



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 140 • NUMBER 038 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, December 3, 2004

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 3, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[English]

CANADA EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT

Hon. Joe Comuzzi (for the Minister of International Trade) moved that Bill C-5, an act to provide financial assistance for post-secondary education savings, be read the third time and passed.

Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I especially welcome the opportunity to join in the debate on third reading of Bill C-5. I have participated in discussion on the bill both in this place and in committee. I am concerned that many of the comments I hear are not about Bill C-5 at all.

Bill C-5 has three key objectives. It complements the many other ways the government is working to ensure that students who need help with the costs of post-secondary education are able to get it. It will assist and encourage families to save for their children's education by making it easier for them to build the assets they will need in later years. It follows through on a commitment in the Speech from the Throne to increase access to post-secondary education, especially for low income families.

I will expand on this last point a bit, helping lower income families save for post-secondary education. One of the key features of the bill is that it brings a new focus to ensuring that low and middle income families can participate initiatives like the registered education savings plan, the RESP program, and the Canada education savings grant program. These are proving to be very popular with many higher income Canadian families.

Last March the Minister of Finance said in his budget speech that he was concerned that too many Canadians, especially those in low and middle income brackets, see post-secondary education as unattainable, not because of the academic challenge but because the costs are too high. That is why the budget for 2004 provided a needs based grant up to \$3,000 for students from low income families to go toward their first year of university.

Bill C-5 includes specific ways the government can move to make it easier for low and middle income Canadians to save for their children's educational needs. For example, the bill introduces the Canada learning bond, which is an innovative way the government can provide families with an upfront cash contribution of \$500 to kick-start their education savings plan and to build on it with annual instalments.

Up to and including the age of 15, children born after 2003 into low income families who receive the \$500 bond will continue to qualify each year for a \$100 Canada learning bond instalment, if the family is entitled to the national child benefit. Over a 16 year period, families could receive a total Canada learning bond of \$2,000 per child. If parents never open an RESP, the child will not be penalized. Children will never lose their entitlement for the bond because, at the age of majority, they can then open their own RESP and claim their entitlement up to the age of 21 years.

The Canada learning bond serves as a kick-start to savings. After opening an RESP to deposit the bond, the bill supplies an incentive to save even more by increasing the Canada education savings grant match rates to low and middle income families, increasing them up to 40%. In other words, the bond will provide an important incentive for low income families to set up an RESP, and the enhanced education savings grant match rates will help those savings grow over the years.

If the bill is passed, we estimate that 120,000 newborn Canadian children will benefit from the Canada learning bond this year alone and another 4.5 million could benefit from the enhanced Canada education savings grant.

I do not want to see any of these children left behind. That is why I support this bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech. His party has put forward the point of view that it will solve the problem of high tuition fees and, generally, access to post-secondary education with virtually every idea but what is really needed, which is out and out grants to enable more people to get into post-secondary education.

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I heard the head of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations say that it viewed the scheme under Bill C-5 as comparable to giving students a \$500 grant and a Mercedes-Benz, then making them make the rest of the payments on a car they could afford. In other words, it does not address the basic issue of access to post-secondary education in its purest form.

The hon. member is very knowledgeable of these things. I know he comes from a background of the post-secondary education system. However, he has danced all around the main fundamental issue of access for students and crippling and spiralling out of control tuition costs, which means fewer and fewer people from low income families can afford to go to school.

Does the hon. member honestly believe that Bill C-5 answers the pertinent questions about access to post-secondary education?

• (1010)

Hon. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague knows that tuition fees are in the jurisdiction of the provinces. Therefore, the federal government cannot do anything about controlling those fees.

However, this government has improved the Canada student loan beyond recognition, billions of dollars have gone to students, admittedly in loan form. It set up the millennium scholarship program. A million students, mainly low income students, will receive millennium scholarships. It has set up other scholarship programs. In the last budget it established the \$3,000 first year tuition payment for low income students. It established the \$3,000 per year, of the current undergraduate year, for disabled students.

I would suggest that the government, given that it cannot control tuition fees, has done more than any other federal government ever has to support students. As a result, we have the highest participation in post-secondary education in the world.

The member is right. There are still many problems. Bill C-5 is a different tactic. We know that despite the fact that enrolment has gone up in the post-secondary institutions and despite these scholarship, grant and loan programs which we have established, participation in the low income groups is not there. There are a variety of reasons for that. This is a different point.

I believe the bond and the money that it will provide to young persons when they reach the age of majority is very useful. They will be able to use that for apprenticeships or any sort of post-graduate education. It is in some ways not a huge sum of money.

The important thing is that from birth, a family will know that it is helping to put aside some money for that child's post-secondary education. It will make these families think throughout the child's growth that post-secondary education is possibility. Our target is to encourage these families to look at post-secondary education. Many of them, if they did, would already discover that their children could afford to go to higher education. At the present time they simply do not.

Therefore, I would say to my colleague, and I know his interest in these matters, that the purpose of the bill is different than scholarship programs, loan programs and the like.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member. He mentioned in his comments that there was not enough participation by lower income students. Yet the whole purpose of this is where families can put disposable income. If they do not have disposable income, then they have nothing to contribute.

If the target group is those of low income, how on earth can we argue that this is helpful to those families when they do not have the discretionary funds within the family budget to put into this wonderful new program of the federal government?

Hon. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, there are at least two components to this program. The first is the initial contribution of \$500 at birth for the child is a grant. The family has no need to have disposable income. If it opens an RESP account, it will have \$500 in it.

My colleague is right. Some of these families are not used to opening accounts of any sort. As a result, each family will receive \$25 to assist them in setting up and opening an account, which will last the child's lifetime. Once that is done, each year \$100 will go into that account from the Government of Canada.

Now it is true, where families do not have disposable income, they cannot take advantage of the second aspect of the program. If the family puts in, for example, \$100 at any time in the first 15 years of a child's life, it will receive \$40 from the Government of Canada and the accumulated interest from it. He is right. Some families will be unable to do that. However, at the very base, they will have in this account, at no cost, \$2,000 when the child reaches the age of 15.

His colleague mentioned tuition. We keep thinking of college and university and tuition fees. Those moneys could be used for any form of lifelong learning. In fact, if the children concerned, say at the age of 18, had just the \$2,000 and rolled it into an RESP, they would have another 20 years with the accumulated proceeds of the \$2,000 to decide what to do. They might decide to take a computer course or to move from one trade to another and take some training.

I understand the point that it is only \$2,000 plus the accumulated interest. However, I would say it is something, and throughout that child's life, the family would have been thinking about post-secondary education.

• (1015)

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's response, except I really do not think it answered the question. If I heard correctly, and please do correct me if I am wrong, he said that there are two components. He has acknowledged that the one component may not benefit the families, which I spoke of earlier in my question. He said that the other one would however, and I think it amounted to \$2,000 plus the potential for accumulated interest, assuming if one put it into the stock market and made the right call. That is a whole different issue.

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However, if the argument of the hon. member is that the second component makes this worthwhile for the target group who cannot afford to put discretionary money into a fund for the future of the children's education, then really all that second component is, having acknowledged the first one does not do the trick, is a \$2,000 grant. Why not give the families \$2,000 and tell them to invest it and do the best they can in the stock market. However, let us not pretend that somehow this program will accomplish the objective, which I have to believe is to ensure that everybody has access to post-secondary education. In this case we are talking about those who have modest means of income.

I am not satisfied that the question was answered.

Hon. Peter Adams: Mr. Speaker, the evidence shows a significant percentage of the lowest income employed families in the country already save specifically for their children's education. That group is already there. Without any assistance at all, already they are putting aside money in whatever vehicles they find appropriate for their children's education.

All the evidence shows that in those families, unlike the other low income families, the participation in post-secondary education is very high. One of our motivations in this is the demonstration of the link between families thinking early of their children's post-secondary education and those families which do not.

I do not disparage the grant aspect of this and the accumulated interest on the grant aspect of it. However, I believe this significant percentage of low income people already saving will be increased considerably.

Another point I would make is that we are talking a 15 year period. Very often families of low income when a child is born, go to a higher income level by the time the child is 15. In the last few years they will have disposable income to put into these accounts.

The member mentioned the \$2,000. There is a provision for the provinces to participate. They can run their own programs under this legislation. The province of Alberta will do so as of next year, and children there will have at least double this amount of money.

Mr. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, education is very much the gateway to achieving one's hopes and dreams and achieving a better life. In Canada, education has played a very important role in this.

It has been said that there is no greater drive in mankind, in all people, than the desire to improve our condition in life as it relates to our standard of living. There is no better route and no better way to do that than through higher education. When we look at our society and look at the difference that education makes, we see that it makes a profound difference. Indeed, it is what makes a civilized society.

Whether it comes down to the simple bread and butter issues for a family, the evidence demonstrates that the higher one's education, the higher one's income and the greater one's ability to live a better life and provide better for one's family. For most Canadians, that is their most important priority: day to day, what kind of living can I give to myself, to my family and to my children? What kind of future can we provide for them? Can we have a good standard of living? Can we be secure and safe?

Education plays a tremendous role in this. It has been demonstrated in studies again and again that higher income jobs and higher prosperity are strongly related to the education of individuals and society at large.

Education makes a tremendous difference in our society in terms of the richness of the lives we live and the culture we share. Whether it is the arts, the literature or all kinds of day to day and community entertainments, education plays a tremendous role in contributing to that richness in our lives. Indeed, it is an important part of living the good life, of contributing to one's community, of enjoying all that life has to offer here in Canada. Education plays an important role in all of this.

It was Plato who said, "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life". That is one of the reasons why we support the Canada learning bond and why we think it is so important.

This bill contains what we think is the best combination of Conservative values. On the one hand, there is help for those genuinely in need. The Canada learning bond is not money that is given to everyone. It is a form of assistance that is targeted to those who are genuinely in need. That is what we believe the role of the government, the role of the state, is: to look out for those in our society who are less able, to give them that hand up to be able to aspire to do better, to achieve more, to protect them from whatever vicissitudes of life may have made things difficult for them in the past, and to help those who are genuinely in need. The bill does that by targeting the Canada learning bond to those individuals.

Yet at the same time it also reflects that other important Conservative value, that of responsibility and self-reliance, of rewarding people for their own work and their own efforts. The entire principle of RESPs and Canada learning bonds reflects the notion of matching grants, of rewarding people when they make their own efforts to save for their children's education and future. That expectation of self-reliance, that rewarding of people's own contribution and effort, is also indeed a tremendous Conservative value.

As well, it reflects another Conservative value, the reflection that we do believe people should be given the opportunity to aspire to better, to achieve higher education, and to make their lives and the lives of their families better.

The Canada learning bond will also help to stimulate among people that aspiration to a better life and to improve themselves. It will also, by virtue of encouraging more families to establish registered education savings plans, encourage in the children of those families the expectation that indeed they are expected by their parents, their families, their loved ones, to achieve a higher education, to go to university or to go to college, to advance themselves, in many cases beyond the state in life and the education level of their own parents and grandparents. We know that this expectation is an important factor in the decisions of children as they grow up as to whether or not they will pursue an education.

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When I was about four years old my mother took me down to the University of Toronto and said that one day I would have to go there. It made an impression on me at age four. I looked at those august walls around me and said to myself that there was an expectation, that I had better do something and I had better get there. I think that expectation is an important part in every child's decision on where they will go with their education.

I am also pleased that at committee our side had an opportunity through me to propose a number of amendments that I think improved the bill significantly. The first one is what I call the "grandparent amendment". It was an amendment to make it easier and cut the red tape and barriers for grandparents wanting to make contributions to children's RESPs, which would trigger matching grants. No longer will grandparents have to set up their own separate RESP plans. They can simply contribute to another person's plan. In my view that amendment is a significant improvement to the way this system will work and I am pleased that it was accepted by all parties.

• (1020)

Another amendment that I thought was even more profound was that of permitting the use of Canada learning bond RESPs for part time study. Part time study is an increasingly important part of how people pursue their education. I have said it before in the House. I know many who have done this themselves, in large part and particularly because some do not have the means to commit themselves full time to study. There can be financial reasons or family reasons. They have to focus on other things.

At the same time that we are putting forward a bill to encourage folks in those challenged conditions to aspire to university, the opportunity to make it available for part time study was only logical and consistent. I believe it will make a great difference in the lives of many. I am very pleased that once again it ultimately was supported by all parties. I think it is a significant improvement to this bill. I am very proud of having had a hand in it.

There is no doubt that there is a need for a bill like this. Some of our friends in the New Democratic Party suggest that the real issue is that money just should be transferred willy-nilly to education in an indiscriminate fashion through lower tuition, free tuition or otherwise. We do not agree with that perspective. We believe that people should be expected to make some effort to save for their own education. We believe in support for those who need it, but there should also be an effort to save.

The suggestion was made that it is not that people are not aware of RESPs, it is that they do not have the means. In fact, even those of modest means are willing and happy to save, but there is a real problem in that many are not aware of RESPs. Research shows that of those with incomes greater than \$80,000 a year, over 60% of the population knows about RESPs and how they work, yet if incomes are under \$30,000 that figure falls by half to just over 30%.

This tells us that perhaps one of the reasons many of those lower income families are not taking advantage of the potential to save and trigger matching grants is that they simply are not aware of the opportunity. The Canada learning bond, by providing that initial seed money and matching grants, which basically is free money from the outset, whether families choose to contribute or not, will help to

trigger that awareness of RESPs. I am confident that it will result in greater savings over time. That indeed will be a very productive outcome.

Post-secondary education is crucial to the challenges this country faces and we have to encourage and stimulate it. Unfortunately, Canada has serious problems, which the government is not addressing and which need to be addressed. Post-secondary education is part of that. The greatest of all is the increasing productivity and prosperity gap we see between Canada and our most direct competitors, our neighbours the United States, and other countries in the G-7 and the OECD. The fact is that Canada is falling behind.

That is harming the standard of living of all Canadians. It is harming our entire economy. This is a matter of increasing concern. We have not seen, in the 11 years that this government has been in power, significant efforts to address in any way the productivity gap and improve our economy and our standard of living. This bill is perhaps one step, with a Canada learning bond and RESPs, to address in a small way part of that productivity gap, because post-secondary education makes up for a significant part of it.

We can see in this productivity gap that our educational standing is part of the reason for it. We have fewer M.A. and Ph.D. graduates than the United States. We simply are not producing the number of graduates per capita that we should at this important, superior, critical research level.

I have to disagree with my friend the parliamentary secretary who said we have the highest percentage of people involved in post-secondary education. In fact, right now former premier Bob Rae is undertaking a study. If we look at his work, we can see him demonstrating quite clearly that our participation is far from the highest. We are falling behind many of our OECD competitors in terms of participation of youth enrolled in higher education. We were at 39.3% of youths aged 20 to 24, yet France is at 53%, Denmark at 55%, Finland at 56%, and on it goes. The fact is that Canada is sliding. Our productivity is sliding and this government has not taken that seriously. We have to see that happen.

The other aspect and the other problem we have to address, which is addressed to some degree, is the poverty in Canada and the condition of those in need. In one way, that is best addressed by the opportunity for higher education. That is the way in which people are able to elevate themselves out of poverty to advance themselves. No one will rise out of poverty because the government gives them the money to do it. They will rise out of poverty by their own means and by their desire to advance. The role of the government is to help them, to provide that helping hand, the hand up for them to be able to advance themselves. That is very much what the Canada learning bond does. I am hopeful that to some extent it will help to address this problem in society.

Government Orders

•(1025)

For many years I have had the pleasure of teaching in addition to my other job of practising law. I was teaching. I was in the classroom at the University of Toronto. I can tell members that one of the reasons I do it or have done it for so many years is the great joy and satisfaction in seeing that light come on, in seeing the students learning and seeing their advancement.

However, there is something greater than that. That is the greater satisfaction of then seeing those same individuals five or six years later down the road making their way in life, making use of that education and advancing themselves. For me personally, that outcome, that result of the post-secondary education they have attained, that advancement in life, is something in which I take great pride. I know their families do and I know they do. I know that it makes a great difference to this country and to all their lives.

In conclusion, we are very pleased to support the bill. It was something that the Conservative Party advocated in the last election. It was in our policy platform. We are pleased that the government has moved on it. We are pleased that we had the opportunity to make amendments to significantly improve it. We are confident that with the Canada learning bond in place many more Canadians will have the opportunity to achieve higher education and build better lives and futures for their families.

•(1030)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently and I appreciate the comments of the member, in particular his closing remarks when he talked, I believe quite forthrightly and from the heart, about his experience in the classroom and what that meant to him and running into the students later. I believe that. I have no doubt that it must be a very fulfilling feeling for anyone in the teaching profession. It sounds like he is playing it straight here today and I appreciate that.

But I have to say that the difficulty we have with the bill in front of us now is that we have to get there first; we have to get the students in front of the hon. member so he can do his magic. That is what this is about. It is about what vehicles society will use to ensure that students can get in front of the hon. member and benefit from his learning and his experience.

The member also said some words about just throwing money at education “willy-nilly”; for the Conservative Party, investing in education now has become throwing money “willy-nilly”. Further, the member said, and I know hon. members do not want to talk about this too much, that low income people, if they just knew about the program, would be willing and happy to make the investment. That is all it is: if they just knew. If they just knew, they would be willing and happy to make the investment. These are the low income people, the ones we are concerned about who do not have the discretionary income. The member says all they have to do is know about this.

Here is the difficulty we have with that. If the members who support this would just say that this is to benefit those who already have some discretionary income, who understand how the system works, who perhaps have parents who are university graduates or at least understand how the system works and therefore can plug right into it and “is that not a benefit?”, if they were making that argument they would get a bit of a different response from us, because at least

it would be totally upfront. If it were matched with willy-nilly investments to ensure that those who do not have discretionary income could also find themselves in front of the hon. member, then maybe we would have something.

They do not want to argue that today so they try to make an argument that somehow this is going to benefit low income people. We will not let them off the dime on this issue because this is what students are telling us and this is what parents are telling us. I would like the hon. member to explain in detail, not in willy-nilly words, how this is going to benefit low income people even if they become fully aware of this wonderful program but do not have a dime because they spend every dollar they have putting food on the table for their children.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I know my friend was a provincial member and I believe he served with Bob Rae. I will answer him by reading from one of Bob Rae's papers from a current study in which he indicated quite clearly that “Canada is spending willy-nilly on post-secondary education”. The problem is not with the amount we are spending but with how we are spending it.

We are spending more as a percentage of public spending on higher education. Canada, at 4.6%, is spending more than Australia, Ireland, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S. In fact, we are spending close to double the mean in the OECD as a proportion of our public spending on education. Therefore the problem is not the amount because we certainly are spending more than enough. The problem obviously is that it is not being as well spent.

One of the things we see with the Canada learning bond is that it is targeted spending that is done intelligently and leverages. I know leveraging is a principle familiar to many who do business in the private sector, and that it may be foreign to those in the NDP, but leveraging seeks to maximize the return for the investment made. The Canada learning bond would do exactly that. It may be an investment that perhaps is modest in the view of my friend but I believe it is an investment that is significant.

Others will also make an effort to invest. Everybody is contributing. Individuals themselves are contributing toward their own education. In that sense, a greater return is achieved rather than if the government were simply providing the money. The total amount in the pot to finance a child's education at the end of the exercise is far in excess of the money that the government has contributed. Other matching grants do get triggered along the way.

Overall, the Canada learning bond is a positive way of targeting investment that achieves greater returns. It targets investment in a way that has secondary effects of increasing ambition, aspiration and the desire to achieve higher education.

This is a very positive initiative and it should be viewed that way on all sides of the House. The problem is not, as Bob Rae has indicated, that we are not spending enough. We are spending more than all those other jurisdictions as a percentage of our public spending on higher education. I am only relying on what the member's old colleague, Bob Rae, said. The problem is how we spend it and whether we are getting the right returns for it.

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•(1035)

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I believe that former Premier Rae has not yet concluded his review and has not made his recommendations. It will be quite interesting to see exactly what comes out of that.

The member said that enough money was already being spent but that we were just not spending it wisely. Government, as well as private enterprise, can always spend money more wisely. There is always room for improvement. The hon. member and his colleagues in the Conservative caucus will never get the statement by me that there is more than enough money going forward, that the total money is adequate but that it is just how we spend it.

I went through the Mike Harris years in Ontario. That is exactly what Mike Harris said about environmental protection, education, the health care system and social services in Ontario. In every one of those areas he said that there was no revenue problem in terms of money going into them, but that there was a problem with where it was being spent. By the time he left government, every one of those areas were in tatters. We are doing the best we can in Ontario to try to rebuild all the damage that was done.

The hon. member can go ahead and make those claims but, after having lived through a Conservative government that devastated and decimated all the public services that mattered, that argument will not wash over here.

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member has forgotten the state of affairs in which his government, when he was a part of it with Bob Rae, left Ontario, with a significant debt running at \$1 million or more than it could take it. The NDP so bankrupted the province that there was no longer any means to finance education or health. It was that government that provoked the crisis. I am not going to listen to the crocodile tears from that side.

