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Friday, September 21, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 21, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

INCREASING OFFENDERS' ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VICTIMS ACT

The House resumed from September 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate on a very important bill, Bill C-37, the Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act. This bill would amend section 737 of the Criminal Code to increase victim surcharges. Specifically, it would double the amount of victim surcharges imposed on offenders from 15% to 30%, and if no fine is imposed, the surcharge will increase to \$100 for offences punishable by summary conviction and to \$200 for offences punishable by indictment.

I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Beaches—East York.

Back to Bill C-37. It is important to note that, contrary to what the members opposite have said over and over again all over the place, the New Democratic Party cares about victims' interests. That said, let us talk specifically about Bill C-37.

First, what is a surcharge? It is an additional penalty imposed when a guilty offender is sentenced. The surcharge is collected and kept by the provincial and territorial governments to finance programs and services for victims of crime in the province or territory where the crime was committed.

This would be one way to increase funding for programs to assist victims of crime. The existing services cannot keep up with the demands of so many Canadians, and additional means would be most welcome.

According to the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, crime cost Canadians around \$70 billion in 2003. Of this, \$47 billion, or

about 70%, was assumed by the victims themselves. Those numbers are huge.

What concerns me about this bill is the repeal of section 737.5 of the Criminal Code. This section allowed judges to waive the surcharge if they felt that imposing it would cause problems or undue hardship for the individual in question. I am deeply concerned about this. I am not convinced that we can anticipate every possible situation. I am very comfortable with the idea of giving judges the flexibility to determine if the surcharge will cause more harm than good to society. We have a strong criminal justice system and competent judges. We should let them do their jobs. They have been appointed because of their competence and their sound judgment, and we should let them use those skills.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House that the courts have already ruled on judicial independence. I recall one particular judgment of the Ontario Court of Appeal on minimum sentences that was handed down last February. The court ruled that some mandatory minimums could be considered cruel and unusual punishment and therefore were in violation of the Charter.

I am not suggesting that this is exactly the same thing, but it follows the same principle. We cannot possibly anticipate every situation, and we should give judges the flexibility they need to determine the best outcomes. I think it makes sense to maintain the discretionary power of the judiciary, especially since there are many extenuating circumstances in which forcing an offender to pay the surcharge would have an unnecessarily harsh effect.

I am particularly concerned about offenders who have a clear history of mental illness and who may be unable to pay that surcharge.

We must seriously examine the impact that this change will have on our justice system. I hope that, if the bill is passed at second reading, the Standing Committee on Justice will examine this issue seriously and thoroughly, and that the members of the committee will keep an open mind when listening to the witnesses.

Some organizations have already expressed their concern. I am thinking of the Elizabeth Fry Society, which is concerned about the impact that these additional fines will have on disadvantaged aboriginal people. The John Howard Society is worried that some fines will be disproportionate to the crimes committed, but does not have a problem with monetary penalties.

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The idea of allowing people who cannot pay their surcharge to participate in a provincial fine option program strikes me as a worthwhile approach. However, the bill does not take into account whether such a program exists in the province or territory where the crime was committed. There is no other alternative if this type of program does not exist. I hope that the committee will take this into account and will find a solution for such cases.

Like many of my colleagues, I am also wondering about the link between this bill and the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry's Bill C-350, and the mutual impact they will have if they are passed. Time and time again in this chamber, we have seen the government use private members' business to pass more controversial measures.

In closing, I am very pleased to see that the government is concerned about the funding of victims programs. However, I have reservations about taking away from judges the power to choose not to impose the victim surcharge under certain specific circumstances that are currently set out in the act, particularly since they will have the flexibility to choose to impose a higher surcharge.

I hope that this will be seriously examined in committee if the bill is passed at second reading. We must not contribute to the vicious circle of poverty and crime but, rather, we must work to reduce crime in Canada in the short, medium and long term.

• (1010)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the member talked about the principle of the bill, she made reference to two things. One was the surcharge. There is a great deal of sympathy from the public as a whole that there be some form of surcharge that ultimately goes to assist victims of crime in one form or another. There are many different types of programs across the country. There seems to be a lot of merit and support in principle for that.

We would also suggest that there needs to be general funding that supports victims, possibly through general revenue.

The other principle of the bill, and it is a significant one, is the issue of judicial independence and allowing judges the discretion to determine what sort of surcharge would be applicable. That is, in essence, being wiped out with this particular bill.

It surprises a lot of people that the NDP seem to favour judicial independence being taken away or taken out of the court by allowing and supporting the bill to go to committee. The largest, most significant aspect of this legislation is that it is proposing to take away that judicial discretion.

Does the NDP not have concerns about taking away the judicial independence, and if so, why would it be voting in favour of the bill?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his questions. I think I have made it clear that we, in the NDP, are concerned about a judge's discretionary power. I think I said that we agreed that the government should think about the victims of crime. We are also as concerned as the members opposite about taking away judicial independence, but we are also concerned

about taking away their discretionary power, which is why we were talking about exceptional cases. As I mentioned in my speech, the cases of people visibly affected by mental illness come under these exceptional situations.

• (1015)

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech.

She made the connection between poverty and criminal behaviour. Could she provide some more details on the surcharge provision, as well as on the link between poverty and criminal behaviour?

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert for her question. I know these are topics that concern us all. As for the connection between poverty and criminal behaviour, we know very well—and it has now been scientifically proven—that social factors play a very important role, both in the criminal behaviour and the health of individuals.

So we want to reduce criminal behaviour and, to do that, we need to backtrack and reduce the poverty that might be one of the factors at the root of criminal behaviour.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand this morning to speak to Bill C-37.

As our justice critic, the member for Gatineau, has made clear in her speech on this matter, we will be supporting this bill in order to send it on to committee. I am happy to move the bill out of this place for a couple of reasons.

First, it appears to trivialize an issue of real concern and significant cost, which is victim compensation. A 2003 study put the cost of crime in the vicinity of \$70 billion. Seventy per cent of that cost is borne by the victims of crime, it concludes. Another study from 2004 assessed the pain and suffering of victims at \$36 billion.

Now I come to these numbers somewhat skeptically. I am not quite sure of the methodology quantification for placing a price tag, in effect, on the kinds of losses, heartbreak, trauma and mental or physical anguish that victims of crime experience. Nevertheless, I would not dare suggest that they overstate the case.

Therefore, it is in that context and through that lens that I come to Bill C-37. What I see is a bill that purports to support victims by way of pennies on the dollar.

For example, where no fine is imposed, the bill would increase the surcharge from \$50 to \$100 for summary convictions and from \$100 to \$200 for indictable offences. If the goal is to provide real and meaningful compensation for victims, the bill on its face is a woeful and token effort. For all the world, it looks to me like a political marketing exercise, one that makes a mockery of victim rights and victim compensation.

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However, let us let the committee look into this issue and answer some obvious and important questions: How much of this surcharge makes it to victims? How much of it goes to support bureaucracy, a special victim surcharge collection agency, if I may? What are the costs to the court system of administering fine option programs where they exist? These programs, on the face of it, would require significant administrative effort to operate.

I have another issue for the committee to study. How many of those who are found guilty of a crime can actually pay a victim surcharge? Interestingly, Conservative senator, Hugh Segal, had an op-ed published last year entitled "Tough on poverty, tough on crime". He begins his op-ed by stating:

Debates about whether approaches to crime and corrections in Canada are too soft or too tough are ongoing and endemic.

While the partisan debate continues unabated, the real issue is why prisons disproportionately house our most vulnerable citizens.

While all those Canadians who live beneath the poverty line are by no means associated with criminal activity, almost all those in Canada's prisons come from beneath the poverty line. Less than 10 per cent of Canadians live beneath the poverty line but almost 100 per cent of our prison inmates come from that 10 per cent.

Senator Segal's comments raise another question. Bill C-37 seeks to remove judicial discretion to waive the discharge. So, is the judiciary's predilection for waiving the surcharge an acknowledgement of the social fact noted by Senator Segal? Do judges understand from their seat on the bench, confronted daily with courtroom reality, something that my colleagues, from their seats in the House exercising their ideological reflexes, fail to grasp? Do judges perhaps recognize, as this legislation fails to do, that very often those subject to a victim surcharge have dependants, children, for example, whose circumstances are not at all advanced by the imposition of fines on those upon whom they depend?

We should put this question to the committee. Will crime victims meaningfully benefit from Bill C-37 or is this tokenism, cynical political marketing and/or just another ideological spasm? Or, is there a better way to deal with our collective responsibility to those who are victims of crime?

This leads me to the second reason I would like to see the bill move on to committee. It is so we can get on in the House with the crucial task of ensuring that we do all we can to prevent crime and limit the number of victims of crime.

On this side of the House, we recognize that we, in a meaningful way, must ensure that we treat victims of crime with compassion and generosity. That means being tough on crime by protecting the communities in which we live with a balanced, effective approach that includes prevention, policing and, more important, border security.

• (1020)

One of the issues that we need to address is gun violence. Toronto is not a dangerous place in which to live but this past summer gun violence in my city created many new victims, those who lost their lives, those who lost loved ones and those who will never again be able to feel safe in their own community.

We know that smuggled guns account for about half of all guns recovered in large Canadian cities. According to Toronto's police chief, Bill Blair, 70% of the guns seized by Toronto police are

smuggled in from the United States and yet the Conservative government is recklessly cutting back on front line border security officers. Of the 325 jobs on the front line of border crossings across the country that will be cut, 60 are in the GTA and 72 in southern Ontario.

In 2011, CBSA officers in the southern Ontario region seized 128 firearms, including 106 handguns, as well as 191 prohibited weapons. In addition to the front line border cuts, every intelligence officer in Canada got an "affected" letter. These are the people who gather and develop information on how and where guns, drugs and other contraband are being smuggled into Canada and by whom. Dog handlers at marinas and airports are also being cut, further limiting CBSA's ability to interdict contraband. A huge percentage of the drugs smuggled through southern Ontario borders every year end up on the streets of Toronto, my city, fueling more gun crimes.

Another issue that needs to be dealt with is gang activity. There are an estimated 11,000 street gang members and associates in Canada today. Most of them are young, under the age of 30. The youth gang prevention fund was meant to support initiatives that target youth and gangs who are at risk of joining gangs in communities where youth gangs are an existing or emerging threat. This fund was set to expire in 2011 but we, the NDP, pushed successfully for its extension. That funding supported case management, parent support, community education and employment outreach for youth age 13 to 24 through the PIT program in Toronto. Funding, however, expired in 2012.

The youth gang prevention fund continues to fund the MY Region Park project, a project that works with community organizations, families and individuals to assess and understand issues related to gang activity and to design and implement appropriate interventions. The MY Region Park project is targeted at kids age 12 to 17. However, funding for this project is set to expire in 2013.

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We should move Bill C-37 to committee so some critically important questions can be asked and answered there. We should also take the opportunity to prevent crime and prevent the creation of more victims of crime. We should reverse the cuts to the CBSA and ensure that we stem the smuggling of handguns onto the streets of our cities. We need to work with the provinces and municipalities to ensure that all jurisdictions are working hand in glove to develop and implement a comprehensive anti-gun smuggling strategy. We also need to take the opportunity to ensure that kids themselves do not become victims by way of getting recruited into gang activities before they even have a chance to contemplate a different and better future for themselves. We need to partner with municipalities to ensure that we establish successful programs that will steer kids to education and employment, not crime and violence. This is what it means to be tough on crime.

• (1025)

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I noticed that toward the end, and even throughout, the member was talking about new programs to stem the crime rate and steer young people into education and jobs. I would hope that when the NDP members, and perhaps that member, come to committee to discuss the bill they will not just once again bring in the mantra of “we need a program for this, we need a program for that”. If they have an idea for a program, and I hope they will, the way to do it is to bring that program, the cost of the program and a cost-benefit analysis of the program. That is the job they should be doing, rather than just arbitrarily asking for a program for this. They should come prepared with their request for a program to demonstrate the cost and the benefit of it.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his question and his expression of hope for the New Democrats' participation on the committee. I do not sit on the justice committee but I trust that my colleagues who do will bring forward some very concrete proposals to deal with crime, assist victims in this country and compensate them properly.

I find it ironic that the member raises the issue about real programs. The very point of my speech is that what is being offered as a token gesture to victims of crime is something that will not help victims of crime as far as I can see. We will let the committee answer the serious and important questions about whether any of the surcharge makes it into the hands or pockets of victims of crime to assist them with their experiences, trauma and losses. We will also see if it makes sense to waive judicial discretion in terms of actually applying the surcharge.

I trust that my colleagues on the justice committee will be able to talk about the social circumstances that surround criminal behaviour and bring a little reality to the members of the government so they do not bring wasteful and token legislation into the House just as a matter of ideological reflex.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was not that long ago when former prime minister Jean Chrétien brought in legislation that dealt with the surcharge. There was an increase in the surcharge, the way in which it would actually be applied and so forth.

In most part, I think we will find favourable reaction to the surcharge, but the principle of this bill is to take away the discretion

of judges to apply that surcharge. That is the overriding concern in this legislation. I believe the New Democrats are sending a very strong mixed message. They are saying that, in principle, they support judges not having that discretion by voting in favour of the legislation. The New Democrats need to be clear on this particular point.

We in the Liberal Party do not support the government of the day taking away the discretion from judges to use common sense to get a better understanding of a situation before the surcharge is actually applied. We believe in the judicial discretion that is necessary in order to make this program work because we want victims in Canada treated appropriately and the funds for victims to be there.

Do the New Democrats support judicial independence and, if so, why are they voting in favour of this legislation?

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beaches—East York has 30 seconds.

• (1030)

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that I have just 30 seconds because I wanted to quote an article by a criminologist on the subject of ironies.

It is interesting that the member stands and talks about mixed messages because it was a Liberal government in 1994 that introduced the largest set of mandatory minimum penalties in Canadian history. If the Liberals want to talk today about mixed messages, then I would suggest that they look at their own history and efforts to limit judicial discretion.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-37, another Conservative bill that shows just how out of touch the Conservatives are with reality when it comes to crime and justice.

The bill changes the rules concerning victim surcharges, which are the fees that are imposed on a person who is sentenced for a crime. This proposal doubles the amount of the fine and removes the discretion of a judge not to impose the fine if it would cause undue hardship. That is the prerogative of the judge. I will explain why this is a flawed idea and why I will be voting against this legislation at second reading.

There is no dispute that victims of crime need support and assistance. Often the victims of crime are not just the people we think of as being the ones involved in the incident. Their families and communities can also be affected tremendously by crime, especially in areas such as hate and bias crimes.

Support for victims, their families and the community must take multiple forms. Financial support alone does not heal. There must be services. Government must take an active role in providing those services through providing grants, public-private partnerships, and many other forms other than simply imposing a fine.

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We oppose this increase to the victim surcharge because it ignores the reality of those who are being placed in prison, who are primarily the poor, racial minorities and aboriginal people. Those who steal for subsistence certainly do not have the money to pay such a fine, and the removal of a judge's discretion based on the ability of the offender to pay the fine is untenable. It does not take an expert to see the problem. Even Conservative Senator Hugh Segal said this:

Less than 10 per cent of Canadians live beneath the poverty line but almost 100 per cent of our prison inmates come from that 10 per cent. There is no political ideology, on the right or left, that would make the case that people living in poverty belong in jail.

This is precisely what the bill would do. Those who are living in poverty and commit a crime would be forced to stay in jail longer because of their inability to pay the fine. While the government is content to say they can work it off through a provincial program, the government fails to understand that not every province has equivalent programs. We would be creating further disparities depending on the province in which the offender lived.

Nobody in the Liberal Party is suggesting that criminals should not be held accountable for their actions. What we are saying is that it is the role of the judges to decide how criminals should be sentenced for their crimes. Judges should be trusted to do that. An independent judiciary is at the core of a democracy. To tamper with the independence of the judiciary, whether it is to impose decisions on judges or set mandatory minimums means that the government does not accept an independent judiciary.

The government seems to be convinced that locking away more people in jail is the solution to both poverty and crime. It is not surprising, however, because it also sees prison as the answer to mental health and homelessness.

The point is that not only are we continuing this vicious cycle of poverty and disadvantage rather than addressing it, but the whole model is flawed.

Let us look at the victim. Remember that the fine is supposed to be collected when someone is found guilty, but what about those instances when, for various reasons, a person is not found guilty or the case is thrown out because the police did not follow the right procedure? All of those things occur. What happens when the victim does not want to press charges, as in the case of rape, because the victim does not want to face the accused or does not want to go to court? Will the government step up to the bar, pardon the pun, and actually do something for the victim? If there is no fine imposed or if there is no one to pay the fine, what happens? This is not helping the victim at all. All these points give rise to situations where there is a victim of crime but no victim surcharge is being imposed.

What about the family of someone who is attacked by a stranger who was never caught? Should we not ensure that family is funded and has available services to help with the healing process? The mandatory imposition of a fine is laughable. At the same time, the government speaks of hate crimes being a victimless crime and therefore, no one needs assistance because there was no victim.

The point is that we must trust our judges to impose a fine where it is warranted. The language of the existing provision in the Criminal Code should be changed if it is inadequate, but judges should not be

stripped of their discretion, doubling the fine and providing no way for some offenders to work it off.

• (1035)

As I said earlier, the provinces are not equal in their ability to meet the provisions that have been placed in the bill. For instance, in British Columbia a \$100 surcharge would help, but in the north and in rural areas where more money is needed to sustain programs for victims, that \$100 may not be enough.

The government is actually shirking its role. It does not want to play a role in helping the victims of crime. It wants to lay it all on the shoulders of the "offender" who may or may not be found.

The point is that the very arbitrariness of the increase is the flaw. A 100% surcharge gets something different in every province as victims do not all have the same needs. We need a consistent level of support for victims. The government cannot shirk that responsibility.

How was the fine calculated? It is not based on evidence. It is arbitrary. We could be back here to increase it in two years and again in five years as time moves along. Committed direct funding from the government is a way to help victims deal with the effects of crime. This dithering by the federal government does not cut it.

I want to speak about the aboriginal people who tend to be over-represented in our prison systems. Aboriginal people make up 17% of our prison population but only 2.7% of the Canadian population. In fact, some people say that aboriginal people make up 30% of the prison population. However, the Conservative government is not talking about aboriginal justice here. Where is its plan to assist aboriginal offenders? Where is its plan to combat the cycle of homelessness, poverty, lack of education, unemployment and discrimination? Where is its plan for culturally sensitive sentencing, or will the government continue with a one-size-fits-all approach like Bill C-37?

The government does not seem to care at all about a person's inability to pay or circumstances that drive someone to commit a crime. It does not seem to want to talk about the prevention of crime. It does not seem to want to talk about the rehabilitation of offenders and helping them integrate back into society. None of that is here. It is just about punishment, having offenders pay fines and not even allowing them to work it off if they cannot afford to pay the fines.