It was his successors who then managed to restore a balanced budget and invest more in education and health care. They had the single biggest building project on post-secondary campuses across Ontario in terms of accommodating incoming students in new buildings that we had seen since the Bill Davis era when he was the minister of education. We also saw the greatest growth in the health care system ever in the history of the province.

The Conservatives in Ontario have absolutely nothing to apologize for what it provided in Ontario. More important, it provided growth and prosperity, increasing incomes and the standard of living for Ontario families, which, of course, led to more people seeking higher education and improving their own lives. At the end of the day that is what it is all about.

It is not about the institutions. It is not about the government. It is not about the lobby groups. It is about the people and the families and their efforts to make better lives for themselves. Education is an important part of it, but so is that fundamental standard of living.

There is no point having a higher education, a higher income and a higher standard of living if then the government takes it all away, which is what my friend would like it to do.

If an individual is taxed to death, there is no incentive, and it is that incentive that is so important. It is that incentive that is part of

the Canada learning bond. It is that incentive to build a better life and a better future. It is a question of hope, which is what the Conservative Party has always been, the party of hope, the party that is looking to build better lives for people's families. That is why we are happy to see this Canada learning bond put in place.

•(1040)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Boire (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supports the social principle of Bill C-5, because creating an education savings bond program will help lower-income families generate savings so their children can have access to post-secondary education, which the Canada education savings grant did not do.

The Bloc Québécois is also in favour of enhancing the Canada education savings grant, a tax measure that benefits lower- and middle-income families.

Bill C-5 also helps lower-income families take advantage of the benefits of registered education savings plans and Canada education savings grants, which already benefit wealthier families.

However, this bill contains several flaws. The learning bonds will not help Quebec and the provinces provide quality education, because they do not provide any concrete measures to do so. They make students pay for part of their post-secondary education but do not improve the quality of that education.

The Canada education savings grant and the education savings bond program are not the best ways to fund and promote post-secondary education. An increase in direct federal transfer payments to Quebec and the provinces remains the best and cheapest solution.

Forty million dollars has been allocated to administer the program during the first three years. The administrative costs seem excessive. It is costing more than \$13 million per year to distribute \$80 million.

As a result of the fiscal imbalance that it created, the federal government must now provide financial assistance so students can access post-secondary education, since transfer payments to the provinces for education have been slashed.

Neither the education savings bond program nor the enhancement of the Canada education savings grant are helping Quebec to provide quality education. The bill must be accompanied by an increase in the CHST, since now is when students in Quebec need financial assistance and a quality education, not just 18 years from now.

Correcting the fiscal imbalance and reinstating equitable transfers between provinces would permit the Government of Quebec, which is the best placed to understand the reality in Quebec, to support Quebec's students appropriately. Quebec already has a loans and scholarships program, which it could greatly improve if it had the funds provided for under the Canada Education Savings Act.

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The budget of this program includes funding for the creation of a management system to administer the registration of children born after 2003. As well, there needs to be an advertising budget for encouraging families to take advantage of the new measures in this bill, in order to avoid a repetition of the situation with the guaranteed income supplement, with those eligible not having any idea that they were.

We are quite used to the federal propensity to underestimate costs. One need look no further than the firearms registry for an example.

The government has no idea what the annual costs of administering the measures announced in Bill C-5 will be. These will, according to it, be determined after an analysis of the first three years of the program's operation.

The Government of Quebec could have distributed this money to students in greatest need at no additional cost, if the Canadian health and social services transfer had been increased. We could then save the annual administration costs of the program, which total \$13 million, and improve equalization payments to the provinces.

We also again deplore the federal disengagement from education. Since the early nineties, federal transfers for post-secondary education have dropped drastically, and this bill will not, of course, compensate for the 40% that has been lost

We have long been aware of the federal government's decision to give priority to debt repayment, excessive spending and its own bureaucracy, rather than to health, education and social services. That is how the fiscal imbalance was created. The federal contribution to total expenditures in education and social programs is now less than 12%.

Instead of creating a learning bond program, would it not be wiser for the government to give the provinces the means to fund their own educational system and to use part of the recently announced federal surplus of \$9.1 billion to invest in youth?

Remediating fiscal imbalance would be an absolutely simple solution to the post-secondary education funding shortfall, and would result in a substantial increase in post-secondary funding.

The Quebec education system is suffering from insufficient resources because of the cuts to the transfer payments. Both financial resources and teaching resources are lacking, despite the valiant efforts made by the Government of Quebec with what little it has.

• (1045)

The Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec and the Canadian Federation of Students have also denounced the federal government's refusal to increase post-secondary education transfer payments by \$4 billion to compensate for the cuts during the 1990s.

This money would have given Quebec more room to manoeuvre in order to reinvest in universities and reduce tuition fees. Over the past 40 years, Quebec has had the lowest rate of post-secondary enrolment in North America. In 1960, only 63% of students who entered primary school completed their seventh year, barely 13% of francophones completed 11 years of schooling and only 3% went on to university.

Quebec made a decision to increase access and the results have been spectacular. Enrolment in Quebec has almost reached the level of the rest of Canada in certain fields and has even surpassed it in others. This emphasis on accessibility is supported by three elements.

First, Quebec enjoys a level of public financing for education higher than that of the rest of Canada. Second, the tuition fees are lower. Unlike in Quebec, 75% of university under-funding in the rest of Canada is covered by tuition fees. In Quebec, average university tuition fees are \$1,625 annually. In English Canada, they are three times higher, at \$4,825 a year. Finally, Quebec has a more generous financial assistance program. Quebec is the only part of Canada with a program of loans and bursaries.

When they complete their studies, Quebec students face an average of \$13,000 in debt, whereas students in other provinces are faced with a debt of \$25,000. Once again, Quebec provides a model for Canada with its free education system.

In conclusion, when Ottawa wants to interfere in provincial jurisdictions, it is to standardize rules across Canada. But in a number of fields, Quebec stands out as an example, with specific programs better tailored to meet the needs of its population.

Given the current context, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of Bill C-5, while reminding the government that if it were to accept its own responsibilities at last, and stop spending money on a vast range of programs that are expensive to administer, it could return to the provinces the money that rightfully belongs to them and that has been denied to them by the fiscal imbalance. In Quebec, we would be able to ensure once and for all the accessibility and quality of the higher education system.

[English]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our research into this bill tells us that virtually no one across the country thinks this bill is a good idea or thinks this methodology is wise. Almost every stakeholder that came before the committee objected strenuously and said that the government was going in the wrong direction in the introduction of this bill for some of the reasons cited by my colleague from Hamilton.

There was a representation made to the committee in the province of Quebec. I have one reference from one of the witnesses to the committee on Bill C-5. His name was Mr. Pier-André Bouchard St-Amant, the President of the Quebec Federation of University Students. He represents 140,000 university students in the province of Quebec. He clearly stated:

We feel that this program provides assistance to people who don't necessarily need it. When you can already save \$2,000 for post-secondary studies, it's not particularly useful for the government to supplement that with \$400 in a registered savings plan. Therefore, the FEUQ believes that assistance should focus on those people who do not necessarily have the means to save for postsecondary education.

Government Orders

In other words, if people already have the ability to put money away from their income, that is not the group that should be targeted. Our focus should concentrate on those who are unable and there should not be any complicated scheme associated with it. It should simply be an access issue. The province of Quebec has done very well to keep tuitions down. I compliment the province of Quebec for the priority it has put on post-secondary education. Even though the federal government has cut and hacked, and slashed transfers for education to the provinces, Quebec prioritized education and I admire that.

I would like him to comment on the remarks from the president of the Quebec Federation of University Students. I would also like him to comment on the remarks from Professor André Lareau from Laval University. He criticized Bill C-5 by saying:

However, one of the objectives of the tax system is to distribute wealth fairly. How can we justify a government financial assistance program that targets the well-off members of society? To summarize, richer families are the big winners in the income splitting that results from the education savings plan, and they benefit from these amounts, because their children are less likely to have to work.

We have two credible authorities from the province of Quebec who are very critical of Bill C-5. I ask the member if he has taken those remarks into consideration as the Bloc Québécois supports this bill.

• (1050)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Boire: Mr. Speaker, we did hear representatives of the Quebec Federation of University Students at committee. As the hon. member indicated, the federation certainly takes a position for which we have great respect. However, I do not think they did the same research as us. Of course, the federation would like to resolve the problem for all of Quebec.

At present, Bill C-5 is designed to provide financial assistance to less well-off families, which means to individuals who cannot afford to go to university. That is why the bill provides for students in financial difficulty to receive \$3,000 toward starting a university education.

There is no doubt that this bill will help families who are cash strapped. It cannot hurt. It is better than a pat on the back. What the QFUS states specifically in its report is that it wants the program in Quebec to be improved so that the problem is resolved once and for all. That particular problem cannot be resolved through Bill C-5.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, the government is stating, by introducing Bill C-5, that it is a key priority to have more people access post-secondary education. I sit on the aboriginal affairs committee and we have heard our Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development say that one of his number one priorities is to get more aboriginal students into post-secondary education, so as to give them the administrative capacity to lead their people out of poverty.

As of January 1 this year any tuition money or living costs given by a first nation to an aboriginal student to go to university will in fact be taxed. This is a first. This is new. The government will begin taxing these benefits and the predictable result will be that the student will have less money to pay for income costs associated with

being at university and the first nation will be able to send fewer aboriginal students to university.

Would the member, in his background and knowledge on post-secondary education, share the view that it is completely contrary to getting more aboriginal students into university by taxing their tuition and living costs paid by the community which sent them?

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Boire: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member said, as of January 1, tuition fees for aboriginal students will be taxed. I cannot comment on this point, because I was not aware of that.

I can say, however, that the Bloc Québécois proposed an amendment to Bill C-5 at committee. The purpose of this amendment is to help part-time students in financial difficulty, who have to work to put themselves through university, make ends meet. This aspect was not covered in Bill C-5. This way, less well-off students could take advantage of the provisions of Bill C-5.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, I would only ask my colleague from a public policy point of view, viewing living costs for first nation students as income, would he not agree that this will have a detrimental effect on the number of students that will be able to access post-secondary education from first nations communities? Would he share my view that this is a shot across the bow on aboriginal and treaty rights, in that education is viewed as a treaty right and has always been viewed by the courts as meaning all education?

However, the government is looking at post-secondary education as taxable income. It is stating the case that it views K to grade 12 as an aboriginal and treaty right, but post-secondary education is viewed as simply the policy of the Government of Canada and subject to arbitrary and unilateral change. Would the hon. member agree that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, by taxing post-secondary education grants to aboriginal students, is in fact eroding the interpretation of aboriginal and treaty rights?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Boire: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member opposite was saying about aboriginal policies and the negative impact tuition fees have on aboriginals, I think this is a specific case. Having to pay taxes on living-out costs puts aboriginal students in the same situation as all other Canadian and Quebec students. If there was a policy, or a treaty with the aboriginals, then it is up to the government to fix the problem that it created. I cannot answer this question.

Bill C-5 will help aboriginal Canadians, just like other Canadians and Quebecers to meet their needs and to put money aside for their education.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

ZAREINU EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, children are the most vulnerable part of our society, and children with disabilities warrant our utmost support.

Today it gives me great pleasure to bring news of a wonderful educational centre which I recently had the opportunity of visiting. The Zareinu Educational Centre has been a driving force within my riding of Thornhill and has been in operation for over 15 years. The centre is a small 66 children facility that caters to children suffering from mild or severe disabilities.

Although small, the centre is renowned for its remarkable work. Teachers, therapists, social workers and special aides work with children who would otherwise not have such opportunities.

I was told of a young child who entered the educational centre not being able to speak. However, after a few short months of hard work, the child was able to greet his parents with those wonderful words, mom and dad.

Centres like Zareinu provide one of the most essential services in my community. In the words of the director, "Zareinu makes miracles happen, they provide hope for the future".

The importance of the work of Zareinu cannot be overstated.

* * *

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. Gord Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a 10 year old resident of my riding of Leeds—Grenville who is here today visiting Ottawa. He has raised close to \$16,000 to provide comfort to hospitalized children and seniors.

At age eight, Cody Clark learned that a young friend had a hole in her heart and he raised money to help buy her a new heart. Soon after, he started Cody's individual care kits of toys, books and games for children in the emergency ward of the hospital. This year he also started a grandma and grandpa kit for seniors entering hospital care.

He has been recognized as a Junior Citizen and a Citizen of the Year.

Cody is a shining example of Canadian youth and, on behalf on everyone who has benefited from his efforts to date and those who will benefit in the future, I wish to congratulate him and his volunteer efforts.

* * *

● (1100)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to talk about International Day of Disabled Persons. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution in 1982 proclaiming December 3 every year as International Day of Disabled Persons.

S. O. 31

[English]

The motto of this year's observance is "Nothing About Us—Without Us", an appropriate embodiment of the crucial principle of full participation of the disabled in society.

In Canada, I know the Deputy Prime Minister is attending a celebration today in Edmonton at the open house of the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities. This is an organization that provides services to citizens with disabilities throughout the province of Alberta.

In my riding, organizations, such as the Rexdale Community Health Centre, Canes and the Albion Neighbourhood Services, strive every day to do the same.

I would ask all members to join with me in observing the 2004 International Day of Disabled Persons.

* * *

[Translation]

BLOOD DONATION

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have always been a firm believer in the importance of blood donation. Not only is it of indisputable value medically, but it is also a symbol of human solidarity. Giving blood is neither dangerous or painful. It is a quick process and, for the recipient, can mean the difference between life and death, health and illness. In Canada, no money changes hands, which makes it all the more meaningful symbolically and medically.

That is why I was so pleased to be made the honorary patron of the Caisse Desjardins annual blood donor clinic in Thérèse-de-Blainville. I invite everyone in my riding to take part in this eighth annual clinic, which is made possible by the Caisse Desjardins, of course, along with the Bois-des-Filion-Lorraine chamber of commerce and the town of Bois-des-Filion.

I look forward to seeing everyone from Marc-Aurèle Fortin riding on December 6 at the Chalet des citoyens starting at 11 a.m. I will be there to meet and encourage those giving blood because blood is the gift of life.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, the theme chosen by the United Nations for the International Day of Disabled Persons is "Nothing About Us Without Us".

This principle of participation and integration reflects the will of persons with disabilities to actively participate in the planning of the strategies and policies that impact on their lives.

The key word for the government's social policies is "integration". The Government of Canada is committed to improving the labour market for persons with disabilities, through the following initiatives: federal-provincial agreements on the labour market that target disabled people, the opportunities fund and employment benefits, and the support measures.

S. O. 31

“Partnership” is another word that I want to mention. The progress that we have made in this area is largely due to the commitment made by the provinces, territories and numerous organizations and individuals working tirelessly to uphold the principle of equal opportunity.

I invite hon. members and all Canadians to take a moment to reflect on what else they could do to bring us closer to full integration.

* * *

[*English*]

JOHN DIEFENBAKER

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to John Diefenbaker, the only prime minister to hail from Saskatchewan.

This past Sunday, Mr. Diefenbaker's childhood home was moved from Regina to the Sukanen Village south of Moose Jaw, in my constituency of Palliser.

Given Mr. Diefenbaker's many accomplishments, this is a great honour for us.

In addition to introducing the country's first bill of rights, Mr. Diefenbaker had two major electoral triumphs in 1957 and 1958 as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. The first victory ended 22 years of Liberal rule. The second resulted in the largest majority government in Canadian history.

In my home province we recently declared that September 18 each year will be John Diefenbaker Day.

While Saskatchewan has produced many politicians, John Diefenbaker stands in a class by himself. I ask today that members join me in paying tribute to this great Canadian.

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● (1105)

HEALTH PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL OF CANADA

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work of Health Partners International of Canada which recently sent out a shipment of Canadian medical aid, including essential drugs valued at over \$2.1 million, to Afghanistan.

HPIC was able to send this shipment thanks to donations from a whole host of research based pharmaceutical companies, the embassy of Afghanistan, the Non-prescription Drug Manufacturers Association, groups like GlaxoSmithKline and many others.

The WHO stated, “This Canadian shipment stands out uniquely among all medical aid programs that the WHO has been involved with in Afghanistan. Canada should be very proud of what this unique partnership has accomplished”.

Speaking personally, I can say that Health Partners International enables essential medications to get to people on the ground in the most dispossessed and conflict ridden places in the world. It is something that is a true success story in Canada.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Mr. Alain Boire (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, next Sunday is International Volunteer Day.

In 1985, the United Nations General Assembly established December 5 as International Volunteer Day and decreed it an international celebration to recognize volunteers around the world for their contributions and dedication.

Because the United Nations is an organization providing international programs dependent on volunteers, it was fitting that the UN set aside a day to honour these unsung heroes. This is a day to recognize their contribution to the socio-economic health of our communities and also an opportunity for each of us to recognize and celebrate their generosity.

On behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I invite everyone to join us in wishing all volunteers the world over a happy International Volunteer Day.

* * *

[*English*]

MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to six individuals in my riding of London West: Julia Baratta, Justine Féron, Elizabeth Goodale, Lauren Killip, Jennifer Pearce and Melissa Rossoni.

Those students were all awarded the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Excellence Award.

This excellence award is one of Canada's most prestigious national scholarship initiatives. The program plays a crucial role in the recognition of excellence in the classroom and beyond in our communities.

The millennium excellence awards were chosen in a nationwide competition on the basis of outstanding achievement in four areas: academics, community service, leadership and innovation.

I hope all hon. members will join me in congratulating these young people for a well deserved award and recognition.

* * *

NAPPAN EXPERIMENTAL FARM

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recent comments coming from the Nappan Experimental Farm have raised concerns about the future of this facility.

In discussions with the Minister of Agriculture I have told him about the employees who are saying that the farm does not even have the resources to fix broken essential equipment. In another case, one of the researchers has resigned and is going to work in Australia for the government there because he feels there is no future working at the Nappan Experimental Farm.

This farm has served the farmers and the agricultural community in Nova Scotia since before Confederation. Now is not the time to abandon farmers. Now is the time to reach out to help them.

In a time when farmers are fighting for survival, the Department of Agriculture should be enhancing the services at this farm in order to help the farmers survive and prosper and find new products and markets.

I urge the Minister of Agriculture to ensure that the level of operation at this facility is maintained and enhanced. I urge the Minister of Agriculture to maintain this facility to serve the farmers in Nova Scotia.

* * *

PIERRE BERTON

Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my deepest sympathies to family and friends on the passing of a great Canadian, Mr. Pierre Berton.

During our lifetime we are fortunate to get to know individuals of real distinction whose significant contribution to Canada warrants special recognition. Pierre Berton was such a man. He was a prolific author, journalist and broadcaster, but he will forever be remembered as a Canadian icon who spent more than five decades chronicling the rich history of our country like no other.

He truly had a unique gift for making Canada's past come alive. In essence, he celebrated our nation and our people by telling Canadian stories from a Canadian perspective. He helped us understand better our country.

Pierre Berton's passing has undoubtedly left a void, however, his works and his contribution to the fabric of our nation will live forever.

* * *

●(1110)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Monday is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This day coincides with the anniversary of the tragic death of 14 young women who were killed at the École Polytechnique in Montreal because of their gender.

The case of the 69 women missing from the downtown east side of Vancouver also highlights the grave danger many women face in their lives. Sex trade workers are awarded no rights in our society and the level of violence they face is astronomical.

I urge my colleagues on the parliamentary committee, who are about to review the solicitation laws, to hear from sex trade workers themselves and put forward recommendations that will improve their safety and communities overall.

I also call on the Minister of Justice to place a moratorium on the enforcement of the communicating laws under the Criminal Code.

This December 6 we must dedicate ourselves to ensure that violence against women is eliminated and that all women live in dignity, with respect and equality in our society.

S. O. 31

NANAIMO

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Nanaimo registered a historic vote on November 20 endorsing a major downtown renewal initiative. The \$200 million program involves a new Nanaimo convention centre, a 140-room Marriott hotel, a new and expanded museum, commercial space and a multi-purpose community auditorium. Spinoffs include choice waterfront condominiums and a multi-purpose twin ice arena.

In recent years, the Nanaimo Port Authority and the city have done a great job transforming Nanaimo's spectacular waterfront through enhanced park space, walkways, a sea plane terminal, the Port Theatre, accessibility and parking.

The new project will expand that renewal into the downtown core. This ambitious proposal is seen as a great and historic opportunity to permanently transform the core area with economic spinoffs that will impact the entire mid and north Vancouver Island regions.

With a fledgling cruise ship industry on the rise and with the 2010 Olympics coming our way, Nanaimo is preparing to receive the world. We are now looking to the federal government to shoulder its share of the financial burden that this historic opportunity presents.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the 13th annual International Day of Disabled Persons. This is a day to better understand the day-to-day lives of individuals with disabilities as well as an opportunity to pay tribute to their courage and perseverance.

There are 500 million disabled persons world-wide. They are actively involved in social, economic, political and cultural affairs.

This day, devoted to them, is an opportunity to acknowledge the gains disabled people have made, without forgetting the work that remains to be done to improve their lives and afford them truly equal opportunities.