Where is the youth criminal justice strategy in here? We do not see any. What about the soccer fields and after-school programs that would prevent young people from getting into crime? Why are we treating youngsters like hardened criminals and locking them up in jail where they will only learn how to become better criminals with no hope of joining society again?

Crime is a complex puzzle. No one disputes that victims of crime need support and assistance, but this one-size-fits-all focus on punishment is not effective. It is flawed.

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Taking away the judges' discretion is flawed. Interfering with the independent judiciary is non-democratic. In fact, the Conservative member for Kootenay—Columbia is saying that if offenders do not want to pay the victim surcharge, they should not commit crimes. That is a fairly simple way of dealing with things, assuming that criminals go on Google every day to find out what the Criminal Code says the sentence would be if they commit a crime. If punishment were a deterrent for crime, the jails in the United States would be empty, but they are not. People do not check and see what the Criminal Code says before they commit a crime. This is a misunderstanding that drives an ideology of mandatory minimums and throwing people in jail. As I said, it is as if the government thinks that criminals spend their time searching on Google to see what the Criminal Code has to say.

Deterrence is not achieved by this surcharge, nor does it help the victims. It is not achieved through mandatory minimums. True deterrence, although the Conservatives would never admit it, is about giving people options and providing them with the ability to start living reasonable lives, to get out of poverty, to get an education and to be rehabilitated.

The Liberals will not be supporting the bill.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her speech.

I would like to go back to a comment by one of her colleagues, a member of her party.

The member has a great deal of experience in the House. I am certain that she knows that just because a party supports a bill at second reading does not mean that it agrees with the bill in its entirety. The party wants the bill to be examined by a committee, which will hear from experts and have the opportunity to make minor and major amendments.

I am very surprised by the hypocritical comments to the effect that by supporting Bill C-37 the NDP opposes the discretionary power of judges. The NDP does not support this bill, but it does support referring it to committee.

I would like to give the member the opportunity to comment on the absurd remarks made by her colleague. Perhaps she has a concrete example of a bill introduced by the NDP that clearly undermines judicial discretion, but that would surprise me. The NDP believes that judicial discretion is important.

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. I have been here for a long time and I have not seen in my time in Parliament a majority government that does not listen to witnesses at committee.

I think the hon. member knows in her own short experience that with this particular government, it does not matter what witnesses say and it does not matter what amendments are made, because amendments are not going to happen. To send the bill to committee and hope it will be changed is the ultimate in Pollyanna thinking. We know it will not happen. We know it has not happened with that majority government.

Let us just say no, put our cards on the table and say that we do not support it.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while listening to the fine speech by my colleague from Vancouver Centre, I was reminded of an interview in *Maclean's* this summer of a professor of psychology, Dan Ariely. He stated:

Yet most of our attempts to overcome bad behaviour are about catching it after the fact, and exacting some kind of penalty. We think this will deter people from behaving badly, but it turns out to have no effect.

This is what psychologists who study crime are telling us. I would ask my hon. colleague from Vancouver Centre what relevance it has to this bill.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

As I touched on in the short time I had to speak against this bill, everything that we see on crime coming into this House from the government is about punishment. There is nothing about looking at the root causes of crime and ways of preventing crime.

We know what the root causes of crime are. Enough studies have done over the last 25 years. Even the United States is moving away from the idea of throwing people in jail, locking them up and throwing away the key and building more jails and filling them with people.

We need to understand what causes people to turn to crime. We need to look at populations that are the highest represented in jails and find out the reasons for that. We need to look at how to assist them to live different lives.

I talked about soccer fields, after-school programs, helping aboriginal people to get an education. I talked about looking at justice in culturally sensitive ways, looking at why people commit crime and preventing it at the outset. If we do catch people who have become criminals, let us look at how we can rehabilitate them. Let us look at how we really help victims, which is what this bill is about, and not simply put it on the shoulders of the offenders, especially if there is no offender.

The government is shirking its responsibility to help victims of crime by not putting forward its own solid and clear programs to help people who are victims of crime.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's comments are quite astute. I do not understand the Liberals' position that the bill should not be sent to committee because we have a majority government. I do not believe that having a committee study a bill means that it will pass. It seems to me that there are other votes.

We have a democratic system where people believe that they have less and less representation and that they are being heard less and less. It is vital that the experts and the people be heard in committee to prove that the government is not listening to them. Canadians must always have a voice. Our position is that committees are essential in order for citizens to participate at any time.

What does my colleague have to say in that regard?

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● (1045)

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, of course committees are essential. It was under a Liberal government in fact that we made a decision to send these to committees before they came back to the House for the final reading. We need to hear what people have to say.

I am speaking about the experience with this particular majority government. Even the past majority governments of Brian Mulroney did not treat committees as places where victims would be disrespected and not listened to.

In this House we saw a budget bill on which over 800 amendments were proposed and not one of them was accepted by the government at committee. Every one of them was denied. Then the government members stood in the House and high-fived each other every time they voted one down. This is a farce. Are we going to allow this farce to continue?

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to address the hon. member on this side of the House and to ask her a question. From her comments and answers to questions, I gathered that this bill was unfortunately not going to do anything for victims.

I am not sure if she did some research to see who is in support of the bill, but the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime does support it. As she probably knows, we all agree that it is important to help victims so that they have more rights. We need a better balanced justice system, and I am sure that the hon. member agrees with that. It would also be useful for the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to look into this issue to figure things out.

But does she not feel that she went a bit too far by saying that the bill does not help victims at all? Should we not perhaps take the time to study the bill further in committee before jumping to these conclusions?

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member might have been distracted for some time during my speech. I did not say that the bill would not help victims. I said that it was arbitrary in that it would be unequally applied because the \$100 fine would not apply in some provinces where the cost to help the victims would be greater.

I also questioned what would happen if the offender was not found or if the person did not press charges. The victim would be left with no help whatsoever if we were to place the burden of help for victims solely on the offenders and not on government to provide appropriate services to help victims and to help the provinces where that would not cut it for the victims either.

This is an arbitrary throw-it-together \$100 fine. What is the basis of that fine? Where is the evidence to say that \$100 would work? Have our provinces been consulted?

This is not a reasonable way to deal with the problem of support for victims.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to rise again to ask the hon. member some questions.

As she was answering my question, I kept nodding my head, for the most part, because it is true that we need to look at victims of crime and the funding they receive. Are programs appropriate? What more can we do to help the victims and to better balance our Canadian justice system?

Does the hon. member not feel that this would be a good opportunity to open the door to some of the recommendations that experts could make in committee in order to better assist victims in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, I am not being frivolous when I say I think I answered that question at least three times.

I have said that we should go to committee to look at how we can modify the bill and make it better. With the majority Conservative government, this does not seem to occur.

I am on the health committee. I have watched witnesses come to committee and they have been disrespected by the Conservative members. I have watched proposals agreed upon by everybody to amend a bill thrown out completely.

All I am saying is this is a farce. Let us not allow this farce to occur over and over again. It is a waste of everybody's time until the current government learns how to respect the parliamentary process and its committees, especially when some decisions could lead to an outcome that would only create problems for victims and offenders, minority offenders like aboriginal people. Let us talk about doing this properly. Let us throw it out and come up with something new.

● (1050)

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak to Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, which is at second reading in the House. First, I would like to say that the NDP is very pleased to support this bill at second reading so that it will be sent to committee.

Unlike what I just heard the Liberal member say on this side of the House, we are very interested in examining this bill more carefully. This is an excellent opportunity to open the debate on victims' rights in Canada. I was a bit sad to hear the member who just spoke say that her party did not support sending the bill to committee, calling the committees a farce. She was wondering why we would use committees, since they are useless and either way, the Conservatives will do whatever they want with this bill, that it does not go far enough, and so on. I agree, but in this case, are we supposed to block all of the bills and give up, saying that no matter what, this is a majority government, that there is no point because we will not be able to make amendments?

Statements by Members

I am disappointed to hear such a thing. As my colleague said, I am still relatively new to the House, but I am familiar with this Conservative government. I sit on the Standing Committee on Public Safety, and all of the parties represented there agree on a number of things. For example, we succeeded in making amendments to a Conservative private member's bill, which we debated this week. We managed to flesh out the bill so that it better represents Canadian ideals.

I am very disappointed to hear the member suggest that committee work would be completely pointless, because the Conservatives have a majority. I do not believe that. On the contrary, I believe that progress in committee is possible. I agree with my colleague that it can be very difficult, but I think that most of the time, everyone is capable of being reasonable. We are all here to pass the best legislation in the interest of all Canadians. Why not take this opportunity to pass better legislation for the protection of victims and their rights, and ensure that victims have access to programs that are managed better financially?

I am not suggesting that Bill C-37 is perfect. I will come back to that point later in my speech. It is extremely important. A door is opening before us and we must take advantage of the opportunity. It is time to examine this bill in committee in order to come up with something better. I am almost certain that my colleagues across the way who are members of the Standing Committee on Justice also want to have a closer look at this in order to ensure that victims are properly represented.

I doubt there is any member here in this House who does not want to protect the rights of victims of crime. That is unthinkable; it would be in bad faith. All parties in this House, especially the NDP, want to explore this issue. We want to strike a balance in order to ensure that victims are well represented and supported. That is extremely important, and besides, who knows what could happen? Any member of the House could suddenly become a victim of crime or perhaps some already have been. This issue affects so many Canadians.

I will therefore support the bill at second reading so that it goes to committee. I hope that all my colleagues who sit on the Standing Committee on Justice will be fair in their discussions about this bill, so that it is a better bill when it returns to the House at third reading. I hope we get the answers to some questions we have about the bill.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues from Gatineau and Toronto—Danforth for the great work they are doing in the Standing Committee on Justice to represent our position on criminal justice in Canada so well.

•(1055)

My colleague from Gatineau is our justice critic and my colleague from Toronto—Danforth is the deputy critic. Their research on Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code was very thorough.

I was very interested in the type of recommendations they would make. I cannot say that I am an expert in justice issues; as a critic, I tend to address public safety issues. We are drawn to certain issues, but I found their explanations on what Bill C-37 could contain and where we could go with it to be very interesting. Furthermore, the

bill touches on some of the recommendations made by the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime.

I met with Ms. O'Sullivan several times in my work with the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, and I also know that many of my colleagues who follow justice issues work closely with the Ombudsman.

What I liked about what the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime had to say was that, while there is room for improvement with respect to protection of victims' rights and compensation for victims of crime, we must also ensure that our criminal justice system is balanced. I will come back to that later on.

What is the infamous Bill C-37, which is before us today, all about? I see three main elements. First, the bill would amend Criminal Code provisions to double the amount of the victim surcharge. Because I am not an expert in the area of justice, I did some research to learn more about these surcharges. Here is what I learned: under this bill, the surcharge would be 30% of any fine imposed on the offender. Currently in Canada, the surcharge is 15%. If no fine is imposed, the surcharge would be \$100—it is currently \$50—in the case of an offence punishable by summary conviction, and \$200—it is currently \$100—in the case of an offence punishable by indictment. All of the amounts will double. These funds are channeled directly to programs that help victims of crime.

Second, the bill would eliminate the court's discretion to waive the victim surcharge if the offender demonstrates that paying the surcharge would cause him or his dependants undue hardship. Judges will, however, retain the discretion to impose an increased surcharge if the offender has the ability to pay.

The third main element is that Bill C-37 would make it possible for an offender who is unable to pay the fine to participate in a provincial fine option program.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan will have 11 minutes left when the debate resumes. It being 11 o'clock, it is time to move on to members' statements.

The member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

PETER LOUGHEED

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Government of Canada to pay tribute to a great Albertan, the Hon. Peter Lougheed.

Statements by Members

Peter Lougheed truly was a great man, universally respected, and in the words of the Prime Minister, “quite simply one of the most remarkable Canadians of his generation”.

Mr. Lougheed was a master politician, a gifted lawyer, a professional athlete and a philanthropist.

He worked tirelessly for his community, province and for all of Canada. In fact, Mr. Lougheed was a vital part of making Alberta the economic success it is today.

On this day I want to offer my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of former premier Peter Lougheed, especially his loving wife of 60 years, his four children and seven grandchildren. Our thoughts and prayers are with them today.

* * *

● (1100)

[Translation]

ÉMILIE HEYMANS

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the London Olympics this summer gave all Canadians an opportunity to appreciate the talent and courage of our athletes. One of those athletes, Émilie Heymans, who grew up in Saint-Lambert in my riding, stood out for her performances and the new record she set.

When she won the bronze medal with Jennifer Abel, Émilie became the first diver and the first Canadian athlete to win a medal in four consecutive Olympic Games. In addition to being in the annals of sport history, this feat will stay in our hearts forever.

Émilie's sacrifices, her commitment to her sport and her presence on the podium for so many years were exhilarating for us during these games and have been throughout her career. Émilie Heymans's courage, determination and desire to perform are an example that dreams are made to be realized, to be exceeded.

* * *

[English]

TAKE THE PLEDGE

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today in my riding of London North Centre, the employees of Labatt Canada are celebrating the launch of Labatt's third annual Be(er) Responsible Day.

For the third straight year, Be(er) Responsible Day will be tied into Labatt's program called Take the Pledge. This program, aimed primarily at young people, appeals to all Canadians to sign a pledge that they will not drink and drive.

For more than two decades, Labatt has taken a leadership role in building awareness among Canadians through its various campaigns and has engaged them to help spread the word on responsible drinking.

Labatt's employees work throughout the year with a variety of programs to ensure people know that their beer is brewed to be enjoyed responsibly by individuals of drinking age.

There have been far too many tragedies involving drinking and driving. I commend the thousands of employees of Labatt Canada,

particularly those working in the Labatt brewery located in my riding of London North Centre, for this initiative.

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

* * *

OTTAWA LITTLE THEATRE

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ottawa Little Theatre, Canada's oldest continuously producing community theatre, has now embarked on its centennial year of celebration.

The Ottawa Little Theatre has a proud legacy of being a cultural beacon in the nation's capital. Since its inception, more than 750 productions have been played on its main stage. It was also the original home of our country's first national theatre festival back in 1933, the Dominion Drama Festival.

This theatre, which I like to think of as the grand Ottawa Little Theatre, focuses on mainstream productions and has been an incubator for actors of national and international renown, such as Ann-Marie MacDonald, Rich Little and Dan Aykroyd, as well as a home for dedicated amateurs to play.

I congratulate the actors, playwrights, staff and board members of the Ottawa Little Theatre for their passion and devotion, and say thanks to the 50,000 to 60,000 spectators who come to watch plays at this respected Canadian establishment every year.

I wish them a happy 100th and all the best as the OLT begins its second century.

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IRAN

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government continues to exercise moral leadership on the international stage. Two weeks ago we closed our embassy in Iran and expelled Iranian diplomats from Canada.

This Iranian regime poses the most significant threat to world peace and security. It has routinely threatened the existence of Israel and engages in racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric and incitement to genocide.

It has provided military assistance to the Assad regime. It has refused to comply with UN resolutions pertaining to its nuclear program. It is among the world's worst violators of human rights. It shelters and materially supports terrorist groups.

The regime in Iran has also shown blatant disregard for the Vienna Convention and its guarantee of protection for diplomatic personnel. Under these circumstances, Canada could no longer maintain a diplomatic presence in Iran.

I commend our government's ongoing moral leadership on the international stage, especially when confronting terrorism and anti-Semitism.

*Statements by Members***CLIMATE CHANGE**

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week melting Arctic sea ice set a new record. The U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that in mid-September Arctic ice covered 3.4 million square kilometres, beating the record set in 2007 when it measured 4.2 million square kilometres.

Scientists are now predicting that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free in the summer by 2020, previously they had predicted 2050 as the ice-free date.

However, the melting Arctic Ocean is only part of the picture. This summer 97% of the Greenland ice cap was melting. The people of the north are seeing changing weather patterns with high temperatures and unusually strong storms, including the largest storm over the Arctic Ocean this summer.

Three large chunks of ice broke off ice shelves in the Arctic this summer. The largest was a piece the size of Bermuda off the Ward Hunt Ice Shelf on Ellesmere Island.

When will the government recognize the crisis that is rapidly overtaking the Arctic? When will we see action that means something on climate change? What is holding the government back?

* * *

• (1105)

TERRY FOX

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk about an important Canadian icon, Terry Fox, an individual of incredible resolve and personal courage who inspired generations of Canadians and will for years to come.

While Terry's journey ended much too soon, it has been up to millions of other Canadians around the world to continue his Marathon of Hope.

This year I had the pleasure of taking part in my community in the great run in Collingwood in my riding of Simcoe—Grey. The event was truly inspirational and it brought together hundreds of families and children.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Sue Underhill, our run coordinator in Collingwood, her fantastic team of volunteers and all of the families that participated.

As Canadians strive to continue the legacy of Terry Fox, Terry's own words should inspire us all to continue:

Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue. It's got to keep going without me.

As Canadians, we will keep going, we will keep his Marathon of Hope alive, and we will continue to fight to find a cure for cancer.

* * *

ARMENIA

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Armenian Independence Day.

Twenty-one years ago Armenia declared its independence from the former Soviet Union, the first non-Baltic state to do so.

Canada is proud of the close friendship we have built with a confident and independent Armenia.

This relationship is stronger by the important contributions of tens of thousands of Armenian Canadians, as well as many church groups and community organizations, such as the one in my riding of Don Valley East. We have also worked closely together in a great number of international initiatives, such as la Francophonie.

I know that Canada will continue to be a good friend of the Republic of Armenia in the years to come.

On behalf of all Canadians, I wish everyone celebrating today a very happy Armenian Independence Day.

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PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we close in on the end of Prostate Cancer Awareness Week, I want to share a cautionary tale.

On November 5, 1993 my father died of prostate cancer and I have not stopped missing him since. He left my mom with a hole in her heart that no one and no thing can ever fill. He left this world before ever meeting his grandchildren. He left this world so long ago now that I am sure he could never even have imagined his boy standing and making statements in the House.

This is the real hurt and pain of prostate cancer.

I implore all men not to risk this fate. It is too prevalent a disease to assume that it will not happen to them. One in six men is diagnosed with this type of cancer.

The good news is that 90% of prostate cancer cases are curable if detected and treated early enough.

If a man is 40 years or older, he should get himself checked out. It is not a particularly dignifying experience, but the alternative can end so easily and early in terrible loss and heartbreak.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Status of Women recently launched a call for proposals, "Working Together: Engaging communities to end violence against women and girls", which demonstrates our government's commitment to preventing and reducing violence against women and girls.

Our Conservative government is taking concrete action by supporting projects to enhance and address girls' and women's safety and security within their own communities. We must continue to champion this important cause.

I encourage all parliamentarians to join our government and promote this call for proposals to create awareness and put an end to violence against women in our ridings and nationwide. By working together we are creating safer communities for all.

All Canadians should know more about how to stop this type of violence and work toward solutions. As members of Parliament we play an important role in doing this.

* * *

•(1110)

HAMILTON AIRPORT

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hometown of Hamilton has asked for and must get help from the Conservative government to deal with pollution at our airport. The issue is straightforward if we believe in the principle of polluter pay.

When the federal government owned the Hamilton airport lands prior to 1987, it operated a firefighting training pad there. At the time, the firefighting foam that was being used contained perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, which has since shown up both at the airport and at points downstream. Links have been made between PFOS and compromised immune systems as well as certain types of cancer.

In 1986, the airport was transferred to the municipality and now the federal government is washing its hands of any responsibility, essentially just saying “buyer beware”. However, the fact remains that the pollution occurred while the federal government owned and operated the airport lands. Therefore, the federal government must take responsibility for what took place on its watch and must act now to assist and contribute to the city's remediation efforts. Anything else is a gross abdication of its responsibility to protect both human health and the environment.

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NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to hide behind the media and not respond to one simple question: Would the NDP impose a carbon tax?

The proof is in the pudding. The NDP's platform clearly shows the members expect to bring in \$21 billion from this carbon tax. Why will the NDP members not come clean with Canadians and admit they want to raise the cost on everything with their sneaky carbon tax scheme? It is clear the NDP members are more worried about their special interest groups than they are about hard-working Canadians.

We know that these hard-working Canadians do not want to pay more for gas, groceries and electricity. That is exactly why we have a low-tax plan for jobs, growth and prosperity.

* * *

WORLD ALZHEIMER'S DAY

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Alzheimer's Day. Alzheimer's disease is one of the most significant social and health crises of the 21st century. It is the most common form of dementia.

Statements by Members

Five hundred thousand Canadians live with some form of dementia. This will double within a generation. Dementia costs the Canadian economy \$15 billion a year but by 2034 this will rise to \$153 billion. Delaying the onset of Alzheimer's by just two years could save \$219 billion over 30 years. The stress Alzheimer's places on families is incalculable.

[Translation]

Research on the early detection of risk factors is essential in delaying the onset of the disease.

It is important to recognize the early signs of Alzheimer's, such as personality change, disorientation, loss of initiative and difficulty performing familiar tasks.

[English]

Research shows that longevity is a factor in the increasing rate of Alzheimer's. If we can delay its onset by five years, we could cut—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

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NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I head back to my riding this weekend, I will be pleased to assure my constituents that our government will not support the NDP's carbon tax.

Canadians in my riding and across the country have been pleased to see taxes consistently decrease under our government. They absolutely do not want to see the price of gas, groceries and electricity rise. Under the NDP's carbon tax, prices would rise on all of these things plus so much more.

We call on the NDP leader to stop hiding behind the media and come clean with Canadians. How much would his carbon tax cost them?

Our government will continue our low-tax plan for jobs and growth and we call on the opposition to start supporting that plan.

* * *

[Translation]

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives are sitting on their hands, gas prices continue to skyrocket.

Oral Questions

But it is as if the Prime Minister and his henchmen have shoved Canadians' concerns aside; after six years of increases totalling 36%, the only plan the Conservatives continue to have is inaction. Despite this major problem that is taking money out of consumers' pockets, the Conservatives are just sitting there not really knowing what to do.

Yet solutions exist. The NDP has put forward concrete solutions to help people, solutions to put a stop to collusion and solutions to listen to consumers.

However, the Conservatives refuse to lift a finger to help families make ends meet. By their inaction, the Conservatives are supporting collusion and gouging consumers.

The NDP is listening to the cries for help from motorists and truckers across the country. And those people will remember that in 2015.

* * *

•(1115)
[English]

PETER LOUGHEED

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we reflect upon the privilege of rising in this place, it behooves us to hold on to a profound sense of those who laid the foundation of where we stand as a nation. A Canadian first, Peter Lougheed stood tall on the battlefield of ideas both to defend his province and to build a strong future for his country, ideals he firmly knew were not mutually exclusive.

By his example, he leaves his province, his country and public discourse itself in a better state than when he found them. He was a titan, as now are his province and its people, and with the legacy that he has left our collective future is so very bright.

On this day of the state memorial service in his beloved Alberta, I ask all hon. members to join with me in paying tribute to this legacy: our strong, prosperous, free and proud country, and to a man who lived his life to build it, Peter Lougheed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the deadline for the proposed takeover of Nexen by CNOOC is in 22 days. Time is running out. Canadians are concerned. They are concerned about the consequences and about the inaction of the Conservative ministers: no public consultation, no clear criteria. The Minister of Industry seems lost and overwhelmed by events.

Will the Conservatives do their job or will they simply rubber-stamp the project?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will always act in the best interest of Canadians. This transaction will be reviewed very carefully. The

Investment Canada Act contains provisions to protect national security, and the people of Canada can be sure that our government is doing its job and making the right decisions in the interest of Canada.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not a single Conservative minister has stood up in the House to express any concerns whatsoever about this company's human rights record. Not a word about their human rights record, not a word about their environmental record, not a single word about a foreign state-owned company buying a huge stake in Canada's oil industry. Is this what Conservatives actually meant when they said "stand up for Canada"?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will always act in the best interests of Canadians. There is a process set out in legislation. We are certainly following that. There are elements to ensure that our national security is protected.

I find it passing strange that the NDP members have spent the last six and half years since I arrived in this place trying to do everything they can to shut down the oil industry. They call it the Dutch disease. They disparage it. Now they seem to be coming to its defence. That is rather strange.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives first got elected I bet they believed they could actually change this place. I bet they told their voters that they were going to go to Ottawa to represent them, not just parrot the Prime Minister's Office's lines day after day. However, unless those same constituents are actually living in the Prime Minister's Office, these Conservatives are not doing their jobs.

Let us give this another try. Will anyone on that side of the House stand up and acknowledge that Canadians have real and legitimate concerns about the purchase of Nexen by CNOOC?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is self-evident that this is not a minor transaction. That is why the Minister of Industry and the Government of Canada will do a thorough review to ensure that Canadian interests are protected and that Canadian national security is guarded.

Canadians can count on our government to always do the right thing, to always stand up for Canada and to do what is in our best economic interests. Job creation and economic growth continue to be a priority.

I suspect what this company would want to know is how much of an effect would the NDP's carbon tax have on this transaction. Why does he not stand up and be very clear? How much of the \$21.5 billion in new taxes would he impose on this company? Maybe the shareholders would—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pontiac.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are running full speed away from accountability. Now, here we go again. The latest Conservative spending scandal has 13 Conservative ministers involved, over two dozen political staffers and a big fat \$100,000 credit card bill.

The government preaches fiscal austerity for everyone else while it racks up sky-high credit card bills for itself. Conservative ministers cannot even manage their office credit cards.

When is the Treasury Board going to do its job and stop abusing the taxpayers' money.

• (1120)

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as of last spring these credit cards are now only issued to certain ministerial staff who are required to undertake substantial travel in the course of their duties. All but two of the fees he references were delayed payments, which resulted in no cost to taxpayers whatsoever. With regard to uncollected debt, the individuals in question no longer work for the federal government. Our government took all available steps to recover the funds.

I should also point out that ministers' office budgets are down 16% compared to the last year of the Liberals' rule.

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Conservatives do not follow the same rules as the rest of Canadians.

This scandal goes even further. When we asked questions about these amounts, a spokesperson for the Treasury Board was unable to tell us whether the money was used for personal expenses. All the Treasury Board told us was that these people were no longer employees.

When will they stop abusing the system? When will they recover the funds, remedy the problems and, finally, start to show some respect for taxpayers?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government does not tolerate any misuse of taxpayers' dollars. The individuals in question are no longer employees of the federal government. The amount still outstanding is about \$4,000. Our government has taken all steps necessary to recover these funds and credit cards are now only issued for necessary circumstances.

What Canadians would really like to know is when the NDP will repay the hundreds of thousands of dollars it illegally accepted from its big union bosses.

* * *

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign suitors are lining up at the oil patch like it is the iPhone store. Two years ago the Prime Minister promised greater transparency in

Oral Questions

foreign investment reviews. Now the government will not even disclose the details of the CNOOC-Nexen deal. When will the government set out a clear process like the Prime Minister promised?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the entire deal was put to the shareholders of this company. When it comes to the Government of Canada, Canadians can count on the government standing up for the best interests of Canadians. They can count on the government to follow the procedure set out by Parliament and they can count on the government to ensure that our national security is protected.

It is passing strange that a former Liberal cabinet minister would raise this when in 13 long years of Liberal government, it did not turn down a single foreign acquisition, not one in 13 long years. It does take chutzpah.

[Translation]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is easy to hide behind the Prime Minister's talking points, but the fact is that since 2010, this government has avoided clarifying the rules surrounding foreign acquisitions, and this is causing uncertainty.

The government gave itself the possibility to publicly disclose the reasons behind a refusal. Can it commit to disclosing the reasons if it determines that this transaction would represent a net benefit to Canada?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will follow exactly the same rules that the Liberal government used. For 13 long years, the Liberal government never said no to any commercial transaction. Our government will always act in the best interest of Canadians. This transaction will be carefully examined and the Investment Canada Act contains provisions to protect our national security. This government will always work in the best interest of our great country.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is bending over backwards to help his friends in the oil patch by scrapping environmental laws but abandoning moms on maternity leave. I heard from several moms this week who are the victims of the government's new EI clawback rules. They are wondering how they are going to afford Pablum and diapers. These moms are wondering why they are being squeezed while free-spending ministerial staffers can rack up thousands on government credit cards.

Oral Questions

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, basically what the working while on claim provision is saying is that those who work more will keep more of their earnings. That is what we want to happen. We want to encourage people to accept more work while they are on employment insurance. We know that when people take a part-time job they frequently move into a full-time job.

I would like to ask the opposition members why they vote against all these initiatives for unemployed individuals, whether it be the EI hiring tax credit, targeted initiatives for older workers, or helmets to hard hats. I would like to know why the opposition members continue to vote against these things that help the unemployed.

* * *

• (1125)

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are hiding details of their reckless cuts and refusing to hand over important information to the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer. Under the Federal Accountability Act the government is required by law to share this information with the PBO. The PBO is supposed to help MPs and Canadians understand our nation's finances. The Conservatives are withholding information and hiding the real impact of these cuts on services and programs Canadians rely on.

What we and Canadians want to know is why are Conservatives running away from accountability?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as was clearly shown in Canada's economic action plan 2012, we have found fair, balanced and moderate savings measures to reduce the deficit. We will continue to report to Parliament through the normal means, including the estimates, quarterly financial reports and the public accounts. We will ensure that the Parliamentary Budget Officer and all Canadians have access to these documents.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Federal Accountability Act is clear and they are not obeying it. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is clear: the government is hiding information. I quote, "...they're not telling us where the axe is going to fall within federal departments."

In my riding and across the country, people are worried about decreased services. What do the Conservatives do? They make up stories and insult Canadians' intelligence.

When will the Conservatives disclose the details the Parliamentary Budget Officer is asking for regarding service cuts, which the government is required to give him pursuant to the act?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as was clearly shown in Canada's economic action plan 2012, we found fair, balanced and moderate

savings measures to reduce this deficit. Overall, the savings we found represent less than 2% of program spending. These savings will be implemented over a three-year period, so full savings will not be realized until the estimates of 2014-15. Over the coming weeks and months, departments will be informing unions and employees about specific changes and will communicate accordingly.

However, what Canadians would really like to know is when the NDP will repay the hundreds of thousands of dollars that it accepted illegally from its big union bosses.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence is one of the largest government departments, with expenditures of over \$20 billion a year. Canadians have the right to know where their money is going and how it is being managed.

But the Conservatives have put in place a policy that affects the entire defence department and requires employees to withhold information that could be embarrassing to the government. The culture of secrecy is nothing new for the Conservatives, but it seems to have become the rule rather than the exception.

What are the Conservatives afraid of? What do they have to hide?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, to begin with, clearly what that member was just babbling about is completely false. What this is all about is that Department of National Defence officials must comply with rules about the classification of certain documents. The department's officials are informing employees of their obligation regarding the rules set out for the entire government by the Treasury Board.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here is a department-wide directive instructing officials to reclassify and hide embarrassing information. This time they were caught with \$2.1 billion in lapsed funds. This is not a matter of national security. This is about a minister hiding his own mismanagement from the light of day.

When will the Conservatives start practising the transparency they used to preach and stop treating this place like a mushroom shed?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Department of National Defence is committed to openness and transparency. Officials work hard to assist the public in efforts to have access to information they request.

These decisions are made by officials, not politicians. There are government-wide policies from the Treasury Board Secretariat on the classification of documents to protect sensitive information and national security, as well as obligations under the Access to Information Act.

We take these responsibilities—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is an admission of the government's effort to hide from accountability. I will print and frame that one.

The minister and his department have been caught trying to hide embarrassing information and mismanagement as matters of national security. It is well past time for the Information Commissioner to investigate this issue.

Until then, maybe someone on that side could tell Canadians why the minister is working harder to hide his mismanagement than to fix it or, better yet, as Mike Holmes says, “Do it right the first time”.

• (1130)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, this is absolutely and totally false. This is a figment of his imagination. This is about a department trying to apply the government-wide policies from the Treasury Board Secretariat on the classification of documents. Again, these are decisions made by officials and not by politicians.

* * *

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are refusing to open the Nexen takeover to public consultation. Meanwhile, CSIS is warning that foreign companies tied to their local government could represent a threat to Canadian security.

With the Conservatives' refusal to have a transparent review, how can Canadians know the minister is taking this CSIS report into account?

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will always act in the best interest of Canadians. This transaction, of course, will be scrutinized very closely. The Investment Canada Act process has provisions to protect national security.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the arrogance of the Conservatives truly knows no bounds. They are so convinced that they have a monopoly on the truth, they are even refusing to listen to the concerns of our own spy agency.

Nexen is the target of a takeover by a state-owned corporation.

CSIS warns that some foreign companies that are linked to their government and investing in Canada may pose a danger, and the Conservatives shrug their shoulders.

What is it going to take to get the minister to finally make his consultations public?

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government will always act in the best interest of Canadians.

We need to be clear about the NDP position on foreign investment. The NDP has opposed every foreign investment transaction that has before the House. In the seven years that I have been an MP, the NDP has opposed every trade deal and every foreign investment transaction.

Forbes magazine has said that Canada is the best place in the world in which to invest because we have a strong economy. We have taken measures to create a business environment that is conducive to foreign investment. That is good for Canadian workers, good for Canadian families and good for Canadian companies.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ABORTION

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the last day of debate on a Conservative motion that will reopen the abortion debate, even though this issue should no longer be up for debate. Canadian women fought for decades for the right to choose, for the right to have control over our own bodies. The Conservatives want to take us back to the Middle Ages and take away women's rights.

Why does this government refuse to respect women's rights and especially women's right to choose?

[*English*]

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's position on this issue has been very clear. The government will not be reopening this debate. Private members' business is just that: private members' business.

Our Conservative government is focused on creating jobs, promoting Canadian exports, increasing economic growth and focusing on and securing our long-term prosperity.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the debate is on today at 1:30 p.m. in this House.

We in the NDP stand with the thousands of women and men across Canada who have connected with their members of Parliament to oppose this very motion. They are in disbelief that, in 2012, we are having this debate. There is no debate.

Oral Questions

What we want to hear from the Prime Minister and from his government is that they will stop bringing back the issue of abortion in this House, into this year and years to come.

Will the Prime Minister stand up, not only in opposition to the motion but also stand up for women's' rights?

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, the Prime Minister's position has been very clear. He has made these statements more than once. Both before this session of Parliament began and during this session of Parliament, he has stood in this place and said that the government will not be reopening this debate.

As I said before, private members' business is just that, and we have rules and procedures around private members' business, as the hon. member knows.

This government is focused on long-term prosperity for Canadians. We are focused on a strong economy. Like a laser, we continue in that direction.

* * *

• (1135)

POLITICAL FINANCING

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nathan Jacobson is a businessman with strong connections to the Conservative Party, right to the front benches, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Well, he is a fugitive of the law, I must say. He is on the run, evading jail time in the United States, after being found guilty in a massive organized crime operation.

Nathan Jacobson maxes out when it comes to contributing to the Conservative Party.

My question for the government is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: They are a bit sensitive on this issue—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg North has a few seconds to finish putting his question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I look to the Minister of Foreign Affairs while I pose the question. Will the Conservatives be returning these donations and, if not, why not? Tens of thousands—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will do absolutely anything to distract from the fact that the member for Guelph engaged in illegal phone calls in the robocall controversy. It is actually an exceptional achievement. He left here in the spring as the accuser, he came back here as the guilty party and yet the Liberal Party still has the audacity to stand and question the ethics of other people.

It is truly an act of audacity and it is truly sad to see what the once great party of Laurier has become, way over there in the corner.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope to finally get a real answer to a question here today.

Since 2007, the Liberals and the Senate have been asking the Conservative government to take its Senate reform to the Supreme Court to confirm its constitutionality. We firmly believe that Bill C-7 would paralyze Parliament, that it would be unfair to Alberta and British Columbia, and that it is unconstitutional, because Parliament alone cannot change the character of the Senate without the support of the provinces.

Will the minister come to his senses and submit his Senate reform to the Supreme Court?

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government tabled the Senate reform act in order to limit the terms of senators and to give Canadians a say in who represents them in the Senate.

We, on this side of the House, are committed to making the Senate more democratic, accountable and representative of Canadians.

This legislation is already before the courts.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, trap tags are an essential conservation and management tool for the fisheries. They inform DFO of the number of traps in the water and prevent illegal fishing. Until now, this conservation tool has been provided by DFO, but the government will download the program to fishers who are already struggling.

It is the responsibility of the federal government to protect and conserve our fishery. Will the government reverse its decision to download this essential program on the backs of our struggling fishers?

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we take very seriously our responsibility to manage fisheries in an efficient and effective way and to ensure that taxpayer dollars are well spent. We have looked at a number of policies to see who should be bearing those costs, the one to which the member referred is one of those, and we will continue to make these changes that improve and manage our fisheries in a responsible way.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS***[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is very keen on a new European trade agreement, but Canadians are worried. They want to know if the agreement will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Scarborough Southwest has the floor.

Mr. Dan Harris: Mr. Speaker, look at them laugh about Canadians' concerns.

Canadians want to know if the agreement will increase the cost of prescription drugs by keeping generic drugs out of the market.

We have already asked the minister, but I will ask again: will the Minister of International Trade promise the House that he will not sign a trade agreement that will increase the cost of prescription drugs for seniors?

• (1140)

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the NDP members say that they would love to see trade agreements signed. I had a chance to review their election platform from 2011. It is 26 pages of archaic ideology and failed policies. Do members know what it says about trade and the importance of trade? It says absolutely nothing.

We on this side of the House are focusing on the priorities of Canadians and we are delivering and opening up new markets for Canadian businesses.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the priority of seniors is not to get gouged by the government signing a deal that would send them out to lunch.