I want to recognize and pay tribute to various organizations for the disabled in Laval, including the Regroupement des organismes de promotion des personnes handicapées de Laval, the Association régionale de loisirs pour personnes handicapées de Laval, the Corporation de personnes handicapées et de travail de Laval, as well as the Association lavalloise pour le transport adapté.

I thank them for their generous contributions.

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[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we observe the International Day of Disabled Persons. According to the United Nations, this day offers an opportunity to foster changes in attitudes toward persons with disabilities and eliminate barriers to their full participation in all aspects of life.

Oral Questions

No matter how far we think we have come, there is always more that can be done. We saw that even here, when my colleague from Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia first tried to navigate the halls of Parliament.

By removing barriers to access and participation of the disabled, society wins. We gain in contributions and perspectives of disabled persons and benefit from the potential of an inclusive society.

Again, I refer to my colleague as an example. His education, experience and expertise in a number of areas are incredible resources for his community, for our party and for all Canadians. Yet in another time or place, in a less inclusive world, his contributions and potential may have been overlooked.

We must not let that happen to anyone. I urge members to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons and embrace its motto, "Nothing about us without us".

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THIRD LANGUAGE BROADCASTERS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, foreign third language broadcasters such as Rai International and Zee TV can play a vital role in upholding Canada's multicultural values. The CRTC should allow these broadcasters into Canada, under certain conditions.

First, the CRTC should give preference to third language broadcasters that are Canadian or that enter into partnership with Canadian broadcasters. However, applications by foreign third language broadcasters should not be automatically rejected just because a cultural community is already being served in its own language.

Second, the CRTC should require that same language services be bundled together by cable and satellite providers so that new entrants into the third language market will not reduce the revenues of existing players.

Third, the CRTC should urge the federal government to create a third language programming fund into which television service providers would invest a portion of the revenues they receive from foreign third language broadcasters. This money would be used to fund the production of third language programming in Canada.

* * *

• (1115)

UKRAINE

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from Ukraine, the new front line in the worldwide struggle for democracy, where hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in the belief that their democratic right to vote has been denied. They are proclaiming to the world that after winning their long struggle for self-determination, they will accept nothing less than their full, unimpeded right to choose their leaders.

The atmosphere is very tense as negotiations continue in trying to find a path out of the crisis. In Canada's eyes the legitimate path must be one through an electoral process free from intimidation and free from any suspicion of fraud. This will not happen without our help.

Canada is needed to play a leadership role to ensure that Ukrainians have that choice.

Canada must bring its experience to resolving this critical situation. I implore the government to take urgent action to assist Ukraine in every way possible to conduct free and fair elections.

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[Translation]

VICTORIANVILLE POSTAL OUTLET

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out the excellent results obtained by the Victoriaville postal outlet, located on Saint-Jean-Baptiste street.

Under the Mystery Shopper Program, 505 postal outlets were in competition across Canada and eight of them did particularly well in Quebec, including the one in Victoriaville. This is the second award of excellence for the employees of this outlet in my riding.

The Mystery Shopper Program, which has been in place for a few years, is designed to recognize excellence among postal outlet employees, in terms of sales and customer service. An impartial mystery client, who only makes one visit per outlet, shows up as if he were an ordinary customer. He determines whether customer oriented sales techniques are being used. The staff at the Victoriaville postal outlet passed the test with flying colours.

I congratulate all the members of the team at the Victoriaville postal outlet, namely Luc Bergeron, Alain Côté and Guy Cullen, and I invite them to continue on the path of excellence.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an immigration exodus on the government side of the House.

Yesterday, a new deputy minister was appointed at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. The government did not wait for the ethics report. This morning the minister's chief of staff took an extended leave of absence. The government did not wait for the ethics report. The government did not wait for the ethics report to manoeuvre in this area and other areas of the department, except when it came to the minister.

The government has reshuffled the public service and turfed the chief of staff. When will the minister join this exodus, simply take responsibility for her actions and resign?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have all worked together in this House to put a new instrument in place, the Ethics Commissioner. The minister herself referred this matter to the Ethics Commissioner. With respect to the minister, we must first and foremost wait patiently for the commissioner's report.

[English]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the democratic deficit deepens. The government waits only when it is to its benefit and it can hide behind it.

Government members claim they cancelled the exotic dancer program that they previously told Canadians did not exist. They shuffled the deputy minister, yet refused to take responsibility for the minister's actions. They brought in a Liberal spin doctor in a thinly veiled attempt to cover the minister's breach.

Instead of trying to redirect public attention away from the minister's breach of ethics, why does the Prime Minister not simply do the right thing and ask his minister to resign?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to be much more prudent. He is making his own ethical judgment rather than waiting for the Ethics Commissioner's opinion. I believe he needs to show more respect for this mechanism put in place by all of us in this place. I feel that this is very important.

Meanwhile, the minister continues to fulfill her duties in the Citizenship and Immigration portfolio very well.

[English]

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister may be vague on missile defence, he is firmly committed to ministerial defence.

A bunker mentality has taken hold in the PMO as it draws up the strategy for the embattled Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In fact, the Prime Minister is not waiting for the Ethics Commissioner's report at all. He is moving in the human shields right away, under the radar.

Yesterday, 24 hours ago, the top lieutenant of the immigration department was sent AWOL. The deputy minister has been parachuted and the new troops are being brought in to contain the collateral damage. The draftees are from the former Chrétien regime and are now in charge.

When will the Prime Minister wave the white flag, admit defeat and ask his Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to surrender?

● (1120)

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the system by which we administer our public service and our senior public service, it is standard practice for changes to take place in the upper echelons from time to time.

Moreover, the events of yesterday are the result of several deputy ministers taking retirement or moving on to new challenges. That is the situation here.

A change at the deputy minister level at Citizenship and Immigration was a definite possibility. There is no connection whatsoever between this and the matter of concern to us today.

[English]

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the immigration minister told Liberal colleagues that there would be no ministerial permits issued during the election campaign. She then issued one for a stripper who worked on her campaign.

While thousands of immigrants were put on hold during the election, why did the minister break her own rules and reward her campaign volunteer?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Saada (Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has consistently maintained in this House that she has issued permits on humanitarian grounds. She has continued to do so and in a totally responsible, coordinated and intelligent manner.

[English]

Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told the House that he supported his minister.

I ask hon. members, with immigration staff who do business in strip clubs, an immigration minister who misleads Canadians and with the minister now being reduced to public ridicule on billboards, will the Prime Minister finally do the right thing, restore integrity to the ministry and fire the minister?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would once again encourage the hon. member of the opposition to be very careful in her judgments and to also maintain respect for her colleagues in this House, who have a variety of responsibilities. There are no grounds at this time to think that our colleague, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, is not fulfilling her responsibilities completely. On the contrary, we are extremely proud of what she is doing at this time.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Quebec minister of agriculture, Françoise Gauthier, gave assurances that the federal minister responsible for Quebec would do his part. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, on the other hand, says that no decision has been made regarding the nature and amount of assistance he plans for Quebec's farmers.

Can the minister responsible for Quebec confirm his commitment and provide the House with some details?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said on many occasions in the House, the federal government has been fully engaged in the province of Quebec in providing assistance both in a general nature and in terms of BSE.

I think the hon. member is referring specifically to the issue of cull cows and the work that is being done in that respect. We have said that the federal government understands that is a particular concern in Quebec, as it is in other provinces across the country, and that it is important for us to take measures to assist in that respect.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that the aid package will cost around \$16 million to ensure that farmers receive the floor price.

Therefore, can the minister confirm that he will make a 60-40 commitment, that is with the federal government putting in 60% and Quebec 40%?

[English]

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is correct in that historically the share between the provinces and the federal government is normally 60:40. In this particular instance, there is at this point in time no specific request of the federal government. We understand that there is a particular issue. We will work with our colleagues in the province of Quebec and with producers in Quebec as we will work with producers and provinces right across this country to deal with the issue of cull cows.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not only are the existing programs poorly suited to the Quebec situation, but they are temporary and will end in February.

Is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food ready to make a commitment not only to cover 60% of the costs, but also to ensure that the programs lasts until the floor price of 42 cents is reached, which would be in about eight months?

• (1125)

[English]

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not correct when she talks about a February date. Our CAIS program, which is an income support program, is a permanent program of the Government of Canada. It does not expire in February. The BSE programming that we put in place on September 10 will run over the next year and a half. It does not expire in February.

We are determined to deal with the issue of cull cows in Quebec. There are other issues that will impact that and we will be taking those into account as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it must not be forgotten that Quebec's farmers have lost \$241 million since the beginning of the crisis—for which they are in no way responsible.

The possible solutions may make corrections for the future, but can do nothing for the past.

Does the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food not agree that \$241 million in losses fully justifies the implementation of specific measures to cover this loss of income suffered by Quebec's farming community?

[English]

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member is simply not accurate.

The income support programs that the government has put in place have been of assistance to producers in Quebec in the past and will be of value to them in the future. The cull animal program that we put in place specifically to deal with BSE has applied to producers in Quebec. The transitional industry support program that we put in place last year has applied directly to producers in Quebec as these programs have applied to producers all across Canada.

The hon. member is simply incorrect. The federal government has been assisting producers in Quebec and right across the country.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

After two years it is time the Prime Minister faced the facts and said no to star wars.

Can the minister explain why the U.S. Missile Defense Agency is asking for money for space weapons if the program does not involve space? Can the minister explain why a space based laser project in Colorado is funded by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency? It is abundantly clear that missile defence will weaponize space.

Will the Prime Minister say no to George Bush and make it clear, finally, that Canada will not participate in this crazy program?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been saying no to the weaponization of space for a long time. Therefore, I do not understand why the member keeps coming back to this. The Prime Minister and the Government of Canada have been clear. We have been saying no to the weaponization of space.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reason we keep coming back to it is that the Government of Canada has not made it clear that it will not participate in this project when it is very clear that it will weaponize space. In fact, yesterday the Prime Minister said that Canada would not support arms proliferation.

Why is he not saying no now to this missile defence program? We cannot both oppose arms proliferation and move ahead and participate in this weapons system because it will weaponize space.

Why will the government not recognize that reality and say no, now?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is the NDP reality. The NDP has decided to see it that way.

Oral Questions

I am telling the House that the government has been clear. We will say no to the weaponization of space. In the meantime, we are discussing with the Americans what the exact impacts of this missile defence system will be for Canada. We will want to ensure the best security of North America. We will continue to resist any orientation toward the weaponization of space.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last November 19 the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration told members in the House that she had in her possession a thick book full of requests from members on both sides of the House.

Will the minister commit to tabling this book today or if she continues with this cover-up, will she simply do the right thing and resign?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Saada (Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, most members in this House intervene on behalf of people who would like to obtain, for humanitarian reasons, visas for family or loved ones. We do this regularly. If we did not, we would be accused of being insensitive or lacking compassion. It is not a matter of justifying whether the country should be compassionate or not.

As for the document, or documents, in question, how can this be assigned to any particular riding when we know that two or three hon. members can intervene on behalf of the same case? The permits are not issued to the hon. members—

• (1130)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is really simple. Every immigration application has an address on it. Sort the database by postal code and we will know which riding they are in. Even the minister herself could figure that out. We know she is having a bit of trouble staffing her office, but I am sure somebody there knows how to hit “print”.

Will the minister either table her big book of requests or give the House a breakdown riding by riding?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Saada (Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, that question is absurd. We frequently have someone come into our riding offices asking us to intervene in their application. For instance, two brothers, one in my riding and the other brother in my colleague's riding, want to bring someone to Canada. What should they use for the official address? The permit is not issued to the MP; it is issued to the person abroad who wants to come here. The riding is not identified. This is totally absurd.

[English]

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this summer a hard-working Romanian family in Saskatoon

was kicked out of Canada by the immigration minister. These people had settled in Saskatoon and contributed to our city while they waited for a decision on their refugee claim.

Because Mr. Pascu was an ethnic minority, he was subject to persecution in Romania. The Romanian police harassed and threatened to rape Mrs. Pascu. Clearly, they should have qualified on compassionate and humanitarian grounds.

Why does a Romanian stripper get to stay in the country on compassionate grounds while a persecuted Romanian family is kicked out?

[Translation]

Hon. Jacques Saada (Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not the practice of this House to disclose confidential information.

[English]

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister told me about the great welcome program for immigrants in Saskatchewan. She seemed proud of this welcome initiative, yet when established immigrant families in Saskatoon needed her intervention to stay in the country, she turned away. Canadians have lost faith in this system. They have lost faith in this minister.

Will she offer her resignation today?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, Canadians support our immigration program. Canada is a land of immigrants. It has been such in the past and will continue to be in the future. This program is very important for the future of our country.

Our Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is currently working with all her provincial partners to improve this program from coast to coast.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister stated that he had not received any specific request from President Bush on Canada's possible participation in the missile defence shield. However, a report from the Department of National Defence indicates that Canada could do a lot to accommodate the Americans in the development of this shield.

Can the Minister of National Defence tell us if these are the proposals that were conveyed to the U.S. government?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, President Bush expressed his wish. In his speech he said, “We hope Canada will join in”. The opposition prefers to interpret this remark as exerting enormous pressure. Frankly, when it comes to pressure, I have seen much worse.

Oral Questions

The president expressed his wish that Canada will join in this program. I can tell hon. members that the decision will be made in Canada, in the best interests of Canadians, while keeping in mind the future security of our continent. This is the exact position of our government.

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is merely pressure exerted by the world's most important and most powerful leader.

The Prime Minister argued that he had obtained assurances the missile defence shield would not result, in its initial phase, in any form of militarization of space. Yet, the report of the Department of National Defence alludes to the possibility of providing Canadian assistance for the development of weapons.

Is this not yet further proof that the missile defence shield will result in the weaponization of space and that Canada intends to participate in it?

• (1135)

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even though the words may come from the world's most powerful leader—and I agree that he is—what he said is, “I hope”. He did not say “I want” or “We demand”. He said “I hope”. When the President of the United States says “I hope”, it is not a very pressing request. I think we have to set the record straight.

I can tell the House that our country will not contribute to the weaponization of space. We are not interested in contributing to it and, should this project contribute to it, Canada will assume its responsibilities based on its own best interests.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, natural resources deputy minister George Anderson has publicly recognized that Canada will not meet even two-thirds of its greenhouse gas emission reduction target.

Is the deputy minister's statement not proof that the government is dragging its feet and is not dealing with those really responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, namely oil companies, power plants and the automotive industry?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the interpretation given the remarks of the deputy minister of natural resources is incorrect. At any rate, the Government of Canada has always said, and is saying yet again, that it would do everything in its power to achieve its Kyoto goals. It is working toward these goals with the industry, the NGOs, the Canadians, the provinces, as well as our international partners.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is the same Minister of the Environment who said he had full confidence in his colleague at Natural Resources to achieve the sectoral objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gases. The deputy minister, however, is wondering how these objectives will be achieved.

Does this admission not convince the minister that he should change course, take the territorial approach and entrust Quebec with the management of greenhouse gas emissions within its jurisdiction?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the interpretation remains just as incorrect. It is true, however, that Canada, by far, has the most demanding Kyoto target of any country. That will not stop us from doing our part, though.

For example, in a single year, we have increased the production of ethanol in Canada fourfold. These are the kind of measures that do not yield immediate results, but can make a very significant difference in the future.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a year ago the Prime Minister was on the phone with Premier Klein seeking advice on what to say to President Bush about the BSE crisis. In a subsequent meeting with the President last year, no action was taken and the border stayed closed. Now, a year later, the Prime Minister again meets with the President and the border continues to be closed to live cattle.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Having failed to cause President Bush to open the border now, what does he have to say to all the farmers and ranchers across Canada who are facing another winter of despair? What will he do beyond small talk and no action?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is actually very much at odds with what the hon. member said.

First of all, two weeks ago the rule change moved out of the USDA and into the White House office of management and budget. That is an important piece of progress. It puts in place a 90 day timeframe in which a decision needs to be made, after which it comes into force 60 days later.

Moreover, in a discussion between the Prime Minister and President Bush, the President said clearly, when he was here this week, that he will expedite that process in the OMB and that he will instruct his officials to do so as well.

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we have from the government on the live cattle ban is excuses on why the U.S. border will not open. President Bush has come and gone, and still the border remains closed.

The Prime Minister has failed our livestock producers again. When will the border open?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the hon. member that, rather than just giving us partisan rhetoric, he should take a look at what is actually occurring in the marketplace.

Thanks to the program that we put in place on September 10, particularly with our set aside programs with fed and feeder cattle, we have seen a substantial recovery in price. It was around 65¢ for fed cattle. Last week it was up to 85¢. That represents, over an annualized basis, \$1 billion from the marketplace to producers. We will continue to work to get the U.S. border open, but at the same time, we are ensuring that we assist producers in dealing with this situation.

Oral Questions

● (1140)

FINANCE

Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in spite of Liberal opposition, the finance committee passed a motion on Wednesday calling for independent quarterly updates of the surplus forecast. For this independent process to begin, it requires funding approval from other House bodies that are dominated, unfortunately, by Liberals.

My question is for the Liberal House leader. Will he ensure that Liberal members of the House liaison committee and the Board of Internal Economy respect the decision of the finance committee when this motion comes before them?

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am quite astonished that the hon. member would ask me to prejudge what would be done by a parliamentary committee. The liaison committee is made up of committee chairs of Parliament. They will look at this issue just like they look at any other issue. They will then assess the merits of it and provide funding accordingly.

As far as the Board of Internal Economy is concerned, perhaps he might want to ask the opposition House leader, who is actually the spokesperson for the Board of Internal Economy, for any of that information.

* * *

AIRPORTS

Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government takes in \$250 million annually in rent from local airports across Canada, with no investment in return. Beginning in 2006, Ottawa will start charging the Regina airport over \$500,000 in rent and \$700,000 the following year. This rent is unnecessary and will increase the cost of flying for passengers.

Will the Minister of Finance do the right thing and eliminate this rent for the Regina airport in his next budget and work to relieve this burden on Canadian travellers nationwide?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague for bringing this to the House. I know he has worked hard for his constituency and he has ruthlessly taken us on in committee in order to represent his riding. So I congratulate him for that.

My hon. colleague should be aware that there was a motion passed in committee asking the minister to freeze airport rents. This is something that is being looked at by the committee. We will be talking with all stakeholders to ensure that our airports are safe and provide the best possible solution for everybody.

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HEALTH

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Several days ago I asked the government why Canada had not yet ratified the international convention on tobacco. The minister said he would look into it.

Will Canada, or even better, has Canada now signed this important convention that will protect the life and health of so many people around the world?

Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that Canada has become one of the first 40 countries to ratify the framework convention on tobacco control. This is a symbol of our strong commitment to ensure that tobacco is controlled and that its effects do not damage Canadians or people across the world.

The framework convention is the first global public health treaty.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, but in Canada access for people with disabilities is moving backward, not forward.

This week the Council of Canadians with Disabilities has withdrawn from the Minister of Transport's advisory committee because the government has refused to restore regulatory standards. Countries like the U.K., Australia and even the U.S. have them and they are moving forward.

Will the Minister of Transport commit today to restore regulated standards and equal access for Canadians with disabilities to transportation in Canada?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada provides policy and leadership to improve accessibility and remove undue obstacles from the federal transportation system. The department consults with public government bodies and the transportation industry, and facilitates solutions to problems and improvements to the system.

As an individual whose parents are hampered with public transportation and who face difficulty, I understand from where the hon. member is coming. I can reassure him that we on this side of the House, especially in the Department of Transport, are discussing this matter with all our stakeholders to ensure that every Canadian has the best possible solution for transportation.

● (1145)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is no reassurance at all. It is not just transportation where things are getting worse. It has been nearly 3,000 days, in 1996, since the federal task force for persons with disabilities brought forward recommendations aimed at empowering Canadians with disabilities. Yet this report has been gathering dust. The government has not acted on virtually all the recommendations. Today, nearly 40% of people with disabilities live in poverty and half of our growing number of homeless are people with disabilities. We need a housing strategy and other measures.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will the government commit now to take that report off the shelf and get to work immediately?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joe Fontana (Minister of Labour and Housing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, the hon. member would know that within our affordable housing strategy, within our homeless strategy and within strategies for renovating people's homes, it is our commitment to ensure that people with disabilities and our seniors have all the opportunities available to them to renovate their homes. We want to ensure that they have not only good transportation, but good housing. We are committed to doing that.

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MARRIAGE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba people licensed as marriage commissioners have been told that they have to perform same sex marriages or turn in their commissioner's licence. This is clearly an infringement on their freedoms protected by the charter. Eleven commissioners have been forced to resign and two are refusing to quit in defiance of this injustice. All these commissioners want is to provide the same services they have provided faithfully for years.

Will the government correct this discrimination and force the government of Manitoba to reinstate the commissioners who were forced to resign, and defend those who refuse to quite?

Hon. Paul Harold Macklin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly something like this is inappropriate as we would see it. That is why we went before the Supreme Court of Canada to ask what its interpretation would be on our reference and to see whether freedom of religion would be protected. In this particular case, we are awaiting, with interest, that response which will be coming to us next Thursday.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on November 13, Vernon Auxiliary Constable Glen Evelyn was killed when a stolen vehicle slammed into his cruiser. A day earlier, Pattie Lee Kibbee was killed in Edmonton when a stolen vehicle slammed into her car. In Nova Scotia, Theresa McEvoy was killed when her car was struck by a stolen vehicle.

Twenty-five to thirty-five Canadians will die this year at the hands of auto thieves. Why will the Minister of Transport not ensure that all new vehicles are equipped with ignition immobilizer to protect Canadians, and stop the carnage?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed something at which the Department of Transport is interested in looking. I can reassure him that we on our side are doing everything that we can. We are talking to all our stakeholders to ensure that we have a safe transportation system for all Canadians.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have made the Minister of Agriculture and the House aware, the greenhouse industry in my riding and around Canada was jeopardized this fall as a result of inspection issues caused by border

delays. I have advised the minister, on behalf of the greenhouse industry, that a preclearance program for cut flowers is imperative for the survival of this industry in the future.

I acknowledge the government has announced funding for this program. However, this announcement is lacking in detail. Why has the government failed to deliver precise timelines for the implementation of this program?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member says, it is an important industry, part of the overall agricultural industry. Its ability to export is critical. That is why we have been moving with initiatives in that respect. We will ensure that we put them in place as expeditiously as we possibly can.

* * *

FORESTRY

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently when I asked the government about helping out with the pine beetle crisis in B.C., the response from the Minister of Natural Resources demonstrated clearly that he did not know the difference between a pine beetle and a 1960s rock band.

In B.C. right now there are 300 million cubic metres of dead pine. In eight years, there will be one billion cubic metres of dead pine. The government has not responded.

When will it stop ignoring British Columbia? When will it stop the disdain it has for British Columbians and come to the aid of our province in this crisis?

● (1150)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should find out exactly what the government is doing before he asks the question.

We have already invested \$40 million in a pine beetle program. All the programs under that are in place. We have also put professional foresters in Kamloops and Prince George. We are working with the Province of British Columbia on this problem.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the American President recognized the importance of properly protecting our shared border. The recent decision to close nine RCMP detachments, thereby moving police away from the border, contradicts this concern and instead threatens to have the opposite effect.

In light of concerns expressed by the Prime Minister with regard to border security, does the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness intend to stay that decision until the mayors of the municipalities affected by the closures have been heard in committee?

Oral Questions

Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

[*English*]

We have dealt with this in the House many times. This was an operational decision of the RCMP. It is to enhance the critical mass of RCMP officers in the province of Quebec so they could focus on the fight against terrorism and organized crime. The same measures were implemented in the province of Ontario just a few years ago, and that is working very well.

We should rely on the expertise of the RCMP who have advised the government that this is in the interest of the citizens of Quebec and Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is the same kind of argument used to withdraw RCMP officers from Montreal ports, and that situation had to be rectified at a very high price.

Last October, the Association des membres de la Police Montée du Québec Inc. confirmed that the closure of RCMP detachments was a step back for the public and a tactical error in the fight against organized crime.

Was the decision to close these detachments not made for the sole purpose of reducing costs at the expense of the fight against organized crime?

Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, this was an operational decision of the RCMP.

[*English*]

If resources were unlimited, we would have a lot of easy decisions in government. This was an operational decision of the RCMP. The member knows full well that the commissioner was at the committee the other day and he reaffirmed that. The committee will be meeting with the RCMP on that specific question. I know the mayors will be coming to town.

We should be guided by the experts. The RCMP has said that this is to help with the safety and security of Quebeckers and Canadians.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mrs. Betty Hinton (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Corporal Fred Topham's Victoria Cross is up for sale. The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion is fighting to keep it in Canada, and I have a private member's bill to ensure this.

I wrote to both the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Minister of Veterans Affairs, encouraging them to do the right thing and protect this national treasure. In a vaguely worded press release the Canadian Heritage minister said, "I am determined to keep this medical in Canada".

Would the minister tell the House what progress has been made on this issue?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I totally reject the premise of the hon. member's question. What we did was respect the wishes of the 1st Parachute Battalion Association, which was keen on holding a fundraiser. About three weeks ago, I indicated to them that we were prepared to cover the cost of buying back this Victoria Cross.

[*English*]

I have also said that the Victoria Cross would stay in Canada. This is our firm intention.

[*Translation*]

We do, however, respect the organization's desire to raise the funds.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government ministers say they cannot possibly meddle in the Canada Post decision to jack up stamp rates and mailing rates. The fact is they have been meddling in Canada Post for years. They have turned it into patronage heaven over there.

They have dumped so many Liberal appointees, friends, flacks, hacks and family members onto that corporation that they have had to set up a special hiring unit at a cost of almost \$3 million to deal with all the patronage. No wonder they have to raise the stamp rate. Pork-barrel politics are expensive.

How many of André Ouellet's family members are still employed in Canada Post?

• (1155)

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for his courage to stand up in the House and raise this matter again. The last time he did, it produced a headline in the *Winnipeg Free Press* yesterday, which reads as follows, "MP gets licking in efforts to stop postal rate hike". He is at it again.

Does he want another licking? My answer from the previous day stands.

* * *

[*Translation*]

UNITED NATIONS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

This week, the United Nations released a set of recommendations, 101 in all, drawn up by a panel of experts. These propose the most thorough reform to the UN since its creation in 1945.

Could the minister give us his opinion on this report?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with this report. Many of its recommendations are of interest to Canada, and we congratulate the expert panel on its vision and courage.

We are particularly encouraged here in Canada that the report includes two significant Canadian initiatives: the responsibility to protect and the L-20, i.e., the G-20 leaders group. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, this is a very important step for Canada, which is actively involved in developing a dynamic foreign policy.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just sent over a copy of a letter that I received from the Russian prosecutor general regarding the illegally confiscated hotel in Moscow, owned by a Canadian investor, I.M.P., in Halifax. In that letter, it says that the prosecutor general of the Russian Federation “is ready to initiate dialogue and cooperation” in this matter.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirm that he will put the full weight of his department behind this exercise to get justice for this company and take advantage of this new opening by the prosecutor general of the Russian Federation?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a dossier on which the government has been working very hard over the last few years.

We welcome this opening to which the member drew my attention just before question period. I want to say that every time we have had the opportunity, the Prime Minister, the Minister of International Trade and myself have argued strongly that the true judicial system enlightens this thing very well. We very much believe that this is evolving in the right direction.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL AID

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with a cloud of controversy hanging over the government benches, Liberal ministers are gallivanting around the world on junkets paid for by the taxpayers, ensuring they are anywhere but in the House of Commons. Yet these trips are not about feeding the hungry. They are not about alleviating poverty.

My question is for the CIDA minister. When programs to fund humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness have been slashed to zero, is her priority foreign aid or foreign travel?

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for international development has been doing an outstanding job, ensuring that the CIDA programs deliver the best possible services for development and for alleviating poverty. We have been doing a lot of work on the HIV-AIDS epidemic. The member knows very well that on all these trips it is important that parliamentarians join her and my colleague, the Minister of International Trade.

We should be very cautious to speak about these trips with the respect they are due when we work on behalf of Canadians to help contribute to build a better planet.

* * *

[Translation]

UKRAINE

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, four parliamentarians, including myself, just returned from an observation mission in Ukraine. We noted that there were not enough international observers to cover the entire area. In addition, Ukrainian MPs have told us that Canada did not provide all the resources it might have.

Will the Prime Minister pledge to convince his counterparts of the urgent need for our countries to support the democratic reconstruction effort in the Ukraine and will he tell us right now whether he intends to send more Canadian observers in the future?

[English]

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the work of our colleague from Etobicoke—Centre who was in Ukraine promoting Canadian values and making sure that we reflect on the result of the next election.

● (1200)

[Translation]

I appreciate the question of the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. It gives me an opportunity to confirm that the supreme court of Ukraine just announced the invalidation of the second round of voting and called for a new one in its stead, to be held on December 26.

I hope that, this time, the results will reflect the opinion of the Ukrainian people. Rest assured that Canada will do its utmost to support this election.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour has announced the first comprehensive review in 40 years of part III of the Canada Labour Code. Part III of the code establishes basic conditions of work and provides protection for some one million employees, 10% of the Canadian workforce.

Could the minister tell the House what this review will encompass?

Hon. Joe Fontana (Minister of Labour and Housing, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his hard work on this file.

As the House knows, the government wants to build the modern economy of the 21st century. In order to do that we have to modernize our labour standards which are over 40 years old. We have appointed Professor Arthurs as the commissioner. We will consult broadly. We will ask employers and employees to forge the new labour standards that this country needs to make sure that everyone is protected. At the same time, we want to continue to excel internationally and domestically and build that modern economy for workers and employers.

* * *

UKRAINE

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night I returned from Ukraine with the member for Etobicoke—Centre. Like the Bloc member, I want the foreign affairs minister to know that the situation is critical and that Canada's help is desperately needed in that we are a leader in the election process.

Has the minister contacted Jean-Pierre Kingsley to assess whether or not his involvement would be helpful? Will the minister commit to a greater number of Canadian observers to ensure a fair and transparent process? Has he notified the NGO and the Ukrainian Canadian community—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about an hour ago the supreme court of Ukraine cancelled the last election. We will be acting on that information. We do welcome the decision here in Canada. We hope that the result will be an election which reflects the true will of the Ukrainian people.

Canada will help in all possible ways in support of this election, including the provision of a significant number of observers.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is on the record as saying that the much awaited, long delayed review of the CAIS program would begin on December 1. Has that review started and if not, why not?

Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this time we are assembling the personnel who will be conducting that review. We have asked for nominations, both from provincial governments and from the private sector. We have received some of those names and we are awaiting some additional ones. Once all of the personnel are in place we will commence that review as quickly as we possibly can. I had hoped we would have it in place on December 1. It will take a few more days, but we will get it in place as soon as we possibly can.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Sébastien Gagnon (Jonquière—Alma, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Agropur cooperative has announced the closing of its dairy plant in Saint-Alexandre-de-Kamouraska, thus putting 50 employees out of work. Agropur explains that this closing has been caused by a

Routine Proceedings

WTO decision whereby the dairy can no longer produce milk for export.

Since the federal government has taken note of the WTO decision, is it prepared to do its part in getting the dairy plant going again?

Hon. Jim Peterson (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

It is true that we are going to work with the industries affected by such decisions.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1205)

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Sue Barnes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2002-03 annual report of the Inuvialuit final agreement implementation coordinating committee, the 2002-03 annual report of the implementation committee on the Gwich'in comprehensive land claim agreement, and the 2002-03 annual report of the implementation committee on the Sahtu Dene and Métis comprehensive land claim agreement.

* * *

[Translation]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to lay upon the table, in both official languages, the Preliminary Report of the Miramichi and Acadie-Bathurst Electoral Boundaries Commission.

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CANADIAN FORCES PROVOST MARSHAL

Hon. Keith Martin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to lay upon the table, in both official languages, two copies of the annual Report of the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal for 2003-04.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITION

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to lay upon the table, in both official languages, the government responses to four petitions.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

PATENT ACT

Hon. Tony Valeri (for the Minister of Industry) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-29, An Act to amend the Patent Act.

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

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PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act and the Salaries Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, three reports from the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage: the fourth report on the supplementary estimates (A) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005 and report the same; the fifth report on Bill C-18, an act to amend the Telefilm Canada Act and another act; and the sixth report concerning the certificate of appointment of S. Wayne Clarkson to the position of executive director of Telefilm Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that the committee applauded Mr. Clarkson after coming to its conclusion on his competence and ability to serve as executive director of Telefilm Canada. The reports are all signed.

* * *

• (1210)

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-307, An Act to amend the Criminal Code to prevent health care practitioners from being coerced into taking part in medical procedures that offend the practitioner's religion or belief that human life is inviolable.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill would prohibit coercion in medical procedures that offend a person's religion or belief that human life is inviolable. The bill seeks to ensure that health care providers will never be forced to participate against their will in procedures such as abortions or acts of euthanasia.

Canada has a long history of recognizing the rights of freedom of religion and of conscience in our country. Yet health care workers and those seeking to be educated for the health care system have often been denied those rights in medical facilities and educational institutions. Some have even been wrongfully dismissed.

The bill would make those conscience rights explicit in law and would safeguard health care workers' fundamental human rights.

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

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-308, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code (truth in sentencing).

He said: Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that would require truth in sentencing. Victims of crime are being abused by our justice system. Violent offenders are constantly being let out of prison early, and far too many of them are reoffending. We need truth in sentencing to restore a measure of credibility to our justice system and to give back some dignity to victims of crime.

One specific provision of the bill is that persons who reoffend after being let out of prison on conditional release will be required to serve the remainder of their original sentence as well as at least two-thirds of their new sentence.

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

* * *

DIVORCE ACT

Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-309, an act to amend the Divorce Act (custody of grandchildren).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise and introduce a private member's bill to amend the Divorce Act. In essence what the bill would do is deal with the very complex and often emotional subject of divorce and the implications for children and parents and for grandparents and in fact all families. Those impacts are significant across the country.

The bill would amend the Divorce Act to allow grandparents to apply for custody of their grandchildren without leave of the court. Clearly it would still have to be granted by the court in the final analysis, but it would in fact provide an avenue that is clearly not there at present. It would give grandparents automatic standing should they choose to seek it and it would entrench an undeniable interest and right of grandparents. I urge hon. members to support the bill and I thank my colleague from Medicine Hat for seconding it.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. David Chatters (Battle River, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-310, an act to amend the Criminal Code (persons acting to preserve and maintain public health and safety).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill would amend the Criminal Code in order to give greater protection to persons acting to preserve and maintain public health and safety, by creating a new offence of first degree murder and increasing the punishment for aggravated assault when the victim is one of those persons.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

CANADA SEAT BELT ACT

Mr. David Chatters (Battle River, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-311, an act respecting seat belts in federal vehicles and school buses.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill would require that all vehicles under federal jurisdiction and all school buses be equipped with seat belts for the driver and passengers if they are operated on a public highway. As a former school bus driver, I think it is well known and proven that seat belts do save lives.

The design of the seat belt must comply with the regulations and the laws of the province in which the vehicles are used. If required, there is a power to exempt vehicles in special cases, but not for vehicles that regularly transport students.

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

* * *

•(1215)

FEDERAL LAW—CIVIL LAW HARMONIZATION ACT NO. 2

Hon. Tony Valeri (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): moved that Bill S-10, a second act to harmonize federal law with the civil law of the Province of Quebec and to amend certain acts in order to ensure that each language version takes into account the common law and the civil law, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

PETITIONS**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition flowing from a demonstration in front of Hamilton City Hall a week ago in support of the citizens of Darfur, who of course are facing unimaginable tragedy. Upwards of 100,000 people have already died. The petition is calling on the Canadian government to play a role in supporting the African Union and the United Nations to do something about this and bring the obscene violence to a halt. I am very proud to present it and also very proud to add my name to this petition.

CANADIAN FORCES HOUSING AGENCY

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon to present three petitions. The first is on an issue that I have raised repeatedly in the House of Commons since the start of this Parliament. It comes from citizens of Blind River, Ontario, in support of our military families who have on base housing. It is well known that the Canadian Forces Housing Agency provides some on base housing. However, many of those homes are below acceptable living conditions and are subject to annual rent increases. The petitioners from Blind River, Ontario, call upon Parliament to immediately suspend any future rent increases until such time as those homes are brought up to acceptable living conditions.

JUSTICE

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on behalf of citizens in my riding in a small town in the Rocky Mountains, Mackenzie, B.C., who wish to draw to the attention of the House the issue of sex offences against citizens. They note that 40% of known sex offenders are likely to reoffend and that an effective national sex offender registry would be an invaluable resource that would assist police agencies and our court system. They therefore call upon Parliament to pass legislation that would create an effective sex offender registry that would automatically include the names of all sex offenders in Canada.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my last petition today deals with the issue of child pornography. It comes on behalf of the citizens of Buick and Prince George in my riding as well as citizens from Fort St. James and Vanderhoof, British Columbia. They wish to draw to the attention of the House that the creation and use of child pornography is condemned by a clear majority of Canadians and that the Liberals have failed to adequately protect our nation's children. Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to protect our children by taking all necessary steps to ensure that all materials that promote or glorify child pornography are outlawed.

JUSTICE

Hon. Raymond Simard (Saint Boniface, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present this petition on behalf of the member for Peterborough. The petitioners, citizens of the Peterborough area, call on Parliament to release Mahmoud Jaballah or to give him his right to a fair trial with full disclosure of the so-called evidence against him.

HEALTH

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan from several ridings, including my own, a petition about the modern scientific evidence for mitigation and prevention of disease through the use of natural health products. The petitioners call upon Parliament to support greater freedom and choice in their personal natural health care products. In particular, they are calling for support for the legislation introduced by the hon. member for Oshawa, Bill C-420.

•(1220)

AGE OF CONSENT

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

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The first deals with sexual exploitation and makes reference also to child pornography. In particular, some 360 petitioners are calling for protection from sexual exploitation. They would like Parliament to protect children by taking all necessary steps to raise the age of consent from 14 to 18 years. It was the Catholic Women's League that was largely responsible for raising this issue, but I know that many citizens beyond that group are also deeply concerned about this matter.

AUTISM

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the subject of autism. The petitioners, again largely from my riding, are calling on Parliament to recognize that families with children suffering from autism spectrum disorder are greatly affected and highly vulnerable. They talk about the alarming increase in the diagnosis and presence of autism in our population, currently at about 1 in 195 children. They draw attention to the therapy which has been made available largely through the United States, intensive behavioural intervention, IBI, and also applied behavioural analysis. These programs are taught in the United States and currently not taught in Canada. They are quite expensive. The petitioners are calling for these programs to be taught and to be available in Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Raymond Simard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 24 and 25.

[Text]

Question No. 24—**Mr. John Reynolds:**

With regard to the Victoria Cross and other medals of the late Lt. Col. John MacGregor, and their eventual residency in the Canadian War Museum (August 1997), what rationale can the Minister of Canadian Heritage provide for: (a) the withdrawal of charges against the exporter; and (b) the exclusion of the Canadian Heritage Cultural Review Board from the appraisal of the medals?

Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to a), due to the particular circumstances of this matter, including the fact that the Department of Canadian Heritage received the exporter's full cooperation to ensure the prompt return of the medals to Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage did not request that a formal criminal investigation be undertaken. The situation was therefore not brought to the attention of the office of the Attorney General and no charges were filed against the exporter.

In response to b), under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board can determine a fair cash offer at the request of either an exporter or an institution or public authority that has made an offer to purchase that has been rejected. Neither party requested such a determination.

Question No. 25—**Mrs. Carol Skelton:**

Will the government confirm, as reported on October 26, 2004, in the Halifax Daily News (Canadian Press), that it requested the Organisation for Economic Co-

operation and Development to study day care issues in Canada and, if so: (a) did this result in the Early Childhood Education and Care Policy document; (b) who made the request; (c) to whom was the request made; (d) did the government pay for it either directly or in kind and, if so, when; and (e) was any province not willing to participate in the study and, if so, why?

Hon. Ken Dryden (Minister of Social Development, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, in 1998, the OECD invited Canada, along with a number of other countries, to participate in the first round of reviews under the thematic review of early childhood education and care policy. At that time, the invitation was declined. At a June 2001 conference in Stockholm, the OECD disseminated its comparative report "Starting Strong" highlighting the findings from their first round of reviews. Following this conference, participating Canadian officials representing Human Resources Development Canada, HRDC, Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, CMEC, and Saskatchewan Department of Education recommended that Canada participate in the second round of reviews, based on their shared commitment to children's issues, including early childhood development. For reviews of this kind, the OECD requests that the host country identify a manageable number of jurisdictions to participate. CMEC approached the provincial-territorial deputy ministers of education and the P.E.I. deputy minister responsible for social services approached all provincial-territorial deputy ministers responsible for social services to determine interest in participating in the review. The Governments of Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba indicated an interest in participating. Remaining provincial-territorial jurisdictions did not wish to be included in the review, but were kept informed on Canada's participation throughout the review. Those jurisdictions who chose not to participate should be contacted directly for further information on their decision.

The Government of Canada, through HRDC, now Social Development Canada, funded the review at a total cost of \$90,896 which covered the cost of the preparation of a background report to support the review, a visit to Canada by the international review team of early childhood education experts and the preparation of the final report by the OECD. The resulting final report "Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Canada" was released publicly on October 25, 2004. Elements of the international review team's findings on Canada's ECEC system will be integrated into a broader comparative report by the OECD. The report will include an overview of the countries participating in the second round of the thematic review of early childhood education and care policy as well as updates on those countries who participated in the first round.

[Translation]

Hon. Raymond Simard: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-5, an act to provide financial assistance for post-secondary education savings, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity on behalf of the NDP caucus to join the debate on Bill C-5 at third reading. At this point in time, we have listened to this debate in the House of Commons and at committee.

The first observation that comes to mind, which I would share with members listening today, is that virtually all of the stakeholders that are knowledgeable about the issue of access to post-secondary education are critical of Bill C-5. They do not support Bill C-5.