Life-saving prescription drugs are a necessity, not a luxury. We need to find ways to support the research and development of new drugs but not at the expense of Canadian seniors. Seniors deserve an answer from the government, not more glib remarks.

Will the Minister of International Trade promise the House not to sign a deal that will dramatically raise the price of prescription drugs for Canadian seniors?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would again remind the NDP opposition that it should not prejudice the outcome of these negotiations.

Our government has always sought to find a balance between protecting our innovators in Canada while, at the same time, ensuring that Canadians have affordable drugs available to them. We continue to consult with the provinces on this issue and we will continue to do so. At the end of the day, we will only sign an agreement that is in the best interests of Canadians.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is more bad news for Canada internationally. While the Prime Minister claims that Asia is a priority, we have been denied a seat at the key political forum in the Pacific, the East Asia summit. Canada will be shut out of important political and economic decisions for years to come. The reason is that we are not actively engaged in the region and doing the hard, diplomatic work.

Why is the government retreating from diplomacy and hurting Canada's national interests?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely ridiculous. This government has been engaged in the Asia-Pacific region like no other. We have been working hard, whether it is on trade, on security and defence or on diplomatic engagement. In fact, I have been to the region at least seven times in the short 18 months I have been minister.

The Minister of International Trade has been doing a phenomenal job with his hard work. He brought Canada into the trans-Pacific partnership, a proactive engagement with ASEAN and an active engagement with APEC. That is all because of the leadership of the Prime Minister in creating more jobs, more hope and more opportunity.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not about how many air miles one racks up. It is about getting results. There is a clear pattern here where Conservative mismanagement on the international stage is hurting our national interests. It is hurting our economy.

In 2010, the Conservatives lost our seat on the Security Council. Now they have lost our place at the East Asia summit, highlighting the government's mishandling of diplomacy and foreign relations yet again.

Why, after six years, are the Conservatives so incapable of delivering on Canada's foreign affairs priorities?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has focused on the Asia-Pacific region like no other government in Canadian history. We are working tremendously hard on issues of trade, whether it is with India, or the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or Japan or Thailand, because this government is focused on economic growth and job creation.

These are concepts which are somewhat foreign to the foreign affairs critic. That is why we have seen 770,000 net new jobs created over the past two years. We remain focused on the number one priority of Canadians, which is jobs and economic growth, and we are seeing real results in the Asia-Pacific region.

*Oral Questions***SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's historic investments in science and technology have created jobs, improved Canadians' quality of life and strengthened our economy for future generations. Canada leads the G7 for supporting basic discovery-oriented research. We invest heavily to development, attract and train the world's top researchers in Canada.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry please update the House on our continued support for basic research in Canada?

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of State for Science and Technology is in Waterloo, celebrating the grand opening of the Mike & Ophelia Lazaridis Quantum-Nano Centre. This investment in state-of-the-art science infrastructure will attract some of the world's top researchers to study in Canada and strengthen Canada's research capacity.

Our government will continue to support science and technology because it enhances productivity, grows the economy and produces lasting benefits for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1145)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives sold off 9,000 square kilometres of the Beaufort Sea for pennies to a shell company and yesterday the government could not even begin to say why they did it. The CEO of the company says that either the Russians or the Koreans might be interested in this lease. The minister had the power under the law to reject the deal, but he did not.

Why did the Conservatives sell off Canadian resources like this?

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is just that there is so much to say about the member for Western Arctic.

Unlike the anti-development NDP, our Conservative government is committed to unlocking the north's potential. In this case, the exploration rights were awarded to the highest bidder. If the company fails to live up to its commitments, this bid will be revoked and no licence issued.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, remember that we are talking about a company with \$220 in the bank and a corporate value of minus \$32,000 at its last filing. That is the guy who got the lease, someone who wants to get the backing of the Koreans or Russians to get rich. Industry observer Paul Ziff rightly points out this would never happen in the North Sea. At least the U.K. has some concern about who takes its resources.

Why did the Conservatives sell off this lease to a fly-by-night company in one of the most environmentally-sensitive areas of the

country, one of the places where drilling and exploration is most controversial right now?

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member is talking about Arctic drilling in the U.K. report, what it really says is that our government is showing leadership through our northern strategy and it calls upon its own government to develop a similar strategy.

Our National Energy Board has just completed a comprehensive review of Canada's Arctic offshore drilling and it concludes that Canada's regulatory regime has the tools we need to strike that important balance: protecting the safety of northern workers, residents and the Arctic environment, while creating jobs for northern Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives unfairly decided to close the maritime search and rescue centre in Quebec City, the NDP raised concerns about the disappearance of services in French.

We had reason to be concerned. The Conservatives recently gave us a glimpse of what is coming. Fisheries and Oceans Canada sent a manual of standard operating procedures to the Quebec City centre for comments. The problem is that they sent the manual in English only.

Is this how the Conservatives intend to prepare people for the disappearance of services in French?

[English]

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we certainly agree with her that the provision of bilingual services is essential and the Coast Guard will continue to enhance services as part of this consolidation. In fact, that is why we have taken a little longer to make that change to ensure we had the necessary bilingual services in place before we made that transition.

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, services in Newfoundland and Labrador were outsourced to Italy, and now the people at the maritime search and rescue centre in Quebec City are supposed to communicate in English.

It should not be hard to understand that when people are in danger and request assistance, they will want to get that help in their mother tongue and they will want to speak to someone who knows the region and the navigable waters.

Will the Conservatives finally recognize that they made a mistake? Do they understand the importance of providing marine rescue services in French?

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have stated before, the changes that we have made will not affect the availability of search and rescue resources. We are committed to providing those services in the language of the person who is in distress. We are moving toward that in an effective way and we are working with the Commissioner of Official Languages on this issue as well.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when are the Conservatives going to stop stealing jobs out of Cape Breton?

In the last 16 months we have lost over 190 federal positions and the services they provide. Two weeks ago, northern Cape Breton fell to the Conservative axe again with 20 more pink slips being handed out to Parks Canada employees. The Conservatives struck again last week with 10 more layoffs at a mail sorting station in North Sydney.

These decisions are not only cruel, but they are bad choices for the Canadian taxpayer. When will the Prime Minister stop this madness?

• (1150)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie), CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I do not think the hon. member renders service to Cape Breton when he tries to label these decisions as a means of taking something away.

At the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency level, we are investing serious sums of money in the Cape Breton area to create jobs and opportunities. Moreover, just like every other area of Atlantic Canada, Cape Bretoners will be able to take advantage of the national shipbuilding procurement strategy, creating jobs—

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

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the operative word being “communities”.

Canada Post is closing the historic post office in Pointe Claire Village after conducting a full public consultation. In fact, close to 300 municipalities across Canada have expressed disappointment with the crown corporation's consultation process.

Pointe Claire Village has been served by Canada Post for 150 years. Why so little regard for the history of Montreal's Lakeshore community and for seniors who need easy access to postal services?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to high-quality mail service for all Canadians and businesses. We continue to expect that

Oral Questions

Canada Post maintain local service and fulfill its universal service mandate without becoming a burden on taxpayers.

In the specific case the member mentioned, I note that there are seven post offices within a five kilometre radius of the Pointe Claire post office, most of which offer extended hours to serve the community even better.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, scientists have sounded the alarm: the Arctic ice cap is melting at an unprecedented rate.

This finding shows that climate change is an alarming problem. We must act now because this is happening right now.

Yet the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development pointed out two years ago that this government has no comprehensive strategy for climate change and no plan for concrete action.

Why are the Conservatives dragging their feet instead of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to help the north deal with this crisis?

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker. Our most recent greenhouse gas emissions inventory in our country shows for the first time a stabilization of greenhouse gas emission growth while the economy grew. We are seeing that the economy can grow and that jobs can be protected while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Also, our country was one of the first to sign on to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, which have a major impact on northern climate change.

We are getting things right, as opposed to the NDP that would put a price on carbon, see gas prices increase, and winter is coming.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not what the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development says. That is just more hot air. And it is not a concrete plan.

The minister seems to think that Canadians are going to swallow those empty words, but he is mistaken. We must take action now to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Otherwise, we might end up with an ice-free Arctic by the summer of 2015. That would not only be bad for us, but also for the traditional lifestyle of northern peoples.

Are we going to wait for the Arctic to become a new Club Med? When are the Conservatives going to take real action to address climate change?

Oral Questions

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for the opportunity to point out that Canada is the first country internationally to have regulations on coal-fired power plants.

Our sector-by-sector regulatory approach is seeing real, tangible reductions to greenhouse gas emissions, as opposed to the Liberal Party, which saw a 30% increase in greenhouse gas emissions under its tenure, and the NDP voted against our measures to support climate change adaptation in the north.

Our government is getting it done.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past week the NDP leader has been making outrageous and incorrect claims about Canada's trade record. It is laughable that he does not grasp the irony that if an NDP's reckless and irresponsible anti-trade agenda were imposed on Canada, there would be zero trade.

Could the Minister of International Trade update the House on the government's plans to increase trade, help grow the economy and create jobs?

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP's anti-trade record is very clear. It has consistently opposed our government's efforts to open up new markets for Canadian exporters.

Ever since the North American Free Trade Agreement, the NDP members have regularly called for Canada to erect new trade barriers. These policies, along with the NDP's \$20 billion carbon tax, would kill Canadian jobs and stall our economy.

On this side of the House, our government is focused on pursuing new agreements that reduce barriers to trade and promote Canadian exports.

* * *

● (1155)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Mali will celebrate the 52nd anniversary of its independence. Unfortunately, this past year has not been an easy one for the people of Mali.

On Wednesday, when he was making a speech at the Canadian Club of Ottawa, I informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of a letter that was sent to him in August by the African diaspora in Canada, inviting Canada to support Mali's transitional institutions.

Can the minister tell us what his government plans on doing to maintain Mali's territorial integrity and peace in western Africa?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this good question from the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

I got this question on Wednesday, and I saw the letter that a large group of people wrote to me. Yesterday, I responded that Canada was proud to continue supporting peace and security in Mali and that I was happy to work with my colleague on this good policy.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of the Conservatives' ridiculous changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, an Iranian woman whose asylum claim was rejected could be sent back to Iran even though there is evidence that she could be accused of adultery, which is punishable by death.

Because of the Conservatives' irresponsible changes to the refugee process, the Canada Border Services Agency does not even have the right to look at new evidence that her life will be in danger if she returns to Iran.

What will the minister do to solve this serious problem?

[English]

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows I cannot speak to the specifics of an individual case, but the policy she speaks to in terms of how the Immigration and Refugee Board treats issues in this regard was passed under the previous Parliament under Bill C-11. Every member of Parliament and every party supported that legislation in terms of starting the process of reforming our refugee legislation.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day indeed. This morning the NDP member for Hamilton Mountain attempted to explain why the NDP voted against helping parents when their child was murdered, missing or critically ill. I cannot imagine how any party could stand in this place and vote against such an important measure that would help families going through hard and tragic times.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources please comment on this issue?

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the excuses of the NDP members will not stand up for voting against this measure. It is simply shameful that they want to vote against EI benefits for parents of missing children and on the other hand impose a carbon tax that would tax Canadians over \$21 billion.

Why does the NDP want to force parents to stay at work when their child has been kidnapped? Why does the NDP not support families in the toughest times they face? I have met these parents in the emergency department. These are parents who want to be with their children.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour claimed her government was committed to ensuring that workers who go to work return home safely. That is not what happened to Jason Chenier and Jordan Fram who died last year in a Sudbury mine.

Canadians want employers to be held accountable for endangering the lives of workers.

The Westray Act was passed a decade ago, but the Minister of Labour is not enforcing the law. When will she start doing her job and protect Canadian workers?

Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously these are tragic circumstances. This government, though, is very focused on ensuring that safety is a top priority for all Canadian employers.

In fact, just two weeks ago, I spoke at the national safety awards where outstanding Canadian employers are doing just that, raising the bar to ensure that Canadians are safe in the workplace. We are focused on this issue. We want to ensure that every Canadian is safe at work.

* * *

• (1200)

[Translation]

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec nation has a distinct culture. It must have the means to protect, support and promote that culture as much as possible. This is an identity issue, but it is also a major economic issue.

The Government of Quebec wants to manage all of the support programs within its borders and wants the federal government to transfer Quebec's share of federal funds allocated to culture.

Since the government claims to be open to signing agreements with Quebec, is it open to good-faith discussions about transferring power with respect to culture?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to culture, our government has a policy that respects artists in all regions of the country. We will pursue that policy, our investments and our approach to protecting Canada's extraordinary diversity.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I can interpret the minister's response as a yes. That much is clear. By saying no to the Government of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois, the federal government is really saying no to requests that the National Assembly has voted unanimously on. It is saying no to the Quebec nation.

Just the day after the election on September 4, the Minister of Industry repeatedly stated that his government was open to administrative agreements with the Government of Quebec.

Since the government is now saying no to transferring firearms registry data and to giving Quebec control over employment

Routine Proceedings

insurance and culture, can the minister give us just one example of an administrative agreement that he is open to signing with the Government of Quebec?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada's policies, investments and approach protect and celebrate diversity in Canada, including Quebec. We will continue with our approach, which respects all regions of Canada.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Nasser Judeh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the report of a Canadian parliamentary delegation concerning its official visit to Romania and Croatia from May 19 to 26, 2012.

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 109, I would like to table, in both official languages, the government response to the third report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, entitled Growing Forward 2, which was tabled in the House of Commons on May 28, 2012.

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table some petitions signed by Canadians who are very upset at the government's decision to shut down the Experimental Lakes Area. These petitioners recognize that it is an invaluable resource for water research in Canada and around the world. They just do not understand why the government has gone this route.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition from a number of constituents. I have received thousands of postcards on this issue.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners point out that Canada's 400-year-old definition of a human being, which says that a child does not become a human being until the point of complete birth, is contrary to 21st century medical evidence. They also point out that Parliament has the sole duty to reject any law that says some human beings are not human.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as human by amending section 223 of the Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

[*Translation*]

ABORTION

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this petition signed by Canadians across the country who are against Motion M-312 that was tabled by the Conservatives, a thinly veiled attempt to reopen the abortion debate.

By strongly proclaiming their opposition, Canadian women are hoping that all members will stop this virulent attack on a woman's right to choose. Canadians do not want to take a step backwards when it comes to women's rights. They want Canada to move ahead toward true equality between men and women.

• (1205)

[*English*]

CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to submit a petition signed by hundreds of concerned residents of southwestern Ontario, a significant number from Guelph, who add their voices to the thousands across Canada calling on the House of Commons to urge the government to exclude all sub-federal governments and their public agencies, including municipalities, from any Canada-EU procurement agreement.

As it stands, CETA negotiations include government procurement, including projects at the provincial and municipal levels. Municipalities such as Guelph and many others across Canada have passed formal resolutions forwarded to the government expressing their concern that they will lose the right to have independent procurement policies—

The Speaker: Order. I will just remind the House of two guiding principles when it comes to presenting petitions. One is that we do not read the petitions and the other is that we provide a succinct summary. There are lots of members rising to table petitions, so we will try to move a bit quicker.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Wanuskewin.

ACCESS TO MEDICINES REGIME

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition from 65 of my constituents from Saskatoon. The petitioners want to draw the government's awareness to the many men and women in sub-Saharan Africa who have died from HIV-AIDS, leaving millions of children orphaned.

The petitioners call upon members of Parliament to support Bill C-398, a bill which would reform Canada's access to medicines regime to make life-saving generic medicines more available to those countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed by people from all over the Golden Horseshoe in Ontario calling on the government to strengthen animal transportation regulations.

Animals can be legally transported for up to 52 hours and many have no access to water, food or rest. These are among the longest transport times in the industrialized world. Animals that become injured or diseased during transport threaten the quality, health and safety of Canadian food products.

For that reason, the petitioners call upon the government on an urgent basis to strengthen the animal transportation regulations under Canada's Health of Animals Act.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition calling on the government to reverse its cuts and the closure of the Experimental Lakes Area, a research station which for many decades has provided and could continue to provide information that the government needs to protect our freshwater ecosystems.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present on behalf of constituents of Cariboo—Prince George.

The first petition calls on the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to confirm that every human being is recognized in Canadian law as human by amending section 223 of our Criminal Code in such as way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

ABORTION

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to speedily enact legislation that restricts abortion to the greatest extent possible.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition signed by Canadians across the country who strongly oppose Motion M-312 put forward by the Conservatives.

Many Canadian women are stating their clear opposition and are hoping that not just the government front benches but all benches will support a woman's right to choose and that they will not revisit a debate that was dealt with decades ago.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition on behalf of individuals who are concerned about the aquatic ecosystem with regard to the Experimental Lakes Area. They are calling on the government to reverse the cuts and to make a firm commitment in support of the Experimental Lakes Area.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present from my riding of Kitchener Centre. They are mainly signed by women, and total over 200 signatures, all of whom are concerned that our 400-year-old definition of human being does not recognize the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. They are asking Parliament to address that in light of 21st century evidence.

I have another petition to the same effect from the riding of St. Catharines, with over 420 signatures, and another from the riding of Ajax—Pickering, with almost 50 signatures. The petitioners call on Parliament to amend section 223 of the Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century knowledge.

I have another petition from the riding of Calgary West, with 50 signatures, and two from the riding of Carleton—Mississippi Mills, with over 138 signatures, and another from the riding of Cambridge, with over 120 signatures. I could go on but I am out of time.

• (1210)

[Translation]

ABORTION

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table petitions that are against Motion M-312, which takes away a woman's long-standing right to control her own body freely and consciously.

[English]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions from my riding, with many signatures by women, which address some of the same issues that others have.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons and Parliament assembled to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as human by amending section 223 of our Criminal Code.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of citizens who are very concerned about what happens to our veterans. Of course, we all know that the freedoms and privileges that we have in our country and in this House we owe to our veterans.

The concern is that Canadian veterans be treated fairly. The petitioners want the assurance of Parliament that the independent office of the Veterans Ombudsman will continue and that veterans from all campaigns will have equal representation with that ombudsman.

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present three petitions.

Two petitions call upon Parliament to amend section 223 of our Criminal Code to better reflect 21st century medical evidence in regard to when life begins.

ABORTION

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other petition calls upon Parliament to speedily enact legislation that restricts abortion to the greatest extent possible.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand to present petitions from thousands of Canadians, women and men, who are asking the government and all members to oppose Motion No. 312, which is a veiled attempt to reopen the abortion debate. The petitioners are asking the government to actually look forward in terms of advancing women's rights instead of rolling back the clock.

[Translation]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table in this House a request to members to review the definition of "human being" that has been used in Canada for 400 years.

[English]

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have petitions from many constituents in my riding of Saskatoon, with first names like Abby, Marion, Yvonne, Sharon, Hope, Caitlin, Lisa, Lucia, Jen, Rebecca, and so on. Most of the petitioners are women.