One would think that if the bill had merits, if the bill was hitting the mark, if the bill was actually going to meet the needs out there, we would have some kind of a split, maybe sixty-forty or seventy-thirty or eighty-twenty. One would think some stakeholders would have been motivated to come to the committee and share with MPs and the political parties they represent that this in fact was a bill that had merit, that they thought it would address the issue of access to post-secondary education, but there were none.

I think it is only fair that we should be guided by the input that we get at the standing committee. We should take guidance from what we hear from Canadians and the associations and organizations that ordinary Canadians form and we should take it seriously.

The federal government is introducing this measure to offset what it has done with post-secondary education, which is to cut, hack and slash the transfer payments in the Canada health and social transfer from which the provinces draw post-secondary education funding.

We believe that the measures found in Bill C-5 will not offset the drastic effect that these cutbacks have had over these past many years. We believe that Bill C-5 falls well short of making up for the effect of the cutbacks in social transfers. We should remind people that the Canada health and social transfer pays for health, post-secondary education and social allowances. There is no dedicated budget line for post-secondary education. This is block funding. It is all grouped together. It is up to the various provinces to do the best they can with that block funding to meet those three very important social needs: health care, education and social allowances.

Most provinces have been unable to backfill the cutbacks from the federal government without dramatic tuition increases. In the province of Manitoba where I come from, Winnipeg Centre, we wrestle with this every budget year. So far we have managed to freeze tuition increases since 1999 so we have reasonable tuition fees in relation to the other provinces, but it is still a very difficult situation for many who wish to further their education.

What we find fault with in Bill C-5 is not just the content of the bill but the very tone of the bill. This in fact is why the member for Halifax moved the amendment at report stage to delete the stated purpose in Bill C-5. The amendment she moved called into account

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the fact that this bill calls upon low income people, essentially, to encourage them to save for their children's futures.

That all sounds very good on paper, but nowhere in the tone of the bill or the tone of the stated purpose of the bill does it take into consideration that many people do not have the luxury of that choice, of "How much this month will I put toward my children's education?" If in fact they are seized with basic needs issues and their monthly spending choice is about paying the rent or buying food or buying clothes for their children, how much they are going to put toward their children's educations is not a luxury they have to wrestle with.

Nowhere is this more true than in the inner city riding of Winnipeg Centre that I represent. It is the third poorest riding in Canada. I see on a daily basis the predictable consequences of chronic, long term poverty, with parents, many of them heads of single parent families, struggling to meet the basic needs. It is not a matter of these people pulling up their bootstraps and making smart investments to pay for their children's post-secondary education. When we are struggling with meeting basic needs, it is not really something we can plan, no matter whether the government is going to assist us in that saving or not.

• (1225)

On a larger scale, this type of plan is similar to some of the funding announcements that the federal government has made for other provincial spending where it calls for matched dollars. In some recent programs, after a decade of cutbacks, as the faucet is turned back on, more often than not the federal government has put strings attached to this funding that has to be matched by the provinces or the municipalities. This never happens because the provinces and the municipalities are already struggling under the weight of trying to make up for the shortfall in the transfer of money over the past decade.

It is a bit of a smoke and mirror game where the federal government can say that it has announced spending in a certain sector and that it is being generous in its transfer to the provinces but what it does not tell the public is that the money is conditional on being matched by the province or the municipality, which rarely happens.

Money therefore is left on the table because the province or the municipality is unable to match the dollars. This is the same sort of policy guideline here. The government is looking to low income people to avail themselves of a program in which they cannot afford to participate.

As I mentioned at the outset, none of the stakeholders on this issue are fans of Bill C-5. It is helpful for us to look at some of the comments that they made. When they came and made representation to the standing committee they made many clear, articulate and well thought out objections to the program.

The president of the University College of Cape Breton noted, "As a parent who is currently enrolled in Canada's PSE system and struggling to support children, I find it an insult that the government believes it has to tell me about the importance of post-secondary education through the Canada learning bond".

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This woman was pointing out I suppose more the tone of the bill rather than the content. It is critical all the same. This particular witness went on to say "Bill C-5 would not help women who were working hard, not just to lift themselves and their children out of poverty, but who were genuinely trying to gain an education".

That was actually a comment from the Federation of Single Parent and Blended Family Association, which represents 60 other associations from all regions of Quebec. Their argument was that the bill would not help that demographic group that is seeking to better themselves through education.

I think we are all cognizant of the fact that the way to go from poverty to middle class in one generation is through education. Therefore the New Democratic Party believes that extraordinary measures are justified if we are to deal with the embarrassing number of Canadian families and children who are living in poverty.

In my riding of Winnipeg Centre, the statistics are shocking. Forty-seven per cent of all families in my riding live below the poverty line. Fifty-two per cent of all the children in my riding live below the poverty line. One would not think that would be the case in a modern, cosmopolitan city like Winnipeg but it is the case.

We were hoping that the government would be thinking outside the box when it came to providing better access to post-secondary education for students, no matter what their means testing or what their parents' income.

After seven surplus budgets one would expect some bold policy statements from the government rather than this document, Bill C-5, which is essentially telling poor people to pull up their boot straps, save their pin money and the government will maybe help match that up to a very small amount per year.

Instead of that kind of patronizing attitude, we expected something bolder. I do not know why people in this House of Commons, where we should be having debates about broader abstract policy issues, are not talking about free education for post-secondary education.

Knowing what we know now, that kindergarten to grade 12 is not good enough, why are we not talking about using this budgetary surplus, or part of it, to broaden the public schools acts in the provinces to say that education should mean kindergarten through one's first degree for instance, or phase that policy in by saying that the student's first year of university education will be picked up by the government.

This is the kind of bold thinking that we would expect. We could have the debate about how that will be paid for, but I do not hear anyone putting forward the idea that if a person cannot get by in today's workforce without at least one university degree, why are we talking about the public schools act being extended to include kindergarten through 12 and one's first university degree. If a person wants to specialized then he or she can find ways to finance that tuition.

• (1230)

If that had been the starting point of this debate perhaps then we could have had people tell us why it would be difficult or tough to implement, or to debate how we would get the financing for that.

However I do not hear that kind of thing being debated here. I hear nickel-and-diming to offset the cutbacks to post-secondary education that has occurred in the last year which has put such a terrible stress on the provinces to finance the institutions that were once international leaders in terms of adequately funded institutions for which we could be proud.

The University of Winnipeg has a net mesh surrounding the exterior of Wesley Hall so that bits of crumbling brick and mortar do not fall on the students' heads as they go to university. That is the crumbling state of the institutions across the country, both figuratively and literally, because as much as there is stress on the physical side, there is an equal amount of stress on the budget to pay salaries, provide research money and to be at the leading edge of the subject matter on which they are supposed to be authorities. Our post-secondary structure is crumbling through neglect because it has not been prioritized.

For all the flowery and romantic language we hear from the Prime Minister and others that post-secondary education is the vehicle by which a generation shall rise from poverty, et cetera, access is getting more difficult. Yes, more students are going to university, so statistically the tuition rates have not been an absolute barrier to participation, but when we look at who is getting to go, it is not the children of the families who need it most. It is the children of middle class and well off families who are prioritizing education because they know they need at least one degree to make it in the world today.

That brings me to another aspect of my riding of Winnipeg Centre. I have an urban aboriginal population of over 16,000 who self-identify as aboriginal on the census. We believe there are many more who have come since the census was taken and some who do not fill out that box on the census. I raise this only to indicate that the stated policy objective of the Minister of Indian Affairs for this Parliament is to get more aboriginal and first nations kids into post-secondary education to help build the administrative capacity in that population and help lead their people out of the abject poverty that we know is a national social tragedy.

However this incredible glaring contradiction exists, which will come into effect on January 1. The government will start taxing all the benefits given to first nations kids for post-secondary education by their community as income. What a glaring contradiction. It should be exposed here in the House of Commons and it should be exposed publicly because the predictable consequence of this action will be that fewer first nations kids will be able to go to university. If they are given \$10,000 this year to pay for tuition and living out expenses and they have to pay 40% of that off the top in taxes, the community will have to give them more money to live, ergo they can send fewer kids to school, ergo there will be fewer kids in university from first nations and aboriginal backgrounds.

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This is more about a shot across the bow on aboriginal and treaty rights than it is about any kind of logic having to do with post-secondary education. I am critical of the government for coming through the back door in what I believe is a cowardly way. If the Liberals cannot win the debate publicly that they do not accept post-secondary education as an aboriginal and treaty right, they are trying to introduce this concept by saying that because we only view post-secondary education as a government policy, not an aboriginal and treaty right, we can unilaterally and arbitrarily change that policy and start viewing it as income and therefore taxable. That is the disagreeable part of this fundamental policy shift, notwithstanding the disagreeable nature of the predictable results, which will be fewer aboriginal kids in university. However, coming in through the back door with this kind of change is a shot across the bow on aboriginal and treaty rights.

• (1235)

Education has always been an aspect of treaty rights and the courts have always viewed education to be open-ended. However, to be fair, when the treaties were signed nobody ever expected an Indian would want to go to university. Maybe they were talking about education as basic literacy or basic reading and writing, but the courts have viewed education to be open-ended. There is no stated limit. In the absence of any language to the contrary in these treaties, education was viewed to be education period.

As of January 1 the government will challenge that orthodoxy. The government will say that it views aboriginal rights to education to mean kindergarten to grade 12 and that anything else is an optional government policy that it will allocate and award at its pleasure or will change the nature unilaterally without consultation at its pleasure.

If this is an indication of how the government is trying to deviate from or derogate aboriginal and treaty rights, it is very worrisome. It is also contrary to the flowery and even romantic language with which the Prime Minister began his tenure in this Parliament with the smudging ceremony and the Speech from the Throne that cited aboriginal progress, in the social tragedy that is aboriginal life in this country, as the number one key priority of his government, when it seems the government is going to chip away and erode aboriginal and treaty rights and look toward a completely different mindset in addressing those issues.

I could not make a speech on post-secondary education without mentioning this, as I am reluctant to deviate from the comments that have been made on Bill C-5. Bill C-5 and post-secondary education policy in my riding means aboriginal access to post-secondary education. I believe it is related in a way that is unavoidable.

I do not see how the government can ignore the fact that virtually every one of the stakeholders who came before the committee to speak to Bill C-5 criticized it resoundingly and made the point that it was going in the wrong direction. They were not satisfied.

Mr. James Kusie, the national director of Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, said:

The greatest problem of learning bonds, however, is that they place heavy expectations on low-income families that simply do not have the resources to contribute significant amounts annually to an RESP for each of their children. Even if families are completely aware of the benefits of saving for education, low-income

Canadians cannot afford to save the necessary funds to pay for education funds while still putting food on the table. ...it's like giving a low-income family \$500 and a Mercedes-Benz and expecting them to finance the rest of the car.

What a profound statement from Mr. James Kusie, the national director of CASA, who is probably a student himself. His statement accurately reflects the reservations that we have about Bill C-5.

• (1240)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of Bill C-5 and the principle of helping aboriginal youth to get an education.

The member misspoke himself on the example he used about \$10,000 being given to students and that they would be taxed 40% right off the top. The fact of the matter is that every taxpayer in Canada is eligible for a personal non-refundable tax credit which is worth some \$8,000 plus the tuition itself as a tuition expense deduction, plus there is the education expense deduction.

In fact, the person would pay no tax, not 40% off the top. Indeed, the unused amount of the tuition and the education expense deduction are transferable to the parents, so that they can use it to reduce their income. The member misspoke himself and I hope he will be able to acknowledge that.

I would also like to suggest that across the board benefits are very expensive. The reason we would want to tax or include the amounts paid to someone for this benefit and include it in income is because there are some people who do not need it. If we apply it across the board, we are taking a defined pie and spreading it very thinly as opposed to paying a higher level of benefits to those who really need it.

I raise those points for the member's consideration and I would entertain his comments.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, we view this policy change as a shot across the bow on aboriginal and treaty rights and changing the definition of what education means as it pertains to aboriginal and treaty rights.

This is a fundamental shift, a unilateral policy shift by the government. Were it viewed as an aboriginal and treaty right by the government, there would be a requirement for a consultation process. The government is allowed to deviate from constitutional rights as they pertain to aboriginal people but only with justification, which is what the recent court rulings have told us.

In extreme and rare cases where there is justification, then the government may in fact deviate from these constitutionally protected rights usually with compensation and after consultation. Consultation does not mean just posting the change. It means accommodating some of the views expressed by the other party. Therefore, consultation with accommodation is a much different thing than the government unilaterally firing this salvo on the issue of whether or not education is to be considered an aboriginal or treaty right.

Government Orders

The reservations that I raised about Bill C-5 could be summed up in a simple way. I think I speak on behalf of many of the stakeholders who came before the committee. They said to take the same amount of money that we were dedicating into this program and put it back into the Canada health and social transfer so that the provinces could adequately fund the universities and cope with some of the systematic cutbacks of the last 10, 12, and 15 years. The government paid down the deficit and at least one-third of the money that it put toward the debt came from savings in the Canada health and social transfer. That is education, health and social welfare.

The government must have predictions. Its policy people must have worked out the total cost of this program. If it were to apply the total cost, it could put that back into the CHST and let the provinces shore up their sagging post-secondary education structure in bricks and mortar and fund those programs.

● (1245)

Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague's comments. I think he has a sincere interest in advancing the cause of his constituents and advancing the cause of young people who grew up in poverty and want to get a better and more adequate education.

I have a comment and a question. The member seems to concentrate on the institution of the university and not so much on the individual person. Coming from a rural background, many of my schoolmates and friends never had the ambition or interest to go to university. They wanted to become electricians, carpenters, start their own farms, start a business, and so on.

When I listen to the debate about funding the institution, I wonder why we do not get around to talking about delivering the need to individuals. Individuals can more directly and more adequately make the decision about their education and how their lives will be more productive, be it a tech school, a trade or starting up an innovative new business.

What ideas would the hon. member have and how would he encourage more emphasis on the individual, instead of merely an institutional approach of funding universities?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, personally, I am a journeyman carpenter. I am not university educated. I hold great value in the idea that not everyone chooses the academic route for their post-secondary learning.

When people ask me what my education is, I show them my carpenter's certificate with as much pride as people who show copies of their B.A. that they hang on the wall. I certainly value other types of post-secondary education, and in fact life-long learning. I will concede that some of the remarks from Liberals on the government side today, in speaking about Bill C-5, were that the money saved in this account could be applied later in life for life-long learning or career change education. I recognize that as a valuable thing.

I view the skilled trades as post-secondary education. I would encourage young people to consider going into these skilled trades as a viable career option. It is a well-paid viable career option. I have friends who worked at the Husky upgrader in the member's home province and who 10 years ago were making \$60,000 and \$70,000 a year as pipefitters et cetera, although unionized pipefitters. There is a

good life to be made in the skilled trades as long as workers belong to the appropriate building trades union.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg Centre is certainly the first one I have heard who has introduced the notion of aboriginal and first nation needs vis-à-vis the education system.

Within the last couple of weeks at the public accounts committee, we received the annual report from the Auditor General which indicated that post-secondary education accessibility as it relates to aboriginal and first nations peoples compared to the rest of the population was way out of wack. In fact, it was so far out of wack that in order to get the proportion of the population graduating within the aboriginal first nations community as compared to the balance of the population in the nation, it would take 27 years to catch up.

The Auditor General reported that, as a result of the government not following up on commitments it made to the public accounts committee, and more importantly, to those communities themselves, we are now in a situation where the Auditor General reports that instead of taking 27 years to catch up it would take 28 years. The trend line is going the wrong way. I wonder what the member for Winnipeg Centre would have to say about that.

● (1250)

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, no matter what social indicator we use, aboriginal people rank at the bottom of the socio-economic scale in this country. The level of participation in post-secondary education of aboriginal people is almost as embarrassing as the over-representation of aboriginal people in our prison population. It is a glaring and socially predictable juxtaposition that we have here.

Whatever indicators we use, the country can no longer ignore that it is in nobody's interest to have this permanent underclass and all the predictable consequences that come from having a permanent underclass. The measures we are taking are clearly not working. I try not to be critical in this regard. I simply point out that we have failed to adequately put an end to this social tragedy and until it becomes a key social objective of Parliament, we will continue to face these glaring social inequities.

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate with my own remarks as they relate to Bill C-5. I had an opportunity earlier this morning to raise a few comments in response to the speeches of others. The message, for any members who were here earlier, certainly has not changed.

The difficulty we have with this is not what it does, so much as what it does not do. It provides for those who already have some means, to the extent they have disposable income, to put away money for their children's education. It does not address the needs of those families and individuals that do not have the means to make the contribution, which at the end of the day means that accessibility is not what Canadians have come to believe accessibility to be.

Government Orders

Let us take a step back. This is a whole new era. Parliamentarians and middle aged people who are watching did not see all of this when we were younger. We did not have the registered education savings plans and the whole notion that individuals needed to put money away for university. When I was growing up, if a person was smart enough, worked hard enough, and wanted it bad enough, a university education was not out of reach even though mom and dad were not rich.

In fact, one of the things that has made this a great nation is that we ensure that people with the ability, desire and willingness to work hard can achieve their goals in this country. We see it somewhat differently from our friends to the south, who see it almost as a dog eat dog situation. We have approached it in a somewhat more genteel manner. We think that the more successful people we have in Canada, the more successful everyone will be. It is not a question of pushing someone down so someone else can get ahead. The more of us we can lift up, the stronger we are as a nation.

I run the risk of getting into serious trouble with the highest authority in this room, but I suspect the Speaker is of an age where he would recall, through his studies I am sure, as I can, that throughout decades past, serious investment was made in post-secondary education at the college level and university level. Certainly in Ontario, which I know best. That is when the college system came into being.

I have attacked a former Conservative Ontario premier, Mike Harris, which I will probably do frequently in my time in this place. However, I am also prepared to acknowledge when a Conservative premier does the right thing. The premier who brought in the college system and beefed up the university system as it is now known in Ontario was Bill Davis.

Mr. Peter Adams: In a minority government.

Mr. David Christopherson: In a minority government, my friend from the government benches reminds me. That is another good reason to continue with a fine tradition we have started with the 38th Parliament. In those years the premier of the minority government of Ontario recognized that, with a little pressure, sure enough, but I try to give credit where credit is due. We have a warm spot for former premier Davis in our province for the initiatives that he took as the education minister, which were significant and made a difference.

Our generation, people who are my age, give or take, the boomers, benefited from the dividends of those public investments in the university system, and in the creation and funding of the community college system. For those whose skills, talents and desires did not suit university, the college system was there to provide skills development, so that those with other talents still had an opportunity to play a significant role in our economy and have the best quality of life for themselves and their families. We benefited from that.

At that time, the politicians of the day, like us here, said this was important and so they made the investment. These were Tories who saw this, not as my friend earlier referred to as willy-nilly throwing money but investing. Tories understand that. They understand investing today. Then it builds and we have something down the road. We are investing the time in trying to educate those who are

having some trouble with this because they need to understand that not all Canadians are going to benefit from this.

We are benefiting from the dividends of that investment, and believe me they were massive. This is the same party, the Tories in Ontario, whose mantra was often "tax cuts, tax cuts", but there was a recognition. It scares me when the younger Tories are like that. The older ones I can almost understand, but I do not know how one gets to be 25 years old and is already 50.

• (1255)

We are benefiting. My colleague who was applauding is at the tail end of the generation that benefited from that investment. I hope I am not wronging the member in any way by assuming that he went on to pursue some post-secondary education, but if he or other members did, they benefited from the investment that was made in post-secondary education in the post-World War II era, in the 1950s, 1960s and into the 1970s. The difficulty is that without a reinvestment, like maintenance money for machinery and other means of production, it is going to break down, and when it breaks down it is not going to serve us the way that we expect it to.

The education system is the same way. There have to be investments along the way to maintain it, to build on it, to make sure that we maintain the vision that the original architects had of what post-secondary education would be in this country. If they had not done that, we would not have that benefit now, but it is petering out because there has not been the subsequent investments over the last 10 years or so.

Instead of addressing that head on and being the generation that picks up the gauntlet to make sure that the investment goes back into the post-secondary education system, we get this system that benefits families with disposable income. I grant that for families that have disposable income, that have enough money to make the investment, this is not a bad thing. This is not an evil bill. What upsets us is the suggestion by the government that this bill addresses a real need.

Odds are for those who have a few thousand dollars and it is not a big deal, they could put it into an RESP. The reality is that that is probably a nice financial tool in their portfolios but it is not the determining factor in whether or not their children will be able to go to university. In other words, if they have the money to put into an RESP, some of those folks are going to have the money to send their kids to university.

That has never been that problem. The wealthy in Canada, the wealthy around the world, the wealthy historically have always made sure that their children were well educated. All of us want that for our children but historically it has only been those who have the means who have been able to send their children to get the kind of education that people took for granted when I was younger.

I want to take just a moment to talk of the role of post-secondary education. I want to set the stage here as to how this fits into the context of education now in Canada and what it means to individuals, the students and their families, but also to our nation on the broader scale.