They are asking that our outdated 400-year-old definition of a human being be changed so that every human being is actually recognized as human. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to change section 223 of the Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***INCREASING OFFENDERS' ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VICTIMS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan has 11 minutes remaining.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to continue the debate on Bill C-37.

Before I was interrupted for members' statements, I was trying to give some background information on Bill C-37.

I said I wanted to talk about three main points. I had reached my third point, which is this: if the offender in question is not able to pay the victim surcharge, Bill C-37 allows that individual the opportunity to participate in a provincial fine option program. I knew very little about such programs, so I consulted the Department of Justice website, where I found the following definition:

The federal victim surcharge (FVS) is a monetary penalty imposed on offenders convicted or discharged of a Criminal Code offence or an offence under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The underlying purpose of the FVS is to provide a rational link between an offender's crime and his or her accountability to the victim, as well as provide financial support to victim services. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for collecting the surcharge, which is used to provide programs, services and assistance to victims of crime within their jurisdictions.

What happens when offenders cannot pay the victim surcharge? Some territories and provinces have a fine option program that allows offenders to volunteer and help communities by giving their time. It seems like a very good idea, on paper. It is worth studying.

Participating in a fine option program is possible; however, my research shows that the program does not exist in every province and territory.

The first thing I would ask my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights is to determine what will happen in the provinces and territories where this program does not exist.

What will happen to offenders who cannot pay and who cannot participate in a fine option program?

What options will they have? Will a fine option program be established in every province and territory? I do not know how that could be done, because these programs are set up in provinces that have agreements with the federal government. We will have to see what can be done in that regard. That is one of the questions I have about this bill. It will be interesting to study it further in committee. It will also be very important to decide how to address this rather important problem with Bill C-37.

I am also concerned about what will happen with low-income offenders. Previously, there was the possibility of applying the undue hardship clause, but Bill C-37 will eliminate this option.

The Victims of Crime Research Digest points out that some provinces and territories have a fine option program that, as I mentioned earlier, may have some weaknesses. At present, the judge can decide whether or not the offender can pay the fine, which is good. Now, the government is thinking of eliminating judicial discretion. We should take a closer look at this because, in this case, judges working in the Canadian penal system will lose some of their powers.

• (1215)

Once again, I think that this is something that should be studied in greater depth. A number of experts should be invited to the committee to tackle the issue and explain to us what can be done.

Many people have ruled either in favour of or against this bill. There are also people who feel the same way we do about the bill. Earlier in my speech I mentioned the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Sue O'Sullivan is the ombudsman and I have already met with her.

I have a great deal of respect for her and for the work that she does. I also have a great deal of respect for the information that she provides in committee, be it on justice matters or public safety. She has a very simple way of explaining the information and making it very accessible. She also has a very balanced take on our system. I very much respect her vision and her approach to her work.

In one of the last meetings of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in the previous parliamentary session, she talked about the need to balance our criminal justice system and our justice system in order to have the least number of victims. For instance, when we met with her, we talked about programs for offenders inside penitentiaries, as well as the importance of their reintegration into society to ensure that they do not reoffend. At the same time, she ensures that our correctional system works well so that Canada has fewer or no victims. I greatly appreciate this balanced approach. We therefore share her vision.

The Elizabeth Fry Society has raised a rather interesting point. The organization asked how this bill would serve disadvantaged aboriginals who, from the outset, do not have the means to pay.

This raised some concerns because, as we know, aboriginal people are already overrepresented in our Canadian prisons right now. The number of aboriginal people who were incarcerated in a federal penitentiary increased by 28.1% from 2000 to 2010, and it is expected that the current aboriginal baby boom will cause the number of aboriginal offenders to rise still further. This information can be found in a document published by Public Safety Canada. I believe that we also have to consider this issue. I once again urge my colleagues who sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to really pay close attention to what is said by the experts who come to speak about these issues. What will we do about these people?

Government Orders

Aboriginal poverty is nothing new, but it is a growing and worrisome problem. It has to be a concern. We know that, in addition to being overrepresented in our prisons, too many aboriginal people are living in poverty in Canada. The truly sad statistics speak for themselves. For example, among first nations, one in four children live in poverty, and over half of aboriginal people are unemployed.

Overcrowded housing is also twice as common among aboriginal families than among all other Canadian families. According to a recent government study, over half of Inuit families live in overcrowded homes. Sometimes up to 20 people are living in a three-bedroom home. This is clearly a problem.

I am going to try to conclude my remarks about Bill C-37 quite quickly. As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, we will support this bill at second reading so that it is sent to committee. It is extremely important that we consider this issue. The door is open to offer more help to victims.

I hope that all my colleagues in this chamber will support this bill because it is important that we study it in committee. It is important to see what we can do to improve it. I hope that the government will be open to some amendments because, as I mentioned, this bill does have some small shortcomings, such as the fine option programs. What will we do about people who have low incomes?

● (1220)

What about the first nations, which are under-represented and whose members are, unfortunately, often poorer than the rest of the Canadian population?

I trust in our parliamentary system to examine this issue with all of the seriousness it deserves. I hope that we will be able to find a balance with Bill C-37 in order to better represent victims and to position them well in our penal system, in the Canadian legal system.

I leave this in your hands and I am ready for questions and comments from my colleagues.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the member's comments prior to question period, she seemed to take some exception as to why we would prevent the bill from going to committee.

We tried to explain that the principle of this bill is to take away judicial discretion, which is probably the most significant thing that the bill would do. Therefore, in principle, we in the Liberal Party do not like that. We want to support the victims of crime, and there are many things the government can do in order to do that, but the principle is judicial discretion, which would deal with many of the things she is talking about.

The NDP members seem to be saying that they have concerns about the bill but that they will still pass it to committee. The member's logical argument that she put forward prior to question period was that even though the NDP members are in opposition to this and have a lot of concerns about the bill, they will still pass it to committee. Given their position on this, could the member not use that argument for every bill? If that is the case, why would she ever vote against a bill going to committee?

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to inflame the situation with my colleague, but I find his comment somewhat demagogic and partisan. That is rather sad in this situation.

A large part of this bill is extremely interesting and we are opening the door to a discussion that is essential for victims of crime in Canada. I agree with my colleague about the problem with judges' discretionary power to waive the victim surcharge, a power that judges had. That is something that will have to be examined in committee.

What I find even sadder when I hear these comments is seeing what little faith my colleague seems to have in our parliamentary system. In committee, we can really change things, even as members of the opposition. As I mentioned in my speech, before question period, the proof of this is in the bills we discussed in the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, of which I am a member. Honestly, there are times when we do not really agree with the government, but we have some extremely interesting things to bring to the table. We see a shortcoming here, a hole in a bill and if we want to be sure that the bill works properly and that we create the best laws possible, then we have to work on fixing these holes.

Right now, we have something important that needs to be done. This bill is important. So yes, we have questions. However, I would like to remind members that the NDP's slogan during the last election campaign focused on working together with all parties. So this would be important to do, even in committee. We have an opportunity here to do so. Why would we pass it up?

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her remarks.

She mentioned provincial fine option programs. Could she tell us if she feels that this kind of option needs to be standardized?

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her very good question. I am not an expert in criminal justice, but I have done research into fine option programs. They seem to be really quite interesting and a good thing for people who cannot afford to pay the victim surcharge. In provinces where this is done, such as New Brunswick, or in the Northwest Territories, the program seems to work very well.

If it were possible, it would be good to do in all provinces. The people involved would be providing their time to the community and to people in need, especially when organizations are having difficulty finding volunteers.

Government Orders

My riding has three federal penitentiaries. There is the Leclerc Institution, a medium-security facility that is unfortunately scheduled to close in September 2013. There are also two minimum-security facilities whose inmates can leave and work in the community. They work in community organizations in and around Laval. This is greatly appreciated, not only by the people who work in those community organizations and by those who benefit from their work, but also by the inmates who give their time. They appreciate it because they do not feel judged. They are providing their time to the community. It is a way for them to feel valued; it helps them to properly reintegrate into society. If it were possible, a fine option program should be established all across Canada.

• (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. Tyrone Belskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a few times today we have heard from our Liberal colleagues that we should basically throw our hands up in the air and accept that this is the way things work.

That may be true. Because of the Conservative majority we are hard-pressed to get things passed. I would ask my hon. colleague if it makes sense basically to throw our hands up in the air and say that if that is the way it is going to go, why even bother?

On our other side we are showing that even though we have issues with this, we are willing to sit down at the committee table to see how we can work through them. I think this is what our constituents want from us. They want us to work for them, even if we are running into a brick wall at times.

What would my hon. colleague have to say to that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Jeanne-Le Ber for his question. It is a very important one, especially in this Parliament where the Conservatives have a majority and we form the official opposition. That is the way things are. But I do not think that throwing in the towel is the right thing to do. We must not just say that, because it is not going to be passed the way we want, we are going to oppose it.

We are going to vote for the bill so that we can study it at second reading in committee. That is all we are doing at the moment. We feel there are problems with this bill. There are gaps in it and it should be improved. But there are good points that we should study and that experts will be able to discuss. We have the opportunity to do that.

Perhaps the time will come when we will throw in the towel. But I believe that, with frank discussion and by trying to work together, we can find solutions. The people who introduced this bill perhaps did not realize that there are gaps for some provinces and territories. That happened previously with a bill that was studied in our committee and everyone agreed to amend it. I do not see why we would not take the time to take a more in-depth look at Bill C-37 rather than saying that nothing will change anyway. At that point, we might as well vote against every bill if we are not going to study them in more depth. I feel that is grandstanding a little.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member

on her speech. She said it in a number of ways: the NDP will not stop doing its job just because we are up against a government that is not prepared to work co-operatively. We will continue to do the work we have to do.

Does every bill deserve second reading? Not in my view. But this one does deserve second reading, if only for the fact that the federal victims' ombudsman supports legislation of this kind. The hon. member has suggested some very appropriate avenues of study in terms of the concerns that the bill raises.

But I would like her to tell us about her experience of other bills and the opportunity—or lack of opportunity—she has had to study concerns with a bill. I am thinking, for example, about Bill C-350, for which, if I am not mistaken, a number of limitations were placed on the appearance of witnesses and on the opportunity to study concerns.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I will try to give a quick answer but this is a question on which I would have liked to spend more time. My thanks to the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard for opening the door. I hope that more hon. members will follow suit and will take this opportunity to discuss this in the House.

When we study bills in committee, hon. members work in good faith, although at times, a little less so. However, I believe sincerely in our parliamentary system and in the fact that we can go far if everyone works together. I know that that is difficult at times and that it is not possible to do so. We do not always agree, but there are times when we do. Why should we not try to work in the interests of all Canadians?

• (1235)

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this has been said before but I have to say it again: the NDP will support Bill C-37 at second reading.

Let me start by telling those who perhaps may not be aware that supporting a bill at second reading means referring it to committee so that it can be studied, so that its weaknesses can be identified and so that improvements can be made. It also allows us to hear from experts, from stakeholders and from partners in the field so that the dialogue on the matter is open. We all agree that assistance to victims is a subject that should be examined from every possible angle.

A door has opened here allowing us to come to grips with the current deficiencies in victim assistance. I agree that the door is only open a little. The bill does not have sufficient potential. If the bill is amended, improved and passed, it will not solve all the problems that victims face. But the door is still open a little and we would be acting in very bad faith if we did not jump on this opportunity to study victim assistance.

Government Orders

The NDP wants to study this bill in committee after second reading. The NDP will not stop doing its job on the pretext that it is dealing with a Conservative government that is not open to dialogue and to teamwork. We have seen a record number of time allocations and closure motions, as well as an amazing number of in camera sessions forced on committees. There are plenty of other examples of the things I am talking about. In spite of that, we are moving forward, we are continuing to work in good faith and we welcome open dialogue and sincere teamwork. There are already a number of avenues of study for this bill and we live in hope that the committee will be open to hearing them and taking them into consideration. The Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime says that this bill warrants special attention. We take seriously the opinion of experts and of partners in the field, and that is enough for us to turn our attention to it.

I would now like to stress an important point: the NDP is not prepared to pass a bill that would significantly reduce the discretionary power of judges. In our justice system, that power is significant. Judges must be able to match the penalty to the case before them. This is an aspect of Bill C-37 that concerns us.

This bill imposes amounts and a procedure, and we cannot pass it as is without asking more questions about how it limits judges' discretionary power. That is very important to us, and it must be taken seriously. We have to ask serious questions about this bill and about all bills that threaten to curtail judges' discretionary power.

I have another concern about this bill, and during the debate, I surmised that it is also a concern for several of my colleagues. I wonder if this bill takes into account all of the possibilities concerning surcharges imposed on offenders. This bill proposes a fine option. If the offender cannot pay the surcharge that is the subject of this bill, he has the option of participating in a provincial fine option program. Of course, this fine option program is administered at the provincial level.

• (1240)

It is important to ensure that anyone in any province or territory, in any region of the country who cannot pay a surcharge can choose the fine option program. We really have to make sure the option is available. At this point, the bill does not make that clear, and it is something that merits further study. Is this bill fair? Will all judges be in a position to offer a fine option program to offenders who cannot pay the surcharge? It is very important that we review this issue.

I would also like to talk about prevention. This is a subject that we care deeply about. We cannot have a conversation about fighting crime without talking about prevention. Failing to discuss eliminating the need to help victims in the first place shows a lack of vision and pure hypocrisy.

We have all seen Spider-Man and Batman. Some members of the House seem to think that they are living in that kind of fictional world. In the movies, superheroes prevent crime before it even happens. They prevent theft, murder and all kinds of terrible things, and then they turn the criminals over to the justice system, which decides how the criminals should be punished.

But I would like to make sure that everyone here knows that, unfortunately, we are not in a movie. There are no superheroes to stop the bullet before it hits its target and to make sure no one gets hurt. No, that is not how things work. If we truly want to prevent crime, we need to think about preventative solutions.

Money is not a cure-all. I am certain that everyone will agree with me on that. Even if an offender gives more money to the victims, that will not compensate them for the injuries and psychological trauma they have experienced. We cannot bring back someone who died as a result of crime. Money is not going to fix everything when crime is concerned, which is why crime needs to be prevented. If we really want to help victims, we will do something before they become victims. We will decrease the number of victims and not just increase victim compensation.

I would like this to be clear for everyone: I am not saying that we do not need to help victims, not at all. I just want to say that the two things go hand in hand. We need to help victims, but we also need to ensure that we have done everything we can to prevent people from becoming victims at all. This is vital and, unfortunately, I have not heard my Conservative colleagues speak much about it during this debate. I would really like to see an openness to these concerns for victims and for crime prevention.

I would like to give an example from my riding. The second-largest co-operative housing complex in Canada is in Pierrefonds—Dollard. The complex has a number of buildings that house a lot of people from all different cultures, but often they are people with low incomes. The crime rate in that area of my riding was alarming 10 or 15 years ago.

How did we manage to overcome the problem? By getting people involved. The area was turned into a co-operative to give people a sense of belonging to where they live. Awareness program were created in co-operation with the police. Police officers started going into the schools, not only to punish, but to engage in dialogue. They created programs, committees and assistance for families. And now women and children can walk through the streets in the evening and feel safe. Based on what I have heard from people who have lived there for years, this has not always been the case.

The evidence is there. Prevention programs are effective and can improve people's quality of life everywhere. These programs do not fall under federal jurisdiction, but nevertheless, the federal government must be prepared to support them to ensure their survival and their continued development, thereby making our streets safer and preventing crime, and in turn, preventing people from becoming victims.

• (1245)

In closing, I hope that constructive work can be done on this bill in order to improve assistance to victims and give them every little bit of support we can. I also hope everyone will bear in mind that a bill to help victims and a bill to support crime prevention programs go hand in hand.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I appreciate about Bill C-37 is that it does show the difference between the Liberal Party and the joint attitude or approach of the Conservatives and the NDP.

Within the Liberal Party we do see how important it is for us to focus attention on the prevention of crime. We do see the value of judicial discretion as an important part of the whole crime file. As such, the primary principle of the bill is to take away the ability of a judge to use his or her discretion in applying a fine. We see that as a negative thing.

I am wondering if the member who just spoke for the New Democratic Party could explain why her party feels it is okay on that principle to allow it to ultimately pass through the House, because she will be voting in favour of it.

I heard the argument made that in committee they would make amendments and so forth. Surely to goodness she would acknowledge that as an opposition party, there are times that we vote in principle for a bill to go to committee, as all opposition parties have done in the past—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

[Translation]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been raising the same issue since the beginning of this debate and I get the impression that we simply do not have the same idea of the work that must be done in committee. It is possible that we do not agree in this regard and I respect that.

However, if the hon. member truly believes that the NDP is against allowing judges to use their discretion, I would like him to give me a good example of a bill that the NDP voted in favour of and that, in its final stages, destroyed the discretionary power of judges. I cannot remember any such bills that were supported by the NDP in their final stages. What the NDP is saying right now is that this bill should be examined because the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime said that there is something worthwhile about it and that it should be given some attention.

The NDP does not just do as it pleases. It works with its partners and with experts, and that is why it remains open to dialogue. However, I have many examples to show that the Liberals have undermined the discretionary power of judges on a number of occasions, and I would be happy to speak to the hon. member about them at another time.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her wonderful speech.

I have a short question to ask her. We know that the Conservatives are not used to co-operating with the other parties, but all we have heard this morning from the Liberal Party is that it has given up on the majority of the Conservatives and that it has adopted an underdog attitude.

I would like my colleague to comment on the Liberal's attitude compared to ours given that we want to work in committee to improve this bill.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe: Mr. Speaker, in my opinion not every bill should be passed at second reading in order to be studied in committee. I believe that we agree on that. However—and here we may not all agree—the purpose of this bill is to provide additional assistance for victims. Exactly how we are going to do that requires serious debate, and it is worth listening to what the experts have to say in that regard.

The NDP is not going to stand on ideology with this issue. We believe we will continue to have discussions and do the work to the end. If this bill is not amended and improved, the NDP will not support it, especially if it undermines judicial discretion. That much is clear. In spite of everything, we will continue to do our job in Parliament.

• (1250)

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House for the first time since Parliament resumed, and I am also happy to see all my colleagues again after a very busy summer in my beautiful constituency of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to congratulate you on your appointment to this new position, something I have not yet had the opportunity to do. I see that you already seem at ease in the chair and I feel that you are going to fulfill your mandate with serene professionalism. Good luck throughout your tenure.

This afternoon, I would like to talk about Bill C-37, which seeks to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with victim surcharges. A victim surcharge is an additional sanction imposed by a judge when an accused is found guilty of a criminal act.

These surcharges are collected and kept by the provincial and territorial governments in order to fund programs and services provided to victims in the province or territory in which the offence was committed. Among other things, the bill proposes to double the amount that offenders have to pay when they are sentenced and to make the surcharge mandatory for all offenders without exception.

Bill C-37 is presently at second reading, as the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard and other hon. members before her rightly pointed out. If it is passed at this stage, it will be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for an in-depth study of each of its clauses. In a word, we are a long way from the final passage and implementation of the bill, which could be passed as is.

Today, I would like to state my position in favour of Bill C-37 at this stage of the legislative process, because I believe that the bill deserves serious and detailed study before it obtains royal assent and becomes part of the overall justice system.

A good number of hon. members before me have expressed the same desire to study the bill in depth in committee, because we are concerned about the lot of victims of crime across the country.

The NDP supports crime victims and their families and is in favour of better funding for programs and services that help those who have become victims of crime.

Government Orders

The Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime and a number of victims' organizations have already clearly stated that there is a huge need for more funding for victims' assistance programs. That is one of the reasons why the NDP is not prepared to dismiss this bill without even taking a look at it. We want to work with the other parties. If the Liberals decide to work with us, all the better. Otherwise, we are still opening the door to the Conservatives to develop a bill that will be able to satisfy the most people and address the specific needs of crime victims.

We want to ensure that everyone who works with crime victims has all the resources they need to provide the necessary services to victims. Although I support the spirit of Bill C-37, I still have a number of concerns. The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights must examine this bill carefully and answer our questions before members of Parliament give their approval.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill proposes to double the amount of the surcharges imposed on offenders. The surcharge would be raised to 30% of the amount of the fine determined by the judge during sentencing—up from 15%. If no fine is imposed on the offender, the amount would be \$100 in the case of an offence punishable by summary conviction and \$200 in the case of an offence punishable by indictment.

Although this is an interesting proposal, we must consider that this provision in Bill C-37, which would double the amount of the surcharge, could quickly become a problem for low-income offenders. I am not saying that these individuals should not pay their debt to society. On the contrary, I completely agree with the principle of holding offenders accountable and making them contribute to compensation for victims.

However, I think that one of the primary goals of our prison system is to rehabilitate prisoners who will eventually be released into society so that they no longer represent a threat to public safety. We cannot simply lock people up and make them pay some money to try to make them accountable for their crimes.

• (1255)

This is not what is going to help rehabilitate criminals. They need to be given favourable conditions to do so. That inmates can accumulate a debt of up to several thousands of dollars before even getting out of prison is perhaps not the best way to facilitate their rehabilitation.

As for offenders who would not be able to pay the surcharge, Bill C-37 still provides the possibility of taking part in a provincial or territorial fine option program in the provinces and territories where this type of program exists. The fine option program lets offenders pay their debt by earning credits for work done in the province or territory where the offence was committed.

The problem here is that this type of program does not exist in all provinces and territories. So not all offenders would have the opportunity to participate in a fine option program and take care of their debt through some form of work. What happens in that case? What solution would enable these individuals to take care of their debt? This question needs an adequate answer before we can even think about making Bill C-37 a proper bill that applies across Canada.

We also need to ensure that the money for victims of crime is put to good use in all provinces and territories where there is no fine option program. The victims who live in those areas of the country also deserve to receive services, and this government has a responsibility to ensure that they get their fair share.

Another aspect of Bill C-37 that deserves to be studied in depth by the committee is the substantial loss of judges' discretion to determine whether paying the victim surcharge would cause undue hardship for the offender. At the moment, judges are not required to automatically impose this type of surcharge on all offenders if the offenders are able to demonstrate that paying the fine would cause undue hardship to them or to their dependants, be they spouses or children.

If Bill C-37 is passed in its present form, courts will no longer be able to waive the victim surcharge in specific cases. However, judges will still retain the discretionary power to impose a higher victim surcharge if circumstances warrant and if the offender has the means to pay it.

I heard a number of Liberal members, and one in particular, suggesting that the NDP is in favour of restricting the autonomy of judges to impose a victim surcharge on offenders at the time of sentencing, as currently proposed under Bill C-37. Let me just say that it is simply not true. The NDP believes that restricting the autonomy of judges poses a problem and should be reconsidered. We have to have confidence in our judiciary, not tie the hands of our judges the way the Conservative government has done by imposing minimum sentences for certain crimes. The NDP firmly believes that the autonomy of judges is essential to the proper functioning of our justice system and that it should be maintained. We have to let courts do their job.

There are and always will be specific cases and judges must be free to treat each case in its own right. They need to have the freedom to impose the appropriate sentence based on the individual circumstances of each offender. I hope that I have been clear enough so that I will not have to answer the typical question from the hon. member for Winnipeg North as to where the NDP stands on restricting the power of judges.

As members can see from what I have said, Bill C-37 to change the Criminal Code provisions on victim surcharges does have some problems, and warrants further debate and consideration. The NDP supports the recommendations of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime and believes that more funding is needed to provide adequate services to victims of crime. There are a few problems with Bill C-37 and a thorough examination at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights is needed in order to come up with real solutions to those problems.

Government Orders

I believe that all members of all political stripes work in good faith. They come to the House with the best interests of Canadians at heart, and they work accordingly. This is the kind of attitude that will allow us to create a bill that is more equitable for everyone, that meets the needs of victims, that provides them with the programs and services they need, and that will make offenders more accountable.

● (1300)

It is for that reason, and that reason alone, that I will support Bill C-37 at second reading and vote to send it to committee. If it is not suitable after that, we can always change our minds.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am starting to get it. The NDP members are saying that they believe they can change the principle of this legislation once it goes to committee, therefore it is okay if we pass the bill on to committee, and that is the reason they will vote for it going to committee.

I do not know how that would have worked for back-to-work legislation, the killing of the Canadian Wheat Board or many of the other pieces of legislation, such as the gun registry and so forth.

Having said that, if that principle does not change, based on what the previous speaker said, then I take it that the NDP will be joining the Liberals and voting against it at third reading.

Is that a fair assessment, that if the member cannot get the government to change that principle that you will in fact oppose it at third reading?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the member for Winnipeg North to address his comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the question put a little differently. Finally a breath of fresh air in this House. I said that we are prepared to consider continuing to support this bill if we get what we need. We are here to work with others.

I cannot predict what will result from the committee's work. Consequently, it is very ill-advised to reply at this time and to say what our exact position will be. However, we will be there and we are open to working with others. Perhaps it is this defeatist attitude tinged with cynicism that led voters to relegate the Liberals to the rank of third party. They saw that the Liberal Party was not prepared to work with others, to find new solutions and to change things.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier who gave an excellent speech on the issue and also gave a good answer to my colleague from Winnipeg North, who truly surprised me. I may perhaps ask my colleague for further clarification.

I have had many discussions with our colleague from Westmount—Ville-Marie at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We tried, always in good faith to consider the government's objective from the government's viewpoint. And that has always been the approach of my colleague from Westmount—Ville-Marie and of the NDP. We try to be better informed after listening to the experts. It is the government that introduces these bills. We spend

our time chastising the government for not listening to the experts. We will have an opportunity to do so.

The Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has told us that we need to do something for the victims, and we would just simply close the door, as the member for Winnipeg North is implying? I must say, perhaps because I was not present during the debates at the beginning of the week, that it seems to me that the Liberal tone has changed. The Liberals' approach was slightly more pro victim at the beginning of the week. I do not know why they have hardened their stance.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Gatineau for her question and for all the work she does in the area of justice. I think that she represents us and the NDP's positions on various files, including this one, very well. I hope that we will have the chance to hear more from the hon. member for Winnipeg North about this closed-minded attitude and about not wanting to help victims.

We are prepared to set aside certain ideological differences to work with the Conservatives and come up with a bill that will really satisfy everyone and meet the needs that have been clearly expressed by victims of crime, the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, and victims organizations.

It is completely illogical and even ridiculous to me to simply close the door on any opportunity to change things here. I believe that this is why Canadians across the country chose members of the NDP to represent them. They know that we are open-minded and that we want to make changes.

● (1305)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague said in her speech that she had some concerns about this bill, which will be sent to committee. I would like her to explain what those concerns are and what will be done differently in committee.

Ms. Éloïse Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I know that I do not have a lot of time, but I want to quickly reiterate two key things.

First, there is the fact that the victim surcharge will be doubled for all offenders without exception. Sometimes, certain specific cases need to be considered separately. Second—and I think that this bears repeating for some of the members of the House—the NDP is opposed to restricting the autonomy and freedom of judges to determine whether a surcharge is necessary on a case by case basis.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under section 737 of the Criminal Code, a judge may impose a victim surcharge on a person found guilty of a criminal offence. Specifically, this is an amount of money that accompanies any other punishment and is determined by the lower of the following amounts: 15% of any fine imposed, or, if no fine is imposed, \$50 in the case of an offence punishable by summary conviction and \$100 in the case of an offence punishable by indictment. Furthermore, the Criminal Code allows the judge the discretionary power not only to order an offender to pay an amount exceeding that amount "if the court...is satisfied that the offender is able to pay", but also to make sure that the offender is able to pay the surcharge.

Government Orders

Our criminal legislation goes further in allowing the offender the opportunity to establish that the additional payment of the victim surcharge would cause undue hardship. The judge can then exempt the offender from the victim surcharge.

The victim surcharge is imposed in addition to any other punishment for an offender convicted or discharged of a Criminal Code offence or an offence under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. It is a sanction that is principally directed at the offender's assets. The money is paid to the provinces and territories so that they can fund assistance to victims of crime.

Given that the victim surcharge is a penalty, it must be effective and it must reflect the traditional objectives expected of penalties: to dissuade, to deter, to provide redress and reparation, and to rehabilitate. In other words, Canadian legislation has, in a way, assigned three classic functions to the penalties provided for in the Criminal Code: those functions are prevention, reparation and redress.

The NDP supports Bill C-37, the intent of which is to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with victim surcharges in order to double the amount that offenders will be required to pay when they are sentenced, and to make the surcharge mandatory for all offenders.

More specifically, under Bill C-37, the surcharge would increase to 30% of any fine imposed, or, if no fine is imposed, it would go from \$50 to \$100 for a summary conviction offence. It would also go from \$100 to \$200 in the case of an offence punishable by indictment.

Bill C-37 makes other amendments to the Criminal Code by repealing the provision that gives the court the flexibility to waive the victim surcharge if offenders establish that paying it would cause them or their dependents undue and unreasonable hardship.

The bill preserves the discretionary power that judges have under the current legislation to increase the amount of the victim surcharge if they believe that the circumstances warrant it and the offender has the ability to pay.

Bill C-37 takes into account the fact that some members of the community may not be able to pay the surcharge because of difficult social conditions, so it gives them an alternative: participating in a provincial fine option program, where such programs exist.

Fine option programs allow the offender to pay a fine by earning credits for work done in the province or territory where the crime was committed.

The purpose of the proposed increase set out in Bill C-37 is to have a more meaningful impact on the personal wealth of potential criminals by connecting their actions to the costs incurred by the government in helping victims cope with the consequences of the terrible acts they commit.

The NDP supported several of the recommendations made by the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, including this one, and is also in favour of enhanced funding for programs for victims of crime.

Indirectly, this bill will satisfy a number of the recommendations made by the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, who for years has been arguing in favour of an automatic surcharge and better funding for programs for victims of crime.

Crime puts a major strain on government resources. It also puts a strain on the limited resources of Canadian taxpayers.

• (1310)

In 2003, crime cost about \$70 billion. Victims of crime bore \$47 billion or 70% of that total cost.

In 2004, studies estimated the compensation paid to victims for pain and suffering at \$36 billion. That amount does not include the compensation that a significant number of eligible victims do not claim because they are not familiar with the legislation.

On a number of occasions, the Elizabeth Fry Society has also expressed its deep concerns about the bill and about the impact of additional fines on disadvantaged people who cannot afford to pay.

The John Howard Society said that it does not necessarily have a problem with the fines, but that it is afraid that, under this system, fines might end up being disproportionate to the crimes.

The NDP is in favour of Bill C-37 as far as the benefits mentioned earlier go. However, they have some concerns about the bill and hope that the necessary improvements will be made once it is studied in committee.

In the meantime, I would like to talk about the proposal to remove judicial discretion under Bill C-37. That is unacceptable since the discretionary power is very much part of a judge's role. Removing it from judges means undermining the independent nature of the judiciary, which allows judges to hear all sides of the story and to take a stand based on what they know and according to their conscience.

Judges have sovereignty to weigh the facts before them and to make a ruling one way or another. We have a problem with removing judicial discretion when it comes to the surcharge.

The NDP recognizes the paramount importance of the autonomy of judges and will not be able to support the amendment that proposes to restrict judicial discretion. Judges must have that power to be able to perform their duties free from pressures of any kind.

We in the NDP also have some reservations about the proposal to remove the undue hardship clause, considering the negative impact this could have on low-income people. The same is true for the proposal to double the amount. For people who have low incomes, the bill should include a provision to allow judges to waive the surcharge. The law cannot blindly punish people. It must take into account the particular circumstances of the victim, otherwise it would be unfair.

Government Orders

The Conservatives and the NDP have different views of justice. This bill is based on one of the Conservatives' campaign promises in the last election, that they would double the amount paid to victims and make the surcharge mandatory in all cases, with no exceptions, in order to make offenders more accountable to victims of crime.

The NDP, which is appealing for a justice system that is more conscious of the specific needs of young offenders and the need to rehabilitate criminals, opposes any justice reforms that appear to be motivated by a law and order ideology and that do not take into account the specific circumstances of each offender.

I cannot conclude my speech without pointing out the overlap that exists between Bill C-37 and private member's Bill C-350, which also aims to make offenders more accountable to victims. How will these two bill affect one another?

The NDP supports victims of crime and their families and respects the recommendations of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Although we support the principle of Bill C-37, the NDP would like it to be debated further in order to improve it overall.

• (1315)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the fact that members of the New Democratic Party say that they support the Liberals' efforts and thoughts in regard to the importance of judicial discretion.

When I have asked why the NDP members would vote to send the bill to committee, the response has tended to be that that is where it should go. Even though Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, was strongly supported by provincial jurisdictions, including the NDP in Saskatchewan, the federal NDP voted against that bill going to committee. It is an issue of consistency and that is what I am looking to the member for. As the Liberals and the New Democrats voted against sending that bill to committee, it is a bit of a surprise that those members would not join us on this bill. Instead they have chosen to join the Conservatives in supporting this particular bill going to committee even though we seem to share the same concerns about judicial independence. I for one am a very strong advocate for listening to what the victims and others have to say.

If the government were to change the principle of the bill, then it would deserve the support of an opposition party. Would the member not agree?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I would simply like to remind the member that the NDP believes in democratic debate. We think that changes can be made in committee, because dialogue and discussion take place there and because debate is possible there, which is why we intend to support this bill, so it can go to committee.

[English]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to preface my question with, "Really?" Bill C-10 was Bill C-10 and Bill C-37 is Bill C-37. I am not sure where my hon. colleague is

drawing the link that just because we stood up against Bill C-10 from the beginning, we should do the same thing for Bill C-37. There are elements in Bill C-37 that deserve being looked at in committee. There are elements in Bill C-37 that need to be changed, in particular the point on judicial discretion.

Could my hon. colleague enlighten us a little more on the importance of taking a good look at a bill, trying to change the things that do not work and enhancing the things that do work, which is what we are trying to do with Bill C-37?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Obviously, ensuring that democratic debate can continue in committee is very important to parliamentarians. We have opportunities to go back to certain things and propose amendments. These discussions are vital because they make it possible to influence in some way the changes made to legislation.

I believe that we must insist on the fact that democratic debate does not exclusive to the House. It occurs in our committees, and these meetings are needed in order to influence and propose amendments to proposed legislation.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciated my colleague's last comments, and her entire speech for that matter.

These bills make it possible to meet with groups who want to be heard by parliamentarians. In that context, would voting against the bill prevent a number of groups that represent victims from having a say on such an important matter?

• (1320)

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my college for his excellent question.

Obviously, hearing from witnesses is crucial and vital to a healthy democracy. It is important and necessary for committees to hear from as many groups as possible, or even from individuals, people who present their viewpoints and suggestions for improvements, which we, as parliamentarians, must consider. That is very important.

[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to express my congratulations to you on your recent elevation to the Speaker's chair in the Deputy Speaker role. Your acknowledged expertise in Parliament, with winning the Maclean's/Dominion Institute Awards as Canada's "Most Knowledgeable" Parliamentarian three times in a row, puts you in a position of considerable support from the entire House for the work that you will do. I hope it all goes very successfully for you. I am sure you will work very well with our Speaker and the Acting Speakers to make the House more reasonable and acceptable to Canadians. I think that is the goal of all of us here. It is a wonderful goal and something for which we should be pushing very hard.

On Bill C-37, first, I would like to deal with the issue of why the NDP would support a bill that would ostensibly take away some discretion from judges and put it into the hands of legislation.

We have to look at the past six months in Parliament to see that many of the bills we wanted to discuss in committee were rammed through. We did not really spend much time on important legislation, legislation that will now have an impact.

Thinking back to Bill C-38, we heard from some witnesses who said that they were in favour of the provisions in the bill on the environment, but that it needed some changes. These people liked the legislation, but thought it required amendment to make the bill better. However, there were no amendments at all to that huge omnibus bill and it was rammed through Parliament. Every Canadian may feel the impact of legislation that is not properly constructed and given due attention.

In this Parliament, the ability to bring something like this forward to committee is an excellent opportunity. There are people who should be heard. Judges need to be heard.

Over previous years, judges have used their discretion quite often not to put a victim surcharge in place. We need to understand why those judges made that decision and why they judged that it was the correct thing to do. We need to understand what it was should that discretion over the victim surcharge be maintained. Upon hearing their opinion, we may get closer to what the bill can accomplish.

We talked a bit about the fine option program. That exists in the Northwest Territories, which I represent, and that program works very well. Not only does it provide low-income Canadians with an option to deal with the added financial responsibility after a criminal charge has been given to them, along with all the other problems it causes in their lives, but in the small communities I represent it really brings people back into the community. It allows them to show that they are willing to work with the community again, that they have attributes and a good side, which can be displayed with these fine option programs.

Over and over we see people under the fine options program taking care of seniors by cleaning their driveways, mowing their lawns or doing all kinds of nice work that brings them back into the community in a real fashion. There are other options that have people out on the land. There may be a variety of activities. They are not costed that well because the cost is not the important part of that program.

• (1325)

The important part of that program is the rehabilitation it provides. If this bill in any way encourages the other provinces and territories to take on a fine option program to match up with this, because the increased fines will be so difficult for many low income people to deal with, that may be a good outcome of the bill. It will encourage those other provinces and territories to get onside with the fine option program, something that works well.

On the other side of it, victims services in the Northwest Territories are probably in the millions of dollars a year. Yet, if we look at the total number of charges and convictions and the amount of money that is raised, we can see that this surcharge is only a small part of what society puts into victims services. It has to be.

Private Members' Business

It is really not about the money. It is about creating an atmosphere where people understand that what they have done has hurt others and they have an opportunity to remedy that through a financial contribution, which may take something off it, but there is also this fine option program where they actually have to interact with the community. The community understands they under a fine option and they understand they are working off some problem that they created. That is very useful for the justice system.