Government Orders

One of our economic advantages is not that we have the lowest tax structure in the world. Our competitive advantage is not that we have the lowest environmental protection laws in the world, where people can come in and make all the investments they want without having to worry about environmental protections or any of that sort of thing. That is not why. Our competitive strength does not come from having the weakest labour laws in the world so people can come in and exploit our citizens.

Our competitive advantage in large part comes because of the value added that our workforce—and I say that whether one is a doctor or a bus driver—is healthy, skilled, and well educated in the broadest sense. That is the advantage. If it was pure tax cuts, we could go to one of the southern states in the U.S. If it was just about exploitation, right now the hot spot seems to be China or other third world nations.

We have significant investment in Canada. I read a report the other day that suggests Ontario is about to surpass Michigan in terms of the greatest number of cars produced.

• (1300)

That is not done for the reasons I have mentioned and it is not done because we have weak environmental laws. It is not based on our weaknesses or how we can undercut other states and jurisdictions around the world. Those who can pay their workers the least amount get the investment will not work in Canada. It never has and never will.

This is what does work for those who want to invest in Canada. First of all in honour of Tommy Douglas, we have got about a \$6 to \$10 an hour advantage because Canadian employers do not have to pay health insurance premiums for their employees. It is part of the national system. It is part of our general revenue system. We have that built in structurally. It is another good reason to maintain our universal health care system.

More important, modern assembly plants now require people who can operate a lot of high end technical equipment, and it is changing all the time. Exploited workers do not learn how to adapt to a new technology very quickly. The fact that we have a skilled and educated workforce, homegrown, makes the difference. It is everything. That is our competitive advantage.

If we could not do it on that front, then unfortunately, we would have to say, “We will have to water down environmental protection, health and safety and cut the minimum wage. We will have to find some other way where we have an advantage over others”. No, most countries would give their right arms to have the challenge that we have, which is simply to maintain what we already have which is one of the most educated, healthy workforces in the world.

As a result, we do get investment. It is not always the best, but I can say that the billion dollars that just went into Ford in Ontario was very welcome. Ford did not make that investment based on all those other issues I mentioned. Ford made it because it can make money in Canada, in large part because of the workforce we can provide to any future employer.

We talk about the university level, the Ph.D. Obviously I do not have a post-secondary education and maybe I appreciate it more than most because I do not have one. However, I know that the more

people who graduate from universities, the more people who graduate from our colleges and the more people who get active in our apprenticeship programs and become journeypersons, like my friend from Winnipeg Centre, the stronger I will be, the stronger my family will be, the stronger my hometown of Hamilton will be and the stronger this country will be.

We do not disagree on that. I did not hear a whole lot of heckling or see too many dirty looks as I was making these comments. Most people accept that the value added of our skilled workforce is one of our key competitive advantages.

That takes us full circle, right back to the inevitability of the critical importance of providing the population with an education system that is accessible to them. All that I have talked about means nothing if ordinary families cannot send their sons and daughters to the post-secondary education institutions. It does not work. That is why we are a little louder in terms of raising this issue than we might otherwise be. We are not so much opposed to what Bill C-5 does. What Bill C-5 purports to do and what the government says it will do, is what upsets us.

The parliamentary secretary and I had an interesting exchange earlier. We talked about the fact that while enrolment rates are up, it is going the wrong way for lower income families. With the growing gap between the haves and the have nots, not just in the world but in our own country, it means that we need to take steps to ensure that those students are getting an opportunity to go on. We are acknowledging that this will not do that, so we are still left with the problem.

• (1305)

I would feel a whole lot better about this whole debate if the government would simply stop saying that this is some kind of panacea, that this will be the big piece that solves the problem. It will not. All the major student union groups are opposed to this for that reason, because of what the government says it will do and they know it will not.

Leading educational experts, not just a small group here from the opposition, are opposed to Bill C-5. Why would students oppose it if it worked? If it worked they would be happy and we would not be having all these great quotes. They are here because the students themselves see that Bill C-5 will not answer the question.

This legislation will still leave a lot of students with debts of \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, or \$100,000. We talked earlier about the fact that a lot of them are not going into the system. They are not going into the system because they are looking at that debt and they do not want to start their lives with that kind of anchor around them.

I do not recall my contemporaries when I was growing up being fearful of going to university because it would somehow have a negative impact on their lives. That is not the way it was. It ought not be that way now. It does not have to be that way now.

Government Orders

It makes so much sense to invest the dollars where it will help the nation, where it will help all of our respective provinces and territories, all of our hometowns, right to the centre of each of our universes, our own families. That is the impact of this issue. We collectively, and the government specifically, are not responding in that fashion.

Maybe the government has taken a look at the demographics. Maybe it has done its polling and found that the people who are not accessing post-secondary education or putting money into RESPs do not have the money, or whatever reason, and that most of them do not vote anyway. We all know the truth. The reality is the higher the income, the higher the education, the higher up people are on the socio-economic scale, the more likely they are to vote in this country. I would like to think that is not what is happening.

I am at a loss to understand why the government would be so reticent to make investments that would give back so much. If this were done right, as former premier Bill Davis did, those dividends would pay for generations. It requires each of us in our time, during our watch, to stand up and ensure that we make the necessary investment to pay respect to those who came before us and to maintain and make better the education system that we want and need for our young people.

I look forward to the give and take over the next 10 minutes. Bill C-5 does not do any great harm, but it sure falls short of the speechifying of the Liberal caucus.

• (1310)

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by first informing the hon. members across the way that oftentimes the unions of students who come to this place to lobby do not speak for the students that they purport to represent. I say that as the youngest member of Parliament in Canada, I also am probably the most recent attendee at a Canadian university of anyone in this room.

There is tremendous frustration among students at the radicalism of some of the student organizations that find themselves here. Indeed, these organizations spend hard earned student dollars on radical causes and on protests that have no correspondence with the issues that matter to real, every day students.

I want to move on to an entirely different point. There is some area where we can find some agreement with the hon. member from the New Democratic Party.

As a recent student, I can point to one of the greatest costs that students face. It is beyond tuition and it is beyond just food and other traditional costs that one would expect. It is the enormous cost of books.

What a lot of non-students do not realize is our young people are paying in the neighbourhood of \$1,500 to \$2,000 a year on textbooks. This bill does not deal directly with it, but I want to take this opportunity to address what I believe is an injustice which students face every year.

These books could be far cheaper. We could get them for the price of maybe 10% of what we are paying now. The reason we cannot is because year after year the professors in the universities demand that

a new edition of the textbook be purchased. Instead of allowing students to sell their used books to students who take over their seats in the class, the books collect dust in their basements for the next six or seven decades. New students then have to pay between \$150 or \$200 for the same textbook that they could have bought for a fraction of the price from the outgoing students.

I do not know exactly what the remedy is for this problem. It seems utterly insane that young people are spending exorbitant amounts of money, paying for books that they could acquire for a fraction of the price if only it were not for the need to buy the new edition every year.

It is very clever for the publishing companies. They change a few pages and alter a bit of the content. The reality is, substantively the book is the same. They run year after year profits on the backs of students.

Would the hon. member offer some solutions to this problem?

• (1315)

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for paying enough attention to want to comment. I did note that he was listening.

I might also say it was pure happenstance. Sometimes we just get darn lucky. I was trying to find a younger member of the House and I happened to pick the youngest. I think I made my point. I am pleased he got a chance to enunciate his particular place in history in this place, and I say that sincerely. There are 308, so grab whatever the member can. We work hard for it.

I will be right upfront. I do not know a lot about the whole issue of professors insisting on upgrades every year. I would not be doing justice to the member's comments, other than it seems there are some common sense concerns there. I will leave it to others who know more to maybe speak to that.

I was a little disappointed. I had hoped the member would take a moment to reflect on the fact that he indeed had benefited from that major investment made so many decades ago. He is one of the last generational beneficiaries of the original investment. I believe he has an obligation, as do I, to ensure that our generation here on our watch ensure that we pony up the money that we need to give his children and grandchildren the same opportunities that he and I have had.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to my colleague from Hamilton, I would like to ask him his views of another contradictory move from the government.

When the current Prime Minister was the minister of finance, he changed the bankruptcy laws so students who may be saddled with crippling debt load as a result of high tuition, which stemmed from his cutbacks to social transfers for education to the provinces, could not file bankruptcy for 10 years. Whereas, I believe the limit is three years for an ordinary citizen.

Not only did the government saddle students with unprecedented debt load, it took away their one avenue of recourse, or remedy, to come out from under that should the situation become unbearable to them from a financial point of view. Would the member speak to that contradiction?

Government Orders

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to focus on that. It has been the subject of some serious discussion and debate within our caucus. In fact our colleague from Halifax has sponsored Bill C-236 which is meant to change that very issue and move it from 10 years to two years so students have some opportunity to have a sound footing for a future.

It makes no sense to go through the whole process of doing everything we can collectively to provide accessibility and professionalism in a post-secondary education system if students who come out of that system in their early twenties feel their financial life is over before it has even begun.

We see this as an important critical component. We hope colleagues would look at Bill C-236 in that light. Hopefully, if not the Prime Minister, his representative would acknowledge that they made a mistake when they made that change. Now in this minority government, we have a unique opportunity, through the bill of the hon. member for Halifax, to correct that mistake. That represents another positive step forward as opposed to the sort of pretend step that Bill C-5 is taking.

Hon. Ed Broadbent (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak briefly in this important debate. I want to begin with what I think is a salient fact that should be relevant to Canadian decision makers on this subject.

Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Finland are countries with comparable national incomes to our own. I am speaking now not only as a member of Parliament, but as a man who spent the last few years teaching at universities in the country.

These countries have the lowest child poverty rates in the world, varying between 2% and 5%. What do they provide in their societies? Free child care, free secondary education and free university education. In fact, in a number of these countries, in addition to waiving tuition, they provide money for books and some of them residence costs for students.

Incidentally, this is not only is this social justice. They show the lowest gaps in final income distribution between the rich and the poor of any other societies in the world. They also have, from the point of view of the economy, the most innovative economic systems, if we are to generalize. If we look at productivity increases in these five countries and compare them with Canada in recent years, they either meet or in most cases exceed our productivity increases as an economy.

What is the moral of this? The moral is, and it goes to the root of social democratic philosophy, that it is not only correct to invest our resources as a society in our children in principle, but to ensure equality of the right to development. The real opportunity for a young boy or young girl to maximize his or her potential as a human being is the ethical impulse of social democracy. The economic spin-off is immense. If we put these resources in early on, then the whole society benefits later on. That is the point.

For me, it is not accidental that almost 90% of those who appeared before the committee on the bill opposed it.

I heard a young Conservative a minute ago ask a question of my colleague. He made a point that these so-called radical student associations often did not speak for their students as a whole. I

taught students recently. I taught in British Columbia at SFU, at Queen's University in Kingston and most recently at McGill in Montreal, for three years. I can tell the member that overwhelmingly the students, whether they are in Ontario, Quebec or British Columbia, would condemn the bill.

As for the associations that came before the committee, it was not just student associations. Student associations in English Canada were there. The Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec was there. As well, the Canadian Association of University Teachers was there. Is that a radical group? The Canadian Council on Social Development and the National Anti-Poverty Organization opposed the bill. These groups are concerned about the well-being in the context of average and low income students. They are not out furthering some so-called radical agenda.

Why are they opposed? What is the problem? I saw it with my students in these universities. Working class kids, if they get into university, had to spend up to half their time working outside the classroom to pay the cost of tuition.

I came from a working class family in the 1950s. I did not have to spend all my time working while I was at university. I worked at Christmas, I worked in the summer. On some weekends, I had a part time job. However, I spent most of my time learning. That is what university students should be free to do. They should not have to spend all their time working, I had students who spent up to 30 hours a week, because they could not afford the tuition or the costs to live at university.

The problem is existing students have a burden on them out of all disproportion compared to what we had when we were growing up. My students, upon graduating, correspond to the statistics of a \$30,000 debt burden to the statistics of having a \$30,000 debt burden. I ran into one of them two weeks ago on the streets of Ottawa. It is outrageous that a young person should start out in life with a \$30,000 debt. We used to buy a house for that.

The problem is students cannot afford to go to university, particularly low income kids. We are now seeing the data. The poorest income kids are starting to be deterred from even considering it because of the fee levels. The bill will not help them.

There is a shortage in university funding that cannot be ignored either. As one of my colleagues pointed out, universities are literally crumbling, and the bill does not help that.

Private Members' Business

● (1320)

As for the learning bonds, as has been pointed out by all these associations, low income families barely have enough money to pay the rent and buy food for their kids, let alone buy bonds for some long term investment strategy. I can afford to do this. Indeed, I can afford to do it for my grandchildren. I am doing it because I can afford it, but I can tell members that most low income families cannot afford it, particularly the low income families that produced a lot of the students I taught at university. They will not get it.

In fact, we know that most of the money disproportionately is going to families earning over \$70,000, who will get much more than families below \$35,000, so this is not going to meet the needs—I repeat, it is not going to meet the needs—of low income kids in this country.

If a democracy means anything in the real world, it should mean that we are allocating resources, whether it is at the child care level, in our health care system or for education, and from the bottom up. We have to concentrate on those citizens who most need assistance to develop their capacities and talents in society. That ought to be the primary objective of a government. This bill totally fails in meeting that objective.

In the past seven years we have accumulated over \$61 billion in surpluses. In the 1990s, there were cutbacks not only in post-secondary funding but across the board, cutbacks in housing and in other social dimensions of policy. No one faulted the government for dealing with the deficit issue in the early 1990s, but in the last seven budgets we have had surpluses, considerable surpluses.

It boggles the mind. Of the five countries I mentioned that provide free university and free child care and have the lowest poverty rates, not one of those countries would have a Minister of Finance who would go around boasting that we have the lowest debt to GDP ratio in the G-7 when we have child poverty at the level we have or student debt burdens at the level we have. He should be ashamed of that. He should not be boasting at this time.

And I do not want my argument to be misunderstood: I am not talking about going into deficit financing. I am talking about using the more than \$61 billion in surplus we have had in the past seven budgets in a better distribution. Yes, we should bring down the debt somewhat, but as some of my colleagues have already said, if we bring it down we have several billions of dollars that could be otherwise used.

Across this country we have thousands of low income kids in every province who deserve financial assistance. We should scrap the existing programs and scrap this bill and replace it with a system of income-based grants to students right across the country. On the other hand, we should provide to the universities the funding they need. Second, we should work with the provinces and put a freeze on the fee structure. Third, we should provide money to the provinces on the condition that they put a freeze on the fees to help rebuild the universities themselves to make up for the money they will not get once they freeze tuition fees.

We are opposed to this bill because we believe in social justice. We believe in genuine equality for kids wherever they live in this country.

● (1325)

Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all greatly respect the member.

He quoted a number of countries at the beginning of his remarks and then said there was a very high cost of university and college education here in Canada, but he knows that in this country tuition fees and, by the way, the non-tuition fees that our colleague opposite was talking about are the responsibility of the provinces. In the other countries they are not, so the other countries can control what they give to students and what the students have to pay. In this country we cannot do that.

I do not know if the member realizes that for universities in Canada at the moment roughly \$11 billion a year comes from the federal government and roughly \$8 billion a year comes from the provincial governments. I make the point that we put in a great deal of federal moneys, including grants to students, but we cannot control the costs at the other end.

● (1330)

Hon. Ed Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the member is right and I appreciate his comment. We cannot at the federal level control the costs at the other end. At the university level it is administered by the provinces, but with all due respect, that is in one sense beside the point in terms of what we can do and how we can contribute.

Of course we should be interested in controlling costs, but I have seen some evidence and I have spent time, as I have just indicated, at three major universities in the last decade in different parts of the country. Frankly, I do not see our universities wasting money. They have all felt budget pressures for 15 to 20 years now. They are in a big crunch themselves so we cannot control the costs, but what we can do at this level is make sure money goes to help those who need it, both students and universities. Federal money can go and should be going to help them.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member will have additional time for questions and comments when debate on this bill resumes. It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP) moved that Bill C-281, an act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Employment Insurance Act and the Employment Insurance Regulations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to speak at second reading of the bill I introduced, Bill C-281. I would like to begin by recognizing the contribution of my colleagues in the NDP caucus in the development of the bill, first, my seconder, the member for Hamilton Centre, who was instrumental in developing the content of the bill to the form it is in now, and second, my colleague from Ottawa Centre, who brought forward recommendations regarding the bankruptcy laws as they affect workers and employees in this country. I want to recognize and thank both of these colleagues for their contribution.

Every week in this country there are roughly 200 commercial bankruptcies, 1,000 bankruptcies a month, and roughly 10,000 bankruptcies per year, many of which leave behind employees who are owed back wages, benefits and pension contributions. The total figures we can only estimate. Over \$1 billion per year is a figure that has been used.

It is workers who pay the price when workplaces shut down. This is especially true when these shutdowns are triggered by bankruptcy, because not only do the employees lose their jobs and their source of income, they also often lose wages that they have not been paid, as I have stated, and vacation pay, termination pay and severance pay.

The reason for this is the order of priority in which employees find themselves when it comes to the distribution of the proceeds of the remaining assets of the company. Workers find themselves at the bottom of the list. I argue that today in the House of Commons in 2004, the members congregated here should be putting workers first in the event of a bankruptcy.

My bill simply reverses the order of priority. Back wages and benefits owing to employees would be ranked at the top of the list when it comes to the distribution of the remaining assets. I urge colleagues to remember or to at least contemplate that big money has controlled things in Ottawa for so long, in my view, that it is no surprise that many of the laws are crafted in such a way as to look after the interests of big money better than they look after the interests of ordinary Canadian voters.

Working people in Canada send us to Parliament to put their interests first, I argue, and in this case, this is one thing we could be doing to look after the interests of Canadian workers as a prime concern, as a priority, by putting them first in line in the event of a bankruptcy.

Parliament has tried to address the inadequacies of the bankruptcy act a number of times in recent years. I am the first to acknowledge that both the House of Commons and the Senate have been seized of the issue and I think this illustrates a growing awareness in Canada that the bankruptcy laws are in fact unfair to workers or at least do not recognize their unique status in the event of a bankruptcy.

When I argue about putting workers as the first priority, we have to view workers who are owed back wages as creditors. I think there is a case to be made that if the company has been operating on or using back wages owed to employees to operate the company, the employees are in fact creditors. Maybe they are creditors against their will in that they certainly did not give any approval to use the back wages and pension contributions to operate the company, but that is in fact what they are.

This is what we are asking members of Parliament to recognize. Employees are justified in being viewed as creditors in the distribution of the assets. In fact, we are asking Parliament to entertain the idea that they should have superpriority, because the other aspect we should acknowledge is the unique trust relationship that exists between the employer and the employee.

Banks, should they take some loss in the event of a bankruptcy, are in that business, we argue. They mitigate that loss by charging interest rates throughout the period of the loan. Even if the order of priority were reversed and employees were paid first, our research shows that the banks would still get most of what was owed to them. They would not lose all of it if some went to workers. The inverse is true, too, in that employees are vulnerable creditors, more so than the banks or the other lenders because they cannot spread that risk over a number of investments. All of their eggs are in one basket.

In the case of a bankruptcy, it is not just the back wages and benefits that are left owing. More often than not in recent high profile bankruptcies, it is the contributions to the pension plan that have a lasting effect, with an underfunded plan leaving employees with far, far less for their monthly retirement than they had earned and were led to believe they would receive.

● (1335)

All of those points add up to a compelling case that the current Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act does not serve the interests of Canadian workers—Canadian voters as it should. We in the House of Commons should put as a priority the best interests of workers and employees, not the best interests of banks and financiers who would object to this reprioritization.

We tested the views of the Canadian public. I brought with me the results of a Vector poll that we conducted with the cooperation of our partners in the labour movement, specifically the United Steel Workers of America which represents a number of workplaces that have been affected by bankruptcy recently.

This nationwide Vector poll of 1,200 Canadians, conducted with what is called a plus or minus accuracy of 1.9%, asked the following question: "Under current laws usually a bankruptcy pays its debts in this order: first, taxes, followed by the banks and other lenders, suppliers and then employees. Do you think the current bankruptcy laws are fair or not fair to employees?" Eighty-four per cent of Canadians said that the current situation was not fair to employees.

When asked a more specific question: "Sometimes bankrupt companies do not get enough money from selling off the assets to pay everyone. Under the current laws, the first to be paid are secured creditors and lenders who have a guarantee. Employees, however, are not secured creditors and may not get the wages owed to them when a company goes into bankruptcy. Should the law be changed to provide more protection for employees' unpaid wages?" Eighty-nine per cent of Canadians across the country said that the law should be changed so that it provides more protection for employees' unpaid wages.

I would think that if there was any need for further argument in the House of Commons or any question of whether this is the political ground that the government wants to take, this should give it some comfort that this is what Canadians want it to do.

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I welcome any other polls to this effect but I challenge anyone to show us results that are dramatically different from what we have demonstrated here today.

Canadians want a fair shake for employees. We want to put workers first. This after all is the House of Commons and it is not called the House of Commons for nothing. This is where common people send their representatives to make laws that work for them. It is as simple as that.