I do not want to see the provincial or territorial fine option program turn out to be something that does not deliver to the victims. Offenders could end up in the fine option program working off their time, but where is the money for the victims? Do they have to wait until the time is worked off? That might be an amendment we could look at to ensure that if victims' compensation is to be delivered that, it is done in a timely fashion to the victims who have an opportunity to get some services or support for whatever has beset them through the crime that has occurred. The victims should have some opportunity to get that as soon as possible.

There are some issues there that would require a careful look at this. The position of the judges needs to be understood more fully. Canadian judges, by and large, across the country represent a very large and significant volume of justice, understanding and experience with handling criminal cases. Canada has an enormous record of making criminals out of our citizens. The judges are there for all of that.

Bringing this bill forward and taking a look at what it actually means is the sensible thing to do right now. It is a good thing for Parliament to do as well. I do not want to go through the exercise we went through last June when the government rammed through the omnibus bill with no consideration of the finer points of any of those legislation changes. The sheer stupidity of that will play out in Canada for many years to come.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUBSECTION 223(1) OF THE CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from April 26 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment. This is my first opportunity to do so.

Private Members' Business

[English]

I am pleased to rise in debate on Motion No. 312. I am proud to stand with my opposition colleagues in voting against the motion. Much of the discussion in the House has turned on the issue of debate, namely the Conservative member who introduced the motion insists that it does nothing more than foster debate over the definition of personhood in the Criminal Code.

In reality, this is just a backdoor to reopen the debate over abortion in Canada, a debate that has been closed for many years. This issue has been laid to rest in the minds of so many Canadians and, frankly, I share the astonishment that we are again in the House needing to debate something for which so many women and men fought tirelessly decades ago.

[Translation]

The member for Kitchener Centre, who sponsored this motion, claims that all he wants to do is improve the legal definition of a human being in Canada. His motion would create a special committee directed to review subsection 223(1) of the Criminal Code. By moving a motion that uses neutral language to review the current definition of a human being, a motion that does not say whether the proposed committee should amend or maintain the existing subsection 223(1), the member can claim that his primary concern is creating better laws. But that is not the case.

The mover of this motion does not deny that he is anti-abortion, but he framed Motion M-312 as an issue of archaic legislation. Let us be honest: an old act is not necessarily a bad act. The Constitution Act of 1867 is close to 150 years old. But no parliamentarian has tried to abolish the Constitution simply because it is old. Similarly, murder has been illegal for a long time, but I do not think that this government, which says it is tough on crime, will decide to decriminalize murder simply because the laws prohibiting it have been around for a very long time.

If he really thinks that subsection 223(1) is archaic, the member for Kitchener Centre should try to amend that section, rather than place the burden of research and decision making on a special committee. Why use resources funded by taxpayers so that parliamentarians can hold a debate that the vast majority of Canadians find undesirable and even offensive? Why accept these terms of debate when the mover himself has said that he would like the legal definition of a human being to include fetuses, thereby restricting abortion?

[English]

It is clear the member has ideas as to how he wants "personhood" defined in the Criminal Code. Why does he not just propose the change? Why does he not put forward for all Canadians to see exactly what he wants to have us legislate, instead of pretending he is neutral and is doing this in the interest of making better laws?

Truly, if the government were interested in better laws, it would not have gutted the Law Commission of Canada. It would not have closed the court challenges program. It would not insist on legislation that is unconstitutional. Just this week, we saw one of its statutes overturned by the Ontario courts.

The Criminal Code is in need of reform and cleaning. Indeed on this whole topic of personhood, the Criminal Code still speaks of therapeutic abortion committees, something the Supreme Court struck down in 1988.

If he wants to make a better Criminal Code, why does he not propose to remove this relic that harkens back to a time when women did not have a choice?

As a non-lawyer, I cannot profess to be a great legal scholar, but I do understand that extending legal personhood to fetuses, the ultimate goal of Motion No. 312 according to its sponsor, would jeopardize the status of abortion in Canada because it would grant legal protections to fetuses such as the right to personal security. The question, of course, is where would that slippery slope take us?

Would this mean outlawing abortion entirely? Would we also then limit what women can do while pregnant? Think about it. If we start down this path, we can easily see the same member coming back here in a few years to say, "Well, abortion is illegal. Now why don't we make it illegal for women to work in their last trimester?"

Where would this assault on the rights of women end?

Canadian jurisprudence on the issue of fetal personhood is clear. A fetus may not be considered a person under existing law, aside from subsection 223(1) of the Criminal Code, which clearly states that a fetus is not a person until the moment of complete birth. A number of Supreme Court decisions have also indicated that a fetus cannot be considered a person in Canadian law.

It is no surprise to anyone paying attention that the government has been attacking our courts, limiting the power of judges through mandatory minimum sentences, reducing options for sentencing alternatives.

However, the law in Canada is settled here. The only suggestion the member opposite can seem to muster up for changing it is that it is old. That simply is not good enough, especially when it comes to the rights of women.

During the 2011 election campaign, the current Prime Minister promised that his party would not change the laws on abortion, saying:

[A]s long as I am prime minister, we will not reopen the debate on abortion. We will leave the law as it stands.

The Prime Minister should hold his party and that member to his promise.

The Liberal Party does not support reopening the abortion debate, in any way.

Frankly, it is a shame that we are wasting time debating this when Canadians are out of work, budget cuts across multiple sectors are putting the health and safety of Canadians at risk, there is a lack of affordable housing and many first nation communities live in circumstances that are downright appalling for a first world nation.

Private Members' Business

•(1335)

[*Translation*]

The Chief Government Whip said that he did not want women to return to a bygone era when some women had to resort to illegal and dangerous abortions. That should never happen in a civilized society. However, that is what might happen if abortion is criminalized.

[*English*]

We should not be turning back the clock on women's rights. Instead, we should be making progress together for women, be it on pay equity, reopening the offices of Status of Women Canada that were closed by the government, ensuring that affordable housing and childcare options exist and ensuring women are represented in public life through judicial appointments and the like.

When the member for Kitchener Centre and his colleagues talk about wanting to make better laws, why not solve issues relating to matrimonial real property on reserves for first nations? Why not create a pay equity commission and tribunal, such as has been called for by the Native Women's Association of Canada? Why not reverse the old age security decision that will harm senior women, who live longer than men and because of workplace discrimination may be in particularly precarious financial situations?

I am proud to be part of a party fighting for the rights of women, not turning back the clock through back door attempts to reopen the abortion debate and through retrogressive policies that prejudice the majority of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I expect this motion to be defeated and I will oppose it.

[*English*]

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of Motion No. 312 as proposed by the member for Kitchener Centre.

For the benefit of my colleagues on all sides of the House, I point out that the only thing Motion No. 312 does is to propose a study. Canadians have different views on this important law, which Motion No. 312 proposes to study, and that is even more reason for Parliament and the House to show leadership. Is it good for Canada if members of Parliament are afraid to even hear evidence about any law? This issue already provokes passionate debate among Canadians. I believe this passion can only fester if it continues to be ignored by Parliament. Is it not better to shed some light on a subject rather than to hide it away somewhere or, worse, to pretend it is not even there?

This House is always being asked to update and change many Canadian laws. After all that is what we do here. For example, we were asked to update our gambling laws by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh. Members may know him. Another recent example is the courts' calling for an update to our laws on prostitution. Would it not be strange if Parliament refused to even study an update of our 400-year-old definition of who is a human being in law? Canadians deserve better than that from us. They deserve a little more courage. Canadians expect more commitment to the true facts from us.

Some say the courts have already settled the question of who is a human being in Canada. To be clear, that is simply not true. Court after court has said, again and again, that this issue is so important that it is Parliament's responsibility to deliberate on it and resolve it for Canadians. Those who say the courts have settled this question should read the comments the courts have actually written about it. For example, here is what the late Justice Bertha Wilson said in her 1988 Morgentaler decision that threw out Canada's abortion law. She wrote:

The precise point in the development of the foetus at which the state's interest in its protection becomes "compelling" I leave to the informed judgment of the legislature which is in a position to receive guidance on the subject from all the relevant disciplines. It seems to me, however, that it might fall somewhere in the second trimester.

The late Justice Wilson was almost certainly not what we might understand as pro-life, yet Justice Wilson suggested almost exactly the study now proposed by the member for Kitchener Centre in Motion No. 312. If a woman like Justice Bertha Wilson, with her impeccable feminist credentials, supported such a parliamentary study, then surely anyone can. Everyone should.

I am informed that in the Tremblay v. Daigle decision, the court discussed the question of whether a fetus is a person and said:

Decisions based upon broad social, political, moral and economic choices are more appropriately left to the legislature.

In the decision on Winnipeg Child and Family Services v. D.F.G., the court said:

The point is that they are major changes attracting an array of consequences that would place the courts at the heart of a web of thorny moral and social issues which are better dealt with by elected legislators than by the courts.

Far from answering this question, the courts have actually suggested that Parliament holds the responsibility to deliberate on this question and to sort it out.

Subsection 223(1) of the Criminal Code of Canada actually says:

A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother, whether or not (a) it has breathed; (b) it has an independent circulation; or (c) the navel string is severed.

This definition in law was first written down in 1644 and dates from even before that. This 17th century law was incorporated into Canadian law in the 19th century at Confederation. This definition of a human being may have made sense when it was written 400 years ago, when leeches and bloodletting were standard medical treatment. People then knew nothing about a child's development before birth. However, does this definition of a human being make medical and scientific sense in the 21st century?

•(1340)

Our knowledge of a child's development has come a long way in 400 years. Here is what I have learned about a child's development before birth.

Private Members' Business

The child's heart begins to beat approximately 18 days after conception. At about six weeks, some of the child's brain activity can be detected. The eyes begin to open at eight weeks when all body systems are present. At nine weeks, although the mother cannot feel it, independent movement begins. By week 16, eyelashes form and fingerprints are completely established.

REM sleep has been recorded from a child at age 17 weeks, suggesting that the child is dreaming. By week 19, children have been observed to respond to specific sounds, and by week 20 are observed being startled by loud external noises. Lastly, by the seventh month, if the child is born, his or her lungs have developed enough to provide adequate ventilation without assistance. Other organs are sufficiently formed to support the child's life.

Canadians and this House should hear from experts about facts like these. Based on what I have learned about the development of a child before birth, it seems to me that a child is a human being well before the moment of complete birth. If this is true and accurate, our definition of a human being is wrong. If none of this is true or accurate, Canadians and this House should hear that too.

If the scientific evidence tells us that our legal definition of who is a human being is wrong, is it right for us to ignore it? If the facts of scientifically established evidence show that a child is a human being before the moment of complete birth, then surely Parliament has a responsibility to amend that definition of when a child becomes a human being.

Why would anyone oppose a respectful dialogue to gather evidence on such an important law? That is the objective of Motion No. 312. Motion No. 312 does not propose any legislation on any subject. It merely proposes that a parliamentary committee look at the evidence of the development of a child before the moment of complete birth.

I believe it is always helpful to shed light on an issue. Armed with complete knowledge, Parliament can assess what, if anything, should be done about subsection 223(1) and its definition of a human being. This is a necessary step in reconciling Canadian law with scientific facts.

However, if Parliament, acting on behalf of all Canadians, refuses even to discuss the issue, it will be letting down the vast majority of Canadians who believe in honest and just laws, grounded in reality as we now understand it.

To recap, Motion No. 312 calls for a respectful conversation among Canadians. Who better than Canadians could have that kind of conversation? Let us talk about Motion No. 312 and what it really says.

Need it be said that we live in a representative parliamentary democracy, governed by laws that should be informed by the best of current human knowledge? In 1988, the Supreme Court was clear that this question was not for the court to decide, but for Parliament. That is why this House is elected: to hear informed witnesses, to consider that testimony, to deliberate and to exercise good, informed judgment. This is an important issue that deserves that kind of testimony and deliberation.

Let me remind this House that Motion No. 312 insists that all options be reported and that no decision be made by the committee to which it is referred.

I also remind my colleagues that this is about fundamental, universal human rights and about a 400-year-old law, frozen in time. Should it be immune to scrutiny and our consideration? Surely not. I ask all members of this House to join me in supporting Motion No. 312.

• (1345)

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the motion being debated in the House today is nothing less than an attempt to reopen the abortion debate in Canada. This is quite literally a slap in the face to women who have fought long and hard for the right to control their own bodies and their ability to determine for themselves when they wish to have children. Motion No. 312 states:

That a special committee of the House be appointed and directed to review the declaration in Subsection 223(1) of the Criminal Code which states that a child becomes a human being only at the moment of complete birth....

The member for Kitchener Centre's desire to open up this debate has an end goal of changing the legislation to enable the fetus to be declared a human being. We are all very aware that such a change in the definition will place Canada directly on the regressive path to banning abortions.

The member for Kitchener Centre held a press conference earlier this week. In that press conference he quite clearly stated that the current definition of a person is an exclusion of a class of people. These types of statements distort the truth. In reality, over 90% of abortions in Canada are done in the first trimester. Only 2% to 3% are done after 16 weeks and no doctor in this country performs abortions past 20 or 21 weeks, except for compelling health or genetic reasons.

The comments by the member are a blatant attempt to misrepresent the facts. A fertilized egg is not a class of people, and I am offended that the member would shamelessly misrepresent the women's rights movement as an example of why we should open the door to changing abortion rights in Canada.

I would like to highlight several legal precedents that have already dealt with the question that Motion No. 312 raises, in particular *Tremblay v. Daigle*, *Dobson v. Dobson*, *Winnipeg Child and Family Services v. G.*, *Borowski v. Canada*, and *R. v. Morgentaler*.

These rulings have concluded or noted that the fetus has never been a person nor been included in the meaning of "everyone" in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; that a fetus must be born alive to enjoy rights, the born alive rule; and that the law has always treated a pregnant woman and her fetus as one person under the law.

We need not look far to see the danger of Motion No. 312. In the United States fetuses have legal personhood rights in at least 38 states, most through so-called fetal homicide laws, which are supposedly aimed at third parties who assault pregnant women.

Private Members' Business

In reality, these laws are used to justify prosecuting pregnant women under child welfare laws, and they function much like the 2008 bill of the member for Edmonton—Sherwood Park, Bill C-484, which proposed changes to the Criminal Code that would, if passed, also threaten a woman's right to choose. The intent of that bill was to amend the Criminal Code to have two charges laid against anyone killing a pregnant woman, and it would in effect have given legal rights to a fetus, thereby changing the definition of when a fetus becomes a person under the law. While the stated purpose of the bill was the protection for a woman and her fetus, in practice, like Motion No. 312, these laws are primarily used to justify the prosecution of women.

Motions and bills such as these create obvious dangers for those who counsel or perform abortions. They also turn pregnant women into lesser citizens whose rights are subordinated to those of a fertilized egg.

What is absolutely clear is that Motion No. 312 is taking aim at a woman's right to choose and is a direct attack on jurisprudence. Canada was once a world leader in the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality. It was committed to the view that gender equality is not only a human rights issue but also an essential component of sustainable development, social justice, peace and security.

These goals can only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal partners, decision-makers and beneficiaries of the sustainable development of their societies. How can Canada be considered a world leader in women's rights when we have members of Parliament suggesting that we revert to the barbaric days of gender inequality through the restriction of abortion?

When abortions are illegal, women do not stop having them. They only take more risks to access the service and these risks can have deadly consequences. For instance, before abortions were legalized in South Africa in 1997, there were an average of 425 deaths stemming from unsafe abortions every year. Today, the numbers are below 20.

● (1350)

In Latin America, most abortions are considered illegal, yet roughly 3.8 million procedures are performed each year and are directly linked to over 4,000 avoidable deaths.

The same happened here. Before abortion laws in Canada were struck down, there were over 35,000 illegal abortions taking place every year. Between 1926 and 1947, there were an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 deaths as a result of desperate women submitting themselves to clandestine procedures.

Despite assurances from the Prime Minister—known for his tight control over his caucus members—that the government does not plan to reopen the abortion debate, there is a troubling trend in the government's backdoor actions and its support for backbenchers who are continually trying to revive this issue.

In the last Parliament, the member for Winnipeg South tabled Bill C-510, An Act to Prevent Coercion of Pregnant Women to Abort (Roxanne's Law). In 2008, as I mentioned earlier, we saw Bill C-484, a bill that nearly the entire Conservative caucus supported, including the Prime Minister.

In 2010, as part of the maternal health initiative at the G8 summit in Muskoka, the government imposed a moratorium on the funding of safe abortions in 10 developing countries, emphasizing the protection of life yet ignoring the consequences of systemic rape in some of those countries. The statistics from those developing countries are heartbreaking. Approximately 70,000 women die each year due to unsafe abortions and 5 million are hospitalized because of complications resulting from unsafe abortions.

Women's groups in Canada fighting for comprehensive maternal health funding were told by a Conservative senator to shut up about abortion or else there might be a backlash. The senator contended that Canada was still a country with free and accessible abortion and to leave it at that.

This thinly veiled threat points to a greater fallacy, that abortion services are in fact available across Canada. Some provinces have very few hospitals providing services. Prince Edward Island has none. Canadian women living in rural areas and those in jurisdictions without an abortion provider travel long distances, encountering significant costs and additional stress. These constraints have the most impact on young women, those who have little job security, or women with significant family obligations.

Turning back the clock and reopening the debate on when human life begins is a dangerous path to take. The Canadian government should be working to strengthen women's rights instead of heading down a path that exposes women to the dangers of illicit, unsafe procedures.

Women in Canada have the right to choose. That has been established by the Supreme Court of Canada, and we demand that the government ensure this right's continuation and that all equality rights are protected. We need a government that will champion programs and policies that ensure that women's contributions to society, the economy, and leadership in this country are respected and encouraged. Access to safe, legal abortions are integral to these rights.

I want to make it very clear that I do not support this motion. New Democrats do not support this motion. We will actively fight against any motion or bill that will threaten a woman's right to choose. It is both frightening and insulting that the men who have introduced these bills and motions have so little respect for a woman's ability to determine what is best for her, her body and her family. The right rests solely with women who choose. No one has the right to interfere. The Supreme Court has upheld that right and so should the members of this Parliament.

Private Members' Business

•(1355)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to be here today. I want to point out that I received over 200 emails just last night supporting the position I am taking today. I have had over 1,500 responses encouraging me to support Motion No. 312. I find it interesting that many of them have come from young women. I think that is a rebuke to the opposition members, reminding them that there are young women in this country who believe in what is being proposed in today's motion.

I am pleased to address the matter of Motion No. 312. To do so, it is necessary to refer to subsection 223(1), Canada's 400-year-old definition of "human being". It states:

A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother, whether or not

- (a) it has breathed;
- (b) it has an independent circulation; or
- (c) the navel string is severed.