Lobbyists for the financial interests have been so prominent that laws have been crafted in such a way that they do not look after our concerns any more, at least not in this one example of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act.

Bill C-281 would do three things. First, it would reverse the order of priority to put employees first in the distribution of the proceeds from the assets of the bankrupt company.

The second thing it would do, until we can add more fairness to the bankruptcy laws, is it would change the Employment Insurance Act. If employees were laid off due to a bankruptcy and were collecting EI, if they received some settlement for back wages owed to him, those back wages would not be viewed as income in the period of time they were collecting EI. If the wages were, they would be deducted dollar for dollar from their EI payments. Seeing as they earned those wages while the company was still open, those earnings when paid later on should not be viewed as income for the purpose of EI. This is a consequential amendment to the principle and the concept of what we are introducing.

Third, the bill would change the Canada Business Corporations Act to provide a more efficacious procedure by which former employees of a bankrupt corporation who are owed wages by the corporation can proceed with claims against its directors.

• (1340)

In other words, under the current law if the proceeds of the bankruptcy are not adequate to pay for the back wages and benefits, the employees are currently allowed to sue the directors of the corporation to make up for any shortfall. However the process is tedious. It can take years, and not all the employees involved have a union to advocate for them. The bill would expedite that process. The employees could still make a claim against the directors for any shortfall but it would be expedited by an arbitration board or tribunal which could fast track the claim against the directors.

The key principle I ask members to please keep in mind is that what we are trying to do is rejig the order of priority whereby employees would rank first in priority and not at the bottom. Canadians want this and expect it. When members of Parliament are given the opportunity they should be fighting for the little guy, speaking out for the person who is left in the wake of these corporate decisions that are far beyond their control or input.

We can point to dozens of recent examples of Canadians who have been impacted. When there are almost 10,000 commercial bankruptcies per year in Canada there is no shortage of empirical evidence to point to and to draw from. In one recent example in the province of Ontario, 1,300 unionized employees with Ontario Store Fixtures lost their jobs because of bankruptcy. Even though another company restarted the business for a brief period of time it too filed

for bankruptcy. When the dust settled in that, over 1,200 employees had lost their jobs. They are owed roughly \$12 million in back wages and benefits.

In the case of Ontario Store Fixtures, no money was in the bankruptcy estate to pay for any of these claims. Guess who got paid first? Any cash that was available at the time of the first bankruptcy went to the company's banker, CIBC. Assets from the auction of the property of the second bankruptcy automatically went to other secured creditors, who in this case were the shareholders of the Ontario Store Fixtures partnership.

Virtually everybody received their money except for the actual employees of the company. I ask my colleagues to consider the ancient trust relationship that exists between the employer and the employee.

I, and many people with whom I have spoken, would like to think that whatever assets remain after a bankruptcy and after the owners have walked away, that the company would like to see that money go toward paying some of the wages it owes its employees and then whatever is left could be distributed among other creditors on the list.

This is an idea whose time has come. In the interest of fairness and on behalf of Canadian workers everywhere, I urge my colleagues to allow the bill to pass at second reading and go to committee where we can give it a more fulsome review, submit amendments, craft it whichever way we want as long as the end result is that our number one concern is to protect the interests of employees in the event of a bankruptcy. We must put workers first.

• (1345)

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is truly a significant and important day for Hamilton, the Hamilton steelworkers and certainly the retirees who would have been affected by this who did not even have the benefit of a union. This is their day.

I am very proud to have seconded the bill. I am proud of the job my colleague from Winnipeg Centre has done on this. I also know that a lot of Hamiltonians and a lot of steelworkers are glad that somebody is standing up in the House of Commons and giving their issues the airing that they deserve.

I run the risk of being called out of order, I serve notice to the Speaker, but we do have a number of activists and leaders from the labour movement. I will only mention one, Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, who is with us today for this kick-off debate of one hour. This is a smaller piece of the whole bill in terms of what will happen, but it is so important that the president and a number of other leaders in the labour movement from the CLC, and the steelworkers themselves are here because this is crucial.

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Of all the things we ever debate, this is not an esoteric, theoretical debate. This is about real people, with real families and a real crisis. And, do hon. members know what? They are real scared because as far as they are concerned somebody is trying to steal their pensions. I cannot imagine anything that could be more terrifying for people who are on the brink of retirement or in retirement than to hear, after having done their duty, having worked hard their whole working life, having made commitments to their communities, having raised their families and having taken money out of their wallets to put toward their future, that their retirement savings were in jeopardy and that they could be facing poverty after all those decades doing their bit.

If ever there was the business of the people to be done, this is the bill. I want to urge members to at least send the bill to committee and give the workers at Stelco, the steelworkers and other workers, their day in court.

A similar bill to this one was introduced by the member in the last Parliament, the 37th Parliament. It had a co-sponsor from Hamilton, a member of the governing party at that time, the former member for Hamilton East. However it was a majority government and the bill died on the order paper.

Now we are in a minority situation and a similar bill is in front of us being debated. It will be voted on. We have every hope that it will get to committee. Does the member think that because this is a minority Parliament versus a majority in the previous Parliament it has anything to do with why we have some optimism that we will get the bill passed at second reading, sent to committee and ultimately passed into law?

• (1350)

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Hamilton is right when he says that previous parliaments have attempted to deal with this thorny issue, and as recently as the last Parliament. I was seconded by a Liberal MP, the member for Hamilton East, when I introduced a very similar bill in the House of Commons.

Minority government works for ordinary Canadians. We are faced with a unique opportunity to do something historic here. In my view, if we do nothing else in this minority Parliament, if we move this issue toward justice for working people, our time will be well served and our political capital well spent.

From a Hamilton point of view, which both the hon. member and my previous seconder from Hamilton raised, Cold Metal Products stands as a glaring example here. Cold Metal Products, which was located in Hamilton, went bankrupt in 2003. When it shut down, 80 members of the Steelworkers Union were shocked to learn that their employer sponsored pension plan was only 55% funded and that their pensions would be cut back, not just the employees who lost their jobs due to the bankruptcy, but the pensioners, the beneficiaries of the plan. The core plan was 55% underfunded.

This is a pattern. It is becoming a typical norm among employers. They are allowed, although I never understood why, to underfund their pension by 20%, but they push it and there is no enforcement of those who exceed that limit. They run at 50% underfunded and if they run into financial difficulty that funding is never made up.

The bill would require and mandate that the shortfall be made up so that the beneficiaries and the current employees do not lose their pension benefits.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to respond to Bill C-281. I congratulate the member for Winnipeg Centre. There is no doubt that wage earners need protection when their employers go bankrupt. Everyone in the House is concerned about this problem and has been for a long time.

Over the years different options for wage earners' protection have been considered. They have been considered here and each with its own benefits and drawbacks.

I would like to offer up some comments as a former unionized worker, as a former small businessman and as a recovering corporate lawyer.

In examining the various options, one question has to be answered and it is this. Is this approach fair to all parties? Make no mistake, bankruptcy means there will be a shortfall and not all debts will be paid. All parties suffer in a bankruptcy, including employees, creditors, suppliers and the owners of the company.

Our challenge here is to find the proper balance in the protection of these various interests.

While it is difficult to say that the protection of workers, the backbone of our economy, can go too far, I believe Bill C-281 does just that. It goes too far. The bill throws all balance and equity out the window. It represents a radical departure from the existing system, one that if adopted into law, could have a dramatic effect on the economy and the very workers that it seeks to protect.

Let me explain. The solution proposed in Bill C-281 is straightforward, an unlimited super priority for all employment related claims to all of the assets of the bankrupt company. In addition to wages and vacation pay, it would add termination, severance pay and other benefits. It could also add protection for pensions, including unfunded liabilities.

The liabilities, in particular the unfunded liabilities, can be huge, outstripping the value of the company's assets and the company's ability to pay.

Due to the magnitude of the super priority contemplated in the bill, it could have serious effects on credit and capital access, particularly for higher risk new businesses, particularly high technology companies, over 1,500 of which exist, for example, in my region here in the National Capital region.

Creditor claims, even those that are secured under the appropriate law, would fall below employment related claims. If all the company's assets go to satisfy worker claims, there would be nothing left to pay remaining creditors. Creditors would be less certain about their ability to collect debts owed to them and it could be assumed would be less interested in investing in Canadian companies.

We must also consider smaller creditors, such as trades people and suppliers. These individuals are in many cases no more capable of protecting their interests than workers. Small businesses and independent contractors take risks when they supply other companies, and our system must respect their efforts as well as their claims in bankruptcies.

Again, we come back to the issue of balance. The underlying factor is that disharmony in the system will have potential economic costs. If credit is not available, businesses will not expand and they might even contract. If business does not expand, new jobs are not created and labourers will see less demand and less opportunities for their services.

The protection of wages must not be examined in a vacuum. Insolvency reform cannot eliminate risk or harm. It should strive to strike the best possible balance of the needs of all parties in a bankruptcy proceeding. The fact is that bankruptcy is about not having enough money to go around. The issue is how best to allocate that shortfall when everyone deserves to be paid.

Bill C-281 does not strike the right balance. It attempts to benefit one group in the equation, while placing an unfair burden on the others. To be sure, the super priority proposed by the bill is not the issue. Indeed, it might be a proper approach to take, but the balance proposed in this bill is off.

It is the position of the government that finding the right balance will require additional study. Reform in this area should wait for the results of the Industry Canada review of this and other insolvency related issues.

I would like to address one other element of the bill that has not received enough attention. The proposed bill also amends the Canada Business Corporations Act. I would commend to my colleague, the member of the NDP, to listen and learn carefully about how the Canada Business Corporations Act actually grants the minister of labour the power to appoint an adjudicator to hear and resolve wage claims by employees.

● (1355)

While it can be appreciated that everyone's best interests are served when claims of this sort are settled quickly, it is unclear as to why the bill would replace the courts as the mechanism for settling these disputes.

The Canada Business Corporations Act already has provisions for wage liability for directors. Right now the directors of a corporation are jointly and severally liable for six months of wages owing to employees in the event of a bankruptcy. This is an absolute liability. There is no statutory defence. These claims, even in a moderate sized corporation, can achieve sums in the millions of dollars.

The courts already have the expertise to deal with large claims of this kind. The small claims courts can deal with situations that involve only a few employees. In any event, given that wage liability is absolute, all that remains for a court to do is satisfy itself that the claim is valid and order the payment. The bill adds little except to set up a parallel system without some of the usual due process rules, including a specific prohibition of a right of appeal. Due process in my estimation should not be capriciously discarded. Despite the cost,

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the rigorous standard created by an absolute liability offence justifies having the safeguards consistent with a formal court proceeding.

Under the provisions of the bill, the adjudicator may summon and enforce the attendance of witnesses, compel testimony, compel the production of documents, administer oaths and order directors to pay employees the wages owing. This sounds like a court to me. Substitute the word judge for adjudicator and we have a system very much like that which currently exists, and one that operates transparently, fairly, and without the additional layers of bureaucracy. I see no need for these provisions.

The government agrees that wage protection is deserving of attention and is actively exploring the options to deal with this important issue. The solution put forward in Bill C-281 is neither practical nor reasonable, insofar as its effects on other stakeholders. It ignores the concept of balance. It favours one group to the exclusion of all others. It ignores the economic impact of unlimited super priority. It ignores the interests of the many creditors, both large and small, who by taking risks and supporting Canadian business, allow our economy to flourish and allow so many of the hundreds of thousands of jobs to be created in the first place.

● (1400)

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some brief remarks with respect to Bill C-281.

There is no question that when it comes to protecting the rights of workers and their wages and salaries, every member of the House would agree that those are important issues which need to be addressed. Workers need to be protected. We have many human tragedy stories that would indicate people have suffered through loss of pensions, entitlements or severance pay. It is not a question of whether those rights need to be protected. The big issue is how they are best protected without creating problems in other places and with regard to other interested parties.

There are obvious examples in a bankruptcy of people who have to take economic loss. Many suppliers are even below the worker in terms of unsecured status. They too suffer significantly.

When a business comes into being, there are many dreams, aspirations and hopes by many parties. Fundamental to getting that business started is the ability to raise capital and operating funds to buy inventory, goods and supplies and to have the plant and the process operate. Most people would go to banks, credit unions or third parties to obtain finances to get their businesses started and to establish those jobs in the first place. Those parties provide funds in return for security. It could be hard assets, inventory or floating charge debentures, but they take those things in exchange for providing cash. They expect to realize on that security. That is why secured creditors have been given preference.

I find it hard to understand how employees are in a situation where pensions are unfunded to the degree they are without some policing taking place. The one who provides the funding expects to get the cash back when the business fails. If we start to destroy the concept of secure transactions, we will be unable to start businesses and create the jobs. We need to be careful.

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When we look at the scheme that presently exists under section 36 of the Bankruptcy Act, secured creditors are first, then preferred creditors and outside of bankruptcy fees and costs, the workers are number four. Then it goes to unsecured creditors. Workers are protected to the sum of \$2,000 in past wages.

The previous bill introduced by the member talked about super priority status for workers, and it was limited to \$10,000. Why was it limited to \$10,000? It was for good reason. It is hard to estimate or understand the amount and value of unfunded pensions, et cetera. The present bill places the workers ahead of all creditors, regardless of time and dollars. How is a person, who is advancing funds, to know what these liabilities may be?

If this bill were passed, there would be severance, which would depend on the length of time the worker was employed. There would be unfunded pensions. A lack of money in the pension fund could be created by it being actuarially unsound by the economic conditions, or by perhaps negotiations through collective bargaining agreements that would enhance the pension which has not yet been funded or to which no contributions have yet been made. These amounts could be huge, but unknown at the time the business started up and unknown at the time the financing was advanced. The only thing that can happen is they would have to plan for a contingency. They would have to plan for what the eventuality may be, which would then restrict credit, lower the amount that could be loaned or increase the interest rate.

This is not the way we want to go. This is not the way we want to deal with business, taking the problem from one area and placing it in another, particularly when the secured creditor has little to do with funding pensions and policing how that happens.

● (1405)

We must look at other alternatives that would preserve the current lending system and that would look at protecting the workers. I think that is a valid concern.

It is interesting to note that workers in other jurisdictions, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia are not given a super or high priority status over secured creditors. They have considered something akin to a worker's protection fund where there is a contribution from the employer, the employee and perhaps from the government. These funds are then used in part to protect workers. It is funded by the people who are affected and the people who have some control of the government.

In each of the jurisdictions they have limitations, so there is some certainty as to what is involved. The United States has put a cap in dollars but has given them a preferred status. It is those kinds of options that need to be reviewed. These are options that take into account the rights of the workers and the security of the market. They ensure that trade and commerce can continue, that we are able to do business as we have known business to be done, and it does not take a resolution that resolves one problem and creates another.

It is for this reason that I feel this particular bill ought not to be approved. It should be opposed. We should look at a bill, introduced in proper time, that takes into consideration all of the stakeholders, all of the parties that are involved, and addresses the issue fairly and into the future.

It is not something we can resolve in what is happening today in a particular situation. It is what we do to resolve an industry issue that is of concern to us. We need to address worker protection. We must address the issue of pensions. Some of that may need to be addressed through pension legislation separate and apart from the bankruptcy legislation. In any event, it must be a broader perspective. It must have a broader view. It must take all of the interests into account when it is being drafted.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Winnipeg Centre for having introduced Bill C-281. As I have already said elsewhere, if he had not introduced it, I would have been happy to do so in my capacity as Bloc Québécois labour critic.

There is no point in repeating that the Bloc Québécois supports the bill in principle. Obviously, employees normally have no way to protect themselves when their employer experiences financial difficulties. Unlike financial institutions, which have more than one source of income, employees do not have the same ability to absorb a loss of income for hours they have already worked.

Obviously, it is difficult for employees to assess the risks of working for a particular company. When an employer has financial problems, its best resources may decide to leave to avoid losing any income, which would further decrease the employer's chances of resolving his problems.

I want to reiterate the commitments the Bloc Québécois made during the last election campaign. The BQ committed to proposing amendments to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act so that the wages and pension funds of employees would be the first debts paid if a company went bankrupt.

The current situation, as we know, is inadequate. Under the current legislation, an employee who has worked all his or her life for the same firm can end up without any income if that company goes bankrupt. The employee loses not only future salary income, but also all contributions to the company pension plan.

For example, in 2003, the workers and retirees of the Canadian Steel Foundries in Montreal found themselves with an unfunded pension fund when the foundry closed. In that case, the guaranteed creditors were owed \$5 million, which left nothing to pay for the system's unfunded liabilities, such as the pension fund, amounting to \$260,000. The employees' pension benefits were reduced but the bank was able to recover its \$5 million.

The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of a motion brought before the House by the NDP in October 2003, asking the government to amend the Bankruptcy Act to ensure that the wages and pensions of employees would be the first debts paid in case of bankruptcy. Unfortunately, the Liberal Party voted against that motion and the bill was not passed.

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Today, as I said, the Bloc will vote in favour of this bill but during the adoption process, it will propose certain amendments. For example, the Bloc will propose the creation of a fund to guarantee pension benefits, which could provide protection to participants in pension plans that are unfunded when the business closes. Such a fund exists in Ontario.

The wage guarantee has not been changed since 1975. The \$2,000 amount would be equal to around \$7,300 in 2004 dollars, according to the Bank of Canada's conversion as of December 3, 2004. It should be increased and indexed.

The fact is that the rights of creditors and the rights of workers are seriously out of balance. Secured creditors are usually the ones who can forgo that guarantee, that is, they can survive financially without a guarantee.

Creditors at the top of the list, financial institutions and large suppliers, have the expertise not only to assess a company's risks, but also to create a guarantee in a legal context. In contrast, employees do not have the opportunity nor very often the information they would need to obtain any guarantee that their hours of work will really be rewarded.

Employees cannot easily absorb a loss of income, unlike financial institutions that have several sources of income.

Even though the proceeds of their activities might be higher than wages, financial institutions diversify their risk, which a regular employee cannot do.

Thus, by giving first priority to unpaid wages, Bill C-281 would reduce the burden on an employee who has just lost his job and, need I remind you, would be a better social measure.

● (1410)

It is important to note that there is no guarantee employees would receive the full value of their unpaid wages, since the amount paid would depend on the value of assets being liquidated. Nonetheless, the money paid back would be even less if we kept the current system.

Some have said that making unpaid wages a first priority might inhibit the borrowing capacity of the companies, particularly those with a very large payroll. Some also say that the rules for borrowing could become stricter and that interest rates could increase if lenders no longer had priority status.

In response to these arguments, let us remember that financial institutions broadly diversify their risks and that wages are often much lower than capital costs.

These days, pay day is usually every two weeks, which greatly limits the risk of having huge amounts to pay in wages.

Passing this bill would shake up the bankruptcy and insolvency rules and standards, which have for too long gone undisturbed.

However, this restructuring is more than necessary, since the business world is constantly changing and workers can no longer be so sure about the future of the companies that employ them.

It is wrong not to ensure a minimum of protection for workers' wages and certain benefits, such as the pension funds they contribute to their entire lives while their employer has enjoyed profits.

To those who claim that amending the act will cause major problems for companies in terms of financing, they should never forget that the operation and success of a company depend in large part on its workers.

It is unthinkable that in the quest for profits and the lowest possible operating costs, we are failing to show due respect for workers.

● (1415)

[*English*]

Mr. Marc Godbout (Ottawa—Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the protection of wage earners when their employers go bankrupt is not a partisan issue, nor should it be. All of us in the House are concerned about this problem. We agree, I am sure, that wage earners, whose employers have gone bankrupt, leaving wages and other benefits unpaid, are vulnerable. Over the years, different governments have considered options for wage earner protection. Each option has both benefits and drawbacks. I am confident that members on all sides would like to see the most equitable solution possible and are prepared to work toward the solution.

I wish to congratulate the member from Winnipeg for having brought this to the attention of the House. As a starting point for this debate, let me note that the government agrees that wage protection is deserving of attention. I can also tell the House that the government is actively exploring options in order to deal with this important issue.

To better assess the bill, let me describe the features of the current act. To protect employees, the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act makes employees preferred creditors when their employer goes bankrupt. That places them ahead of ordinary creditors but behind secured creditors. This preferred status is limited to \$2,000 in wages earned in the six months before bankruptcy, including vacation pay. Amounts in excess of \$2,000 remain as ordinary claims. It also protects up to \$1,000 in disbursements for sales people.

The provision for wage liability also exists in the Canada Business Corporations Act. Right now directors of corporations are jointly and severally liable to employees for six months wages in the event of a bankruptcy. This is an absolute liability.

Bill C-281 would radically alter the situation. It fails in some ways to reflect the many other parties in a bankruptcy. Bill C-281 proposes to give unlimited super priority protection to all employment-related claims. In addition to wages and vacation pay, it would add termination and severance pay and other benefits. It would also add protection for pensions, including unfunded liability. In that respect, I personally have some sympathy for that aspect of the bill.

Private Members' Business

Upon bankruptcy, these claims would be moved ahead of all other creditors. For any shortfalls in recovery, directors of a company would have personal liability that would be determined, not in court but by an adjudicator, without right of appeal.

[*Translation*]

There are a great many drawbacks to this bill.

The amount of the termination and severance pay and unfunded pension plan liability could far exceed the total wages owing, potentially reaching several billions. As a result, this super priority will, without a doubt, have a negative impact on credit availability and commercial loan rates, which will make business start ups or expansions more difficult than ever, in a number of situations.

As for the clauses relating to directors' responsibilities, the bill does not add very much, except to set in place a parallel system without some of the usual recourses. Regardless of cost, the standard of rigour imposed by absolute liability would justify the existence of guidelines compatible with formal legal procedures.

Bill C-281 puts pension claims in the same basket as wage claims, despite the fact that pensions are covered by separate legislative regimes, and in a number of instances by provincial legislation. Mechanisms making it possible to address pension issues are already in place in these forums, and concerns relating to unfunded pension liabilities should be raised there to ensure employee protection.

Finally, even with this type of protection in place, payments would not be guaranteed, nor would they be made promptly. Many stakeholders maintain that the promptness and certainty of payment are essential to worker protection. Creation of a wage protection fund is one valid option, which merits a thorough study, along with super priority and other factors.

• (1420)

[*English*]

The significance of this bill is that while it does go a great deal further in protecting workers, the scope of what it includes shifts an unreasonable burden to other stakeholders. As a result, it could have a detrimental impact on the ability of businesses to access credit and increase employment opportunities for Canadians.

This is not what our insolvency system is about. Bankruptcy laws are a significant part of our marketplace framework. The bill would have a negative effect on commercial activity. Creditors grant credit based upon the assessment of risk. Bill C-281 would significantly increase that risk. While some of the creditors who may be adversely affected are those often thought of as being able to take care of themselves, such as large institutions, some are individual contractors and small businesses that are no better able to face the loss than employees.

In fact, small businesses and new start-ups are two of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to insolvency because they are hit twice. As creditors, they cannot afford the greater losses that the bill would cause. Greater costs of borrowing as debtors makes it less likely that they can get started and thus create jobs.

We must be mindful of these effects, as we all know the importance to the Canadian economy of small and mid-sized enterprises.

Our system must respect the risks taken by small businesses and independent contractors that also have claims in bankruptcies. It must respect the security interests of creditors. It must respect the efforts of directors who try to ensure the survival of the company. And yes, it certainly must respect employees. The fact is that bankruptcy is about not having enough money to go around. The issue is how best to allocate that shortfall when everyone deserves to be paid.

I am not saying that superpriority should be rejected as a way of handling wage and pension contribution claims in bankruptcy, but I am stressing that it is a complex issue, that it has a long history and that it involves certain trade-offs. The economic effect of any change needs to be thoroughly considered.

Last year, the Senate Standing Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce conducted a comprehensive review of our insolvency system. The committee only went so far as to recommend that the existing protection be elevated to a limited superpriority over some assets. It further recommended that pensions not be included in this form of protection and in that aspect I think it did not go too far.

[*Translation*]

To conclude, I have sketched out these details to make a simple point clear to my hon. colleagues of various stripes.

My point is that this whole issue of wage earner protection in the event of a bankruptcy is of great interest and must be addressed. However, to find a fairer solution than what currently exists will require a great deal of work and thought. The process is already well underway but is not yet complete. The solution put forward in Bill C-281 is neither practical nor reasonable in certain circumstances, because of its impact on other stakeholders.

As I indicated at the beginning, this is not a partisan issue. Different governments have been confronted with this issue, which must be resolved. In 1991, a bill was introduced to establish a wage claim protection program to be financed through payroll, but it was not passed. There are various models for increasing protections, and these were discussed during the period before the amendment of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act in 1997. But once again, consensus could not be achieved.

Still, and I stress this point again, while Bill C-281 is certainly well intentioned, it is definitely not the best solution.

Industry Canada is currently working on developing a fair solution to ensure the protection of workers whose employer has declared bankruptcy. Until such time as this work is complete, the government cannot support a bill to amend existing safeguards.

However, I give my personal pledge to work with my hon. colleague to find a solution that is fair to all those involved.

Private Members' Business

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Ed Broadbent (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are many definitions of democracy, but the most succinct one and the one which I have tended to prefer over many years is the one offered by Abraham Lincoln. He said that democracy was government of, by and for the people, not just of and by, but for the people. Political power in a democratic society should be used for the benefit of the average and the poor.

This is a concrete example, it seems to me, of a serious desire to use the capacity of the state that already legislates the benefits of financial institutions, the banks and other investors, to redress the balance on the side of working families. We should approach it from that point of view.

Those who have raised questions about it, those who have praised my colleague's intent with the bill, I hope would vote for it to send it to committee. Then we could have a serious examination of the practical problems that have been raised about generating the necessary investment capital and we would know if we are serious or not.

It would be interesting to hear from people from various government departments and even from the banks. I would love to hear them explain why this would be a serious problem. Maybe the banks could also explain why they are making billions of dollars in profits and they do not pay taxes on their offshore investments in the Caribbean at the same time.

The bill says, to use an old slogan, let us for once put the workers first, the men and women who have devoted 30 or 40 years of their lives to a corporation. Many of us think that is the real investment. I am not denigrating the financial investment. I am just saying that they are both investments. One is through human labour and the other is through capital.

The bill wants us, when we have to make choices, to say that the human labour should be given preference over the capital investment, rather than the other way around. Whether in terms of salaries or wages or in terms of pension benefits, the legitimate claims of workers should be taken ahead of the banks and other financial institutions, suppliers, governments and shareholders if a company goes bankrupt.

Frankly, the only serious argument I have heard against this proposal has been the one that this could somehow deter investment capital. That cannot be dismissed out of hand, but as our colleague from the Bloc Québécois has said, most investment institutions, to understate it considerably, have a widely diverse investment pattern.

If a company went broke in a certain category of its investment, the workers would get, under the provisions of this bill if it passed, the first benefit and the bank would lose some money. Under the present circumstances, it is the workers who lose everything. The banks would lose something here. Normally in capital markets with investments going on in real societies, not just investments here in Canada, they have diverse investments abroad. They will make up for the loss here with what they make elsewhere, which are normally fully adequate profits in their other investments. That is the expectation with the bill.

I come back to my colleagues in the other parties who have raised the investment problem. Why not put a clause in the bill? Why not amend the bill? Why not send the bill to committee and put in an amendment which says that after three years or five years the issue would be revisited? We could take a look at the evidence and, to quote Mr. Diefenbaker's old phrase, if the calamitous disaster should occur as some people think would occur by putting workers first, then we could have a look at it.

Let us try this priority. Let us go ahead and let the working families have the legitimate first claim. If there was a major problem in accumulating capital for investment in our society, after five years, we could look at the bill and then reconsider. I appeal to my colleagues to send the bill to committee.

• (1430)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member will have a further five minutes when we next get back to the bill.

[Translation]

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

[English]

It being 2:30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. CHUCK STRAHL

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. MARCEL PROULX

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. JEAN AUGUSTINE

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

HON. MAURIL BÉLANGER

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

MR. JAY HILL

HON. WALT LASTEWKA

HON. KAREN REDMAN

MR. JOHN REYNOLDS

HON. TONY VALERI

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Thirty Eight Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Hon. Peter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Peterborough	Ontario	Lib.
Alcock, Hon. Reg, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	Lib.
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Rona	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Anderson, Hon. David	Victoria	British Columbia	Lib.
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	Quebec	BQ
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	Quebec	BQ
Augustine, Hon. Jean, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Quebec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bains, Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Bakopanos, Hon. Eleni, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development (Social Economy)	Ahuntsic	Quebec	Lib.
Barnes, Hon. Sue, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	London West	Ontario	Lib.
Batters, Dave	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West	Ontario	Lib.
Bélangier, Hon. Mauril, Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages, Minister responsible for Democratic Reform and Associate Minister of National Defence	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	British Columbia	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Quebec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn, Minister of State (Public Health)	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Quebec	BQ
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Ontario	Lib.
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Quebec	BQ
Blaikie, Hon. Bill	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Quebec	BQ
Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Minister of State (Northern Develop- ment)	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	Lib.
Boire, Alain	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Quebec	BQ
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	Quebec	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond	Nickel Belt	Ontario	Lib.
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Quebec	BQ
Boshcoff, Ken	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Quebec	BQ
Boudria, Hon. Don	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	Lib.
Boulianne, Marc	Mégantic—L'Érable	Quebec	BQ
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Quebec	BQ
Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of State (Human Resources Development)	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Broadbent, Hon. Ed	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Brown, Bonnie	Oakville	Ontario	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Quebec	BQ
Bulte, Hon. Sarmite, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	British Columbia	Ind.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Quebec	BQ
Carr, Gary	Halton	Ontario	Lib.
Carrie, Colin	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Quebec	BQ
Carroll, Hon. Aileen, Minister of International Cooperation	Barrie	Ontario	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Catterall, Marlene	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	Lib.
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Chan, Hon. Raymond, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)	Richmond	British Columbia	Lib.
Chatters, David	Battle River	Alberta	CPC
Chong, Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clavet, Roger	Louis-Hébert	Quebec	BQ
Cleary, Bernard	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Quebec	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Quebec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe, Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	Lib.
Côté, Guy	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Quebec	BQ
Cotler, Hon. Irwin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Mount Royal	Quebec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Quebec	BQ
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Hon. Roy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Demers, Nicole	Laval	Quebec	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	Quebec	BQ
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Quebec	BQ
DeVillers, Hon. Paul	Simcoe North	Ontario	Lib.
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Minister of the Environment	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Quebec	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal, Minister of Health	Vancouver South	British Columbia	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Drouin, Hon. Claude, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Rural Communities)	Beauce	Quebec	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken, Minister of Social Development	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Quebec	BQ
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Rural Development)	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Efford, Hon. R. John, Minister of Natural Resources	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of Industry	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	Lib.
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Eyking, Hon. Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade (Emerging Markets)	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Quebec	BQ
Finley, Diane	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Fletcher, Steven	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Quebec	Lib.
Fontana, Hon. Joe, Minister of Labour and Housing	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Frulla, Hon. Liza, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women	Jeanne-Le Ber	Quebec	Lib.
Fry, Hon. Hedy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Quebec	BQ
Gagnon, Sébastien	Jonquière—Alma	Quebec	BQ
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Galloway, Hon. Roger	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	Lib.
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Quebec	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Quebec	BQ
Godbout, Marc	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	Lib.
Godfrey, Hon. John, Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities)	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Minister of Finance	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gouk, Jim	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of National Defence	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Grewal, Gurmant	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	CPC
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Quebec	BQ
Guergis, Helena	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	Quebec	BQ
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Harper, Hon. Stephen	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Harrison, Jeremy	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Hearn, Loyola		Newfoundland and Labrador	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	St. John's South—Mount Pearl South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hinton, Betty	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	Lib.
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	New Brunswick	Lib.
Ianno, Hon. Tony, Minister of State (Families and Caregivers)	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	Lib.
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada—U.S.)	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Quebec	Lib.
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill	Ontario	Lib.
Kamp, Randy	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Nunavut	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Khan, Wajid	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	Lib.
Kilgour, Hon. David	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	Alberta	Lib.
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	Quebec	BQ
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Quebec	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Quebec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lapierre, Hon. Jean, Minister of Transport	Outremont	Quebec	Lib.
Lapierre, Réal	Lévis—Bellechasse	Quebec	BQ
Lastewka, Hon. Walt, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	St. Catharines	Ontario	Lib.
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Quebec	BQ
Layton, Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Quebec	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	Quebec	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik —Eeyou	Quebec	BQ
Longfield, Hon. Judi, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Housing	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	Lib.
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Quebec	BQ
Lukiwski, Tom	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Peter	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Macklin, Hon. Paul Harold, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	Lib.
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	Lib.
Maloney, John	Welland	Ontario	Lib.
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint- Charles	Quebec	BQ
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River— Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Marleau, Hon. Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board	Sudbury	Ontario	Lib.
Martin, Hon. Keith, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Right Hon. Paul, Prime Minister	LaSalle—Émard	Quebec	Lib.
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
McCallum, Hon. John, Minister of National Revenue	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	Quebec	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Quebec	BQ
Menzies, Ted	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, James	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Rob	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Murphy, Hon. Shawn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Myers, Lynn	Kitchener—Wilmot—Wellesley—Woolwich	Ontario	Lib.
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
O'Brien, Lawrence	Newfoundland and Labrador	Labrador	Lib.
O'Brien, Pat	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	Lib.
O'Connor, Gordon	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Bev	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport)	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Quebec	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Quebec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis	Brome—Missisquoi	Quebec	Lib.
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	Ind.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Quebec	Lib.
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Quebec	BQ
Peterson, Hon. Jim, Minister of International Trade	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Papineau	Quebec	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	Quebec	BQ
Pickard, Hon. Jerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	Lib.
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Quebec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Poirier-Rivard, Denise	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Quebec	BQ
Powers, Russ	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	Lib.
Prentice, Jim	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Proulx, Marcel, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Hull—Aylmer	Quebec	Lib.
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Regan, Hon. Geoff, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Reynolds, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Quebec	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Quebec	Lib.
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis— Matane—Matapédia	Quebec	BQ
Saada, Hon. Jacques, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie	Brossard—La Prairie	Quebec	Lib.
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	Quebec	BQ
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	Lib.
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Quebec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Scott, Hon. Andy, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Fredericton	New Brunswick	Lib.
Sgro, Hon. Judy, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simard, Christian	Beauport—Limoilou	Quebec	BQ
Simard, Hon. Raymond, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Smith, David	Pontiac	Quebec	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Quebec	BQ
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Ontario	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin— Kapusking	Ontario	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	Lib.
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Strahl, Chuck, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Stronach, Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	Lib.
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	Lib.
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette— Témiscouata—Les Basques	Quebec	BQ
Thibault, Hon. Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	West Nova	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Vic	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Torsney, Hon. Paddy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Burlington	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	Lib.
Valeri, Hon. Tony, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	Lib.
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Ontario	Lib.
Van Loan, Peter	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	Quebec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
White, Randy	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	CPC
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	New Brunswick	Lib.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Thirty Eight Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Rona	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Chatters, David	Battle River	CPC
Epp, Ken	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Hanger, Art	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Harper, Hon. Stephen	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Jaffer, Rahim	Edmonton—Strathcona	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Johnston, Dale	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Kenney, Jason	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Kilgour, Hon. David	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	Lib.
McLellan, Hon. Anne, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Edmonton Centre	Lib.
Menzies, Ted	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Mills, Bob	Red Deer	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak	Calgary East	CPC
Penson, Charlie	Peace River	CPC
Prentice, Jim	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Solberg, Monte	Medicine Hat	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Thompson, Myron	Wild Rose	CPC
Williams, John	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Abbott, Jim	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Anderson, Hon. David	Victoria	Lib.
Bell, Don	North Vancouver	Lib.
Cadman, Chuck	Surrey North	Ind.
Chan, Hon. Raymond, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)	Richmond	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Stockwell	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal, Minister of Health	Vancouver South	Lib.
Duncan, John	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of Industry	Vancouver Kingsway	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Forseth, Paul	New Westminster—Coquitlam	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Gouk, Jim	British Columbia Southern Interior	CPC
Grewal, Gurmant	Newton—North Delta	CPC
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Jay	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Hinton, Betty	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunn, Gary	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Moore, James	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Owen, Hon. Stephen, Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Sport)	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Reynolds, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Schmidt, Werner	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Stinson, Darrel	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
Strahl, Chuck, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	CPC
White, Randy	Abbotsford	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Alcock, Hon. Reg, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board	Winnipeg South	Lib.
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Blaikie, Hon. Bill	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Desjarlais, Bev	Churchill	NDP
Fletcher, Steven	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Pallister, Brian	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Simard, Hon. Raymond, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform	Saint Boniface	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Vic	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Bradshaw, Hon. Claudette, Minister of State (Human Resources Development)	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Hubbard, Charles	Miramichi	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Rob	Fundy Royal	CPC
Savoy, Andy	Tobique—Mactaquac	Lib.
Scott, Hon. Andy, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Fredericton	Lib.
Thompson, Greg	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
Zed, Paul	Saint John	Lib.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)

Byrne, Hon. Gerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Doyle, Norman	St. John's East	CPC
Efford, Hon. R. John, Minister of Natural Resources	Avalon	Lib.
Hearn, Loyola	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	CPC
Matthews, Bill	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
O'Brien, Lawrence	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)

Blondin-Andrew, Hon. Ethel, Minister of State (Northern Development)	Western Arctic	Lib.
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NOVA SCOTIA (11)

Brison, Hon. Scott, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade (Emerging Markets)	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
MacKay, Peter	Central Nova	CPC
McDonough, Alexa	Halifax	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Halifax West	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
Thibault, Hon. Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	West Nova	Lib.

NUNAVUT (1)

Karetak-Lindell, Nancy	Nunavut	Lib.
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ONTARIO (106)

Adams, Hon. Peter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Peterborough	Lib.
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Augustine, Hon. Jean, Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Bains, Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Barnes, Hon. Sue, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	London West	Lib.
Beaumier, Colleen	Brampton West.....	Lib.
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril, Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages, Minister responsible for Democratic Reform and Associate Minister of National Defence	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn, Minister of State (Public Health)	St. Paul's.....	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.
Bonin, Raymond.....	Nickel Belt	Lib.
Boshcoff, Ken.....	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Lib.
Boudria, Hon. Don	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.....	Lib.
Broadbent, Hon. Ed	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Brown, Bonnie.....	Oakville.....	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Bulte, Hon. Sarmite, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage .	Parkdale—High Park	Lib.
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre.....	Lib.
Carr, Gary.....	Halton.....	Lib.
Carrie, Colin	Oshawa	CPC
Carroll, Hon. Aileen, Minister of International Cooperation	Barrie	Lib.
Catterall, Marlene.....	Ottawa West—Nepean.....	Lib.
Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda.....	Guelph	Lib.
Chong, Michael.....	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Christopherson, David.....	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh.....	NDP
Comuzzi, Hon. Joe, Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario).....	Thunder Bay—Superior North.....	Lib.
Cullen, Hon. Roy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Etobicoke North.....	Lib.
DeVillers, Hon. Paul	Simcoe North	Lib.
Devolin, Barry	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dhalla, Ruby.....	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken, Minister of Social Development	York Centre	Lib.
Finley, Diane.....	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Fontana, Hon. Joe, Minister of Labour and Housing	London North Centre	Lib.
Gallant, Cheryl.....	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Galloway, Hon. Roger.....	Simcoe—Lambton	Lib.
Godbout, Marc.....	Ottawa—Orléans	Lib.
Godfrey, Hon. John, Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities)	Don Valley West	Lib.
Goodyear, Gary	Cambridge	CPC
Graham, Hon. Bill, Minister of National Defence	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Helena.....	Simcoe—Grey.....	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Ianno, Hon. Tony, Minister of State (Families and Caregivers).....	Trinity—Spadina	Lib.
Kadis, Susan	Thornhill.....	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Khan, Wajid.....	Mississauga—Streetsville.....	Lib.
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lastewka, Hon. Walt, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	St. Catharines	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Layton, Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Longfield, Hon. Judi, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Housing	Whitby—Oshawa	Lib.
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Macklin, Hon. Paul Harold, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Northumberland—Quinte West	Lib.
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Maloney, John	Welland	Lib.
Marleau, Hon. Diane, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board	Sudbury	Lib.
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John, Minister of National Revenue	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria, Beaches—East York	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Mitchell, Hon. Andy, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Lib.
Myers, Lynn	Kitchener—Wilmot—Wellesley—Woolwich	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob	Niagara Falls	CPC
O'Brien, Pat	London—Fanshawe	Lib.
O'Connor, Gordon	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Bev	Durham	CPC
Parrish, Carolyn	Mississauga—Erindale	Ind.
Peterson, Hon. Jim, Minister of International Trade	Willowdale	Lib.
Phinney, Beth	Hamilton Mountain	Lib.
Pickard, Hon. Jerry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Lib.
Poillievre, Pierre	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Powers, Russ	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Lib.
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Redman, Hon. Karen	Kitchener Centre	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	York West	Lib.
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
St. Amand, Lloyd	Brant	Lib.
St. Denis, Brent	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskinging	Lib.
Steckle, Paul	Huron—Bruce	Lib.
Stronach, Belinda	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Telegdi, Hon. Andrew	Kitchener—Waterloo	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Temelkovski, Lui	Oak Ridges—Markham	Lib.
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Torsney, Hon. Paddy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Burlington	Lib.
Ur, Rose-Marie	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Lib.
Valeri, Hon. Tony, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Lib.
Valley, Roger	Kenora	Lib.
Van Loan, Peter	York—Simcoe	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wappel, Tom	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Richmond Hill	Lib.
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Easter, Hon. Wayne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food (Rural Development)	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
McGuire, Hon. Joe, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Egmont	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Charlottetown	Lib.

QUEBEC (75)

André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	BQ
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	BQ
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Bakopanos, Hon. Eleni, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development (Social Economy)	Ahuntsic	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Bergeron, Stéphane	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	BQ
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	BQ
Boire, Alain	Beauharnois—Salaberry	BQ
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	Lib.
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	BQ