Many Canadians have questioned the accuracy of this definition. They ask: What is the medical evidence? Does a child become a human being at some point before the moment of complete birth, or is it at the point fixed by subsection 223(1)? Do Canadians believe that a child transforms from a non-human into a human being at the moment of complete birth, as subsection 223(1) dictates? Motion No. 312 attempts to address these questions. The answers to the questions have implications for Canadians and Canada's justice system. Motion No. 312 calls on this country's leaders, parliamentarians, to look at the evidence and ask if that evidence verifies or contradicts subsection 223(1).

We need to recognize that a majority of Canadians believe that human life begins long before a person is born. We can understand that if the evidence establishes that a child does in fact become a human being before the moment of complete birth, then subsection 223(1) has some major problems and it is actually a law that dehumanizes and excludes a whole class of human beings from legal protection. That is why we need to pass Motion No. 312 in order to get the facts about this issue.

This is a very serious matter. If we presently have a law that decrees a certain human being is not a human being, is that an honest and acceptable law? Could such a law ever be considered just or legitimate? If Parliament finds itself in a situation where it allows one law that decrees the dehumanization and exclusion of an entire class of people, what are the safeguards that will prevent us from finding reasons to decree that others are not human beings as well?

This is just not a theoretical and academic question, because many of the letters and petitions that I have received in my office have referenced the past. They point out that several times legislatures and supreme courts have supported other laws, which, like subsection 223(1), have decreed the exclusion of a class of people from legal protection. They mention, for example, in the 1850s the United States Supreme Court issued a decree that African Americans would not be considered human persons under U.S. law. Instead, they would be excluded from recognition even though they were human beings.

Early in the 20th century, our Canadian Supreme Court ruled that women were not to be considered human persons for purposes of all Canadian laws. Instead, they would be dehumanized and excluded from recognition even though they were human beings. In Germany in the 1930s, laws were passed that dehumanized and excluded mentally challenged people from the protection of law even though they were human beings.

Such laws have been opposed more and more over the last 400 years. By the middle of the last century, Canadians and others around the world reached an international consensus, which is that laws that dehumanize people and exclude any human beings are condemned. Instead, the consensus is that every person has an inherent worth and dignity based on who they are as a human being. Governments and laws can never legitimately assign or withhold the value of any human being. Instead, they can only recognize the worth and dignity with which each human being is created.

Subsection 223(1) has been overlooked until now, but the question really is: Does it directly contradict these principles of universal human rights that so many Canadians have fought for and have died to defend? Do we have a consensus in Canada in favour of universal human rights, or are we willing to accept that our government or laws may dehumanize and exclude classes of people with false definitions of what it means to be human? I do not think Canadians have come to that point. They continue to believe strongly in the unique value of each human life from its beginning to its natural conclusion and they would expect that Parliament is able to discuss these issues.

•(1400)

That belief in the value of human life needs to be protected and encouraged. It is not enough that we properly define human life. It is just as important that we continue as a culture to reaffirm the uniqueness and inherent dignity of every human life. That is how we find good and just solutions to the many life issues that we will be facing as legislators and as a country. To change subsection 223(1) and then to say that we do not recognize human life as having value in itself would lead us down some very dangerous paths.

This is not an unreasonable concern. Our culture is in danger of changing its view of the value of human life, and we all know that. There are many illustrations that are readily apparent.

There is an active attempt within the medical community to convince parents that it is necessary to eliminate Down's syndrome children before they are born. Recently, two European academics proposed that newborn infants should not be treated as human persons since newborn infants are essentially no different than children are before birth. I am told they used the Down's syndrome argument for elimination prior to birth in order to justify their afterbirth proposal.

The member for Kitchener Centre has found evidence that in Canada 40 to 50 children every year are born alive but later die of injuries inflicted by what is referred to as a termination of pregnancy. These are injuries that take place before birth when subsection 223(1) has taken human rights protection away from them.

Private Members' Business

The late Justice Bertha Wilson, who was as much a feminist as any person in this room, agreed that our existing criteria of complete birth were wrong. She believed that the interests and rights of a child before birth should be recognized and protected from some point in the second trimester of the child's development. Justice Wilson quite reasonably suggested that Parliament resolve this by studying evidence from all the relevant disciplines. This is the suggestion which is embodied in Motion No. 312. Justice Wilson did not think that this suggestion contradicted her rejection of Canada's last abortion law. Will abortion become illegal if we study this as Justice Wilson suggested? Absolutely not.

Why would a 400-year-old definition of human being be frozen in time forever? Why would a 400-year-old definition of human being be forever exempt from all democratic review? Why would a 400-year-old definition of human being be severed from advances in our medical understanding?

Why would parliamentarians turn their backs on this important discussion just because we are faced with diverse views on an important topic of human rights? Why would we not search for consensus through informed dialogue?

I ask members in the House to accept Justice Wilson's suggestion for Parliament to inform itself. I ask members to stand up for the Canadian consensus and legacy that every human being has an inherent worth and dignity which all our laws must recognize. I ask members to approve the open-minded, evidence-based study, which is all that Motion No. 312 proposes.

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to express my strong opposition for Motion No. 312. I am strongly opposed to this motion based on my own personal convictions, but dozens of my constituents have also asked me to oppose it because they are concerned. While I am honoured to speak today, I am very disappointed that I am addressing the House about an issue that most Canadians thought was completely closed. The hon. member for Kitchener Centre wants to reopen a debate on an issue that we thought had been resolved for many years. It seems that he wants to try to break the social peace that has settled over this country. He brought forward a motion that reads as follows:

That a special committee of the House be appointed and directed to review the declaration in Subsection 223(1) of the Criminal Code which states that a child becomes a human being only at the moment of complete birth and to answer the questions hereinafter set forth;

The motion also sets out the composition of and powers given to the committee.

I would first like to clarify certain statements that the hon. member for Kitchener Centre made in the speech he gave during the first hour of debate and other speeches.

The definition dates back to 1892 and not to the 17th century, as he led us to believe. Many of our laws were sanctioned in the early years of our federation and they are still in effect and still relevant to the governance of the country. He also said that abortions were done in the third trimester, more specifically that there were no rights to protect the fetus in the third trimester. I would like to remind the hon.

member that 90% of abortions are done in the first trimester. Only 0.3% of abortions are done after the 20th week, and most of those are done for quasi-medical reasons or when the mother's health is in jeopardy.

I would also like to mention to my colleague that abortions are down by an average of 1% per year. So, it is not true that fetuses are being aborted during the third trimester. The Conservatives are twisting the facts to justify their ideologies. Canadians have the right to have the real facts rather than twisted ones.

As I said earlier, in the mind of Canadians, this debate has been closed for many years, following many Supreme Court decisions. It is up to Parliament to make legislation, but it is the responsibility of the courts to review the legislation and to make sure that it is consistent with our Constitution and the individual rights that we all enjoy under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It is important to know the political and legal history behind this debate. Let me quickly go over the facts to refresh the memory of the hon. members opposite, in case they may have forgotten them. In 1988, the Morgentaler decision held that the Criminal Code provisions on abortion were unconstitutional. They violate section 7 of the Charter.

After the 1988 Morgentaler decision, a number of provinces tried to restrict access to abortion by using the health care system in terms of reimbursing costs. They prohibited abortions that were not performed in public hospitals by not paying for abortion fees. In the Morgentaler decisions against the provinces of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba and Quebec, courts ruled in all cases that the provinces' attempts to restrict abortion were contrary to the Charter.

All of these decisions always focused on a woman's inalienable rights concerning her body. However, as my colleague from Gatineau mentioned in a passionate speech, there was a fundamental aspect missing from the speech by the member for Kitchener Centre: a woman's right to control her own body. This right is included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But the member for Kitchener Centre seems to have completely forgotten that, or simply ignored it. The member said that he wants a study in good faith on the issue and that the definition in section 223 of the Criminal Code is dishonest.

Let us talk about honesty in speeches and statements. The member for Kitchener Centre said:

Motion No. 312 simply calls for a study of the evidence about when a child becomes a human being. It does not propose any answer to that question. In fact, it directs the committee to make no decision and no recommendation but merely to report options.

However, the Chief Government Whip said:

...the ultimate intention of this motion is to restrict abortions in Canada at some fetal development stage.

Private Members' Business

●(1410)

The member for Kitchener Centre also indicated in an interview with *Metro Ottawa* published on April 26, 2012, that if we reach a conclusion on when a child becomes a human being then all of the other issues that are so complicated about abortion can be discussed with that honest conclusion as a bedrock foundation. Either the member is contradicting himself, or else the member for Kitchener Centre is hiding his real desire to turn women who have abortions into criminals. So, the member should be careful when he talks about honesty.

The Conservative Party does not have a good record on this issue. The Conservatives have been trying to criminalize abortion for a long time. The Mulroney government introduced Bill C-43 in order to criminalize abortion, but fortunately it was defeated at third reading.

In 2004, the then leader of the opposition, who is now the Prime Minister, said that the first Conservative government would not be interested in reopening the abortion issue.

In 2008, the member for Edmonton—Sherwood Park tried to create a loophole for the criminalization of abortion by introducing Bill C-484, which would have made the murder of a pregnant woman a double homicide. Almost every Conservative, including the Prime Minister, voted for the bill.

In 2010, when the Muskoka Initiative for maternal health was launched by the G8, the Prime minister imposed a moratorium on funding for projects involving abortion in the developing world. Still in 2010, the member for Winnipeg South introduced Bill C-510, which would have made it an offence to coerce a woman to have an abortion.

In 2011, the Prime Minister reiterated this promise with the assurance that his party would not reopen the abortion debate. We know what happened: a member moved a motion with the ultimate goal of restricting access to abortion. One cannot help but wonder about the Conservative Party's ability to be consistent. The Prime Minister seems to have difficulty keeping the more extremist elements of his party in line with his position to not reopen the debate. In any case, the Conservative Party cannot be trusted when it comes to protecting women's rights.

How many times will the Conservatives try to reopen this debate? The Conservative ideology believes that the government should be as small as possible and that it should not interfere in the private lives of people, as demonstrated by its position on the firearms registry.

Strangely enough, this does not seem to apply when it comes to defending the rights and equality of women. If such a motion is accepted by the House, it could lead to the criminalization of abortion, which is completely unacceptable. Criminalizing abortions will not stop women from having them, even if that means having them in conditions that could jeopardize their health and life, not to mention the criminal prosecution that could follow.

Let us look at the example of the United States, where abortion is now severely limited. Women have to travel hundreds of kilometres to have access to this procedure. They have to use their rent and food

money to pay for it and they have to go to judges to get permission. When they go to the clinic, they have to listen to anti-abortion propaganda and push their way past violent and aggressive anti-choice activists. They sometimes even have to wait for hours in their cars in the clinic parking lot because of a bomb threat, which is a frequent occurrence. All this to say that most women will do whatever it takes to have access to this procedure, regardless of the difficulty or risk involved.

Is this really the type of society that we want? Do we want to take such a big step backward? Women have fought for decades to assert their individual rights and to protect their safety and security.

We must never impose our beliefs and opinions on others. Members of the Conservative Party may never have to resort to abortion, and I fully respect their positions and their beliefs, but they should never judge women who do resort to abortion, nor should they attempt to take that right away.

Members of the New Democratic Party strongly oppose this motion, which is a direct attack on women's right to choose. The Conservative government, which now has a majority, is speaking out of both sides of its mouth on this issue. We want the Prime Minister to keep the promise he made to Canadians during the most recent election campaigns and to put a stop to these regressive debates. Abortion must remain a matter between a consenting woman and her doctor.

In closing, I am confident that the NDP members will unanimously oppose this motion.

●(1415)

[English]

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak to Motion No. 312 that has been tabled by the member for Kitchener Centre calling for a study of Canada's 400-year-old definition of a human being. I am saddened by some of the comments I have heard falsely describing this man of honour. I have had the privilege of working with him in this House since 2008. He is a man of integrity, logic and a man people in this House respect. I think what he has asked for is reasonable.

It is important that we, as members of Parliament, do not exaggerate and turn to rhetoric but that we show one another respect, listen to one another and that we debate and build good laws. If laws need to be changed, that should be based on science and logic, not on rhetoric. We want a better Canada for ourselves, our children, our grandchildren and for coming generations.

As I share my speech, I have questions that go to my heart. Why is Canada out of sync with the rest of the world? Why does Canada have legislation that is on par with North Korea? Why do we have 400-year-old legislation when the rest of the world has moved on? We have heard about going back to the dark ages.

The member for Kitchener Centre is saying that we should move into the future. We need to look at what is happening in the rest of the world and have a study based on science and all the best evidence. We need to protect women's rights but we also must protect everyone's rights, the rights of women, children, adults and all human rights.

Private Members' Business

I am saddened that the rhetoric is so strong at times and that it is not based on logic. Maybe they are afraid of the truth and what that study would reveal.

It is important to understand that the context of the motion is about Canada's 400-year-old definition of a human being. Remarkably, polls show that almost 80% of Canadians think that Canada's law already protects children in the last trimester before birth. Sadly, that is not true. There is no legislation in Canada protecting children until the point of complete birth. Is that in line with what is reasonable? The rest of the world, other than North Korea and Canada, have said that it is not reasonable and that is not what scientific evidence shows.

Section 223(1) actually strips away all recognition of humanity from children until the point of complete birth. Subsection 223(1) is a law that actually says that some human beings are not human. As parliamentarians, we have an important job to do with informing Canadians that our law does not protect human rights in any way before the moment of complete birth. It reads:

A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother, whether or not

- (a) it has breathed;
- (b) it has an independent circulation;
- or (c) the navel string is severed.

A child whose little toe is still in the birth canal and has not fully proceeded from its mother's body is, therefore, not human in Canada and can be and is terminated. How can that possibly be right and just in a Canadian society when it is not in the rest of the world other than Canada and North Korea? Why does our law take such an unusual position in spite of all the recent advances in medical science about the development of a child before birth? Canada is a world leader in those sciences. Why does Canadian law say that a child is not a human being until the moment of complete birth when any parent knows that a child is there?

Most parents are able to hear their child's heartbeat and even see their child sucking their little thumb long before the moment of complete birth. Why does Canadians law decree that such children are not human before the moment of complete birth? That is a good question and the study would, hopefully, provide some guidance.

● (1420)

The study that is being requested would have no conclusions. It would be a study to find out the facts. Maybe the committee would make recommendations, maybe not. It would be up to the committee. Why would we be afraid of a study?

Why is it so important that Parliament recognize the fundamental human rights of every human being? The answer can be found in the sweep of history over the past 400 years since our definition of human being was enacted. We can look throughout history with horror. Tragedy after tragedy resulted when powerful people decreed that some people would not be treated as human beings. However, one after another around the world laws which stripped the vulnerable of fundamental human rights have been repealed.

History will look back on this moment when we members were debating this issue in the House. Maybe we will look back on our lives when we breathe our last breath. This summer I said good-bye

to my father-in-law. I have said good-bye to my father and my mother. Those times have made me look back on my life. Will I have regrets or will I hold my head high on how I voted this coming Wednesday on this motion? Will I be afraid of the truth, or will I go for it and do the right thing? I hope all of us will do the right thing.

Apart from a diminishing number of states in the U.S., the only other country in the world that shares Canada's complete lack of recognition of human rights before birth is North Korea.

In Canada every year there are 40 to 50 infants who were born alive but died later due to injuries inflicted during pregnancy termination, when no human rights were recognized in Canadian law.

Canadian courts have repeatedly ruled that it is Parliament's duty, we members here in this sacred House, to decide at what point human rights for children should begin.

Should those rights begin at the age of viability? Should they be the same as the standard in Europe, which is approximately 12 weeks? Some governments in Europe identify it as being earlier than 12 weeks. The choice to end a pregnancy can be made a bit earlier than 12 weeks or not at all, but the standard in Europe is 12 weeks. Nothing can be done after 12 weeks; one has the choice up to 12 weeks. In the United States, it is the age of viability, which is about 20 weeks.

Why does Canada have the same policies as North Korea? A study would reveal that.

We need to make decisions and laws in this country that are based on logic, science and truth. I therefore will be supporting this motion.

I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for his integrity and his honesty, and for bringing this matter before the House.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our great democracy was founded on the promise that two founding nations in conflict could reconcile their differences peaceably. Generations of Canadians have lived and died to defend the dream of universal human rights and honest laws so necessary to fulfill that promise. These ideals created unity out of diversity and made Canada a bright beacon of hope.

The sweep of history for 400 years has brought ever greater recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. That bedrock foundation anchors Canada's essential character. We are here in Parliament to honour that vision of Canada. We are here to seek out a spirit of compromise amid passionate debate. We are here to embrace advancing knowledge in the service of universal human rights.

Private Members' Business

Motion No. 312 honours those essential duties. Motion No. 312 seeks merely to shine the light of 21st century knowledge upon our 400-year-old law which decrees the dehumanization and exclusion of a whole class of people, children before the moment of complete birth.

About abortion, I say this: recognizing children as human before the moment of complete birth will not resolve that issue. Even Justice Bertha Wilson, who championed abortion rights in the Morgentaler decision, wrote that Parliament should “inform itself from the relevant disciplines”, the very proposal embodied in Motion No. 312.

Recognizing the reality that children are human beings before complete birth will affirm the hallowed principle that human rights are universal, not a gift of the state that can be cancelled by subsection 223(1).

It would be a triumph of leadership to insist that our definition of human being must not remain frozen in time forever, immune from the light of advancing knowledge, immune from all democratic governance and immune from the spirit of open dialogue.

It would honour our commitment to honest laws to recognize a child's worth and dignity as a human being before the moment of complete birth if the evidence established that as fact.

It would fulfill our shared vision of Canada to allow, despite extreme and intransigent opposition, a mere study about human rights, even if modern evidence might cause some to question our laws. Or will Parliament reject those Canadian ideals? Is that what Parliament has come to?

I thank, and many Canadians thank, the members who stand with me against that dismal view.

Yet we in Parliament cannot allow ourselves sustain, we cannot protect, we cannot without help safeguard, this great vision of Canada. The hope of a Canada governed by honest laws rests in the

hearts of every Canadian. The pledge offered by countless Canadians to the high principle of universal human rights will not be overcome by any decision of this Parliament. We may safely place our confidence in the certainty that Canadians will not rest content with the perpetual absence of open dialogue on this issue.

There is no more noble undertaking than to fulfill that essential promise of Canada. Join me in the conversation so necessary to reconcile Canadians.

● (1425)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for debate has expired.

● (1430)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 26, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:32 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:32 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. JOE COMARTIN

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BRUCE STANTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

MR. NATHAN CULLEN

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

MS. NYCOLE TURMEL

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (27)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Ind. Cons.
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
VACANCY	Calgary Centre	
BRITISH COLUMBIA (35)		
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Kerry-Lynne D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Delta—Richmond East	CPC

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

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

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

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

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

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

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

QUÉBEC (75)

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

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

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

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of September 21, 2012 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

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Chungsen Leung

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

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Pat Martin
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Costas Menegakis
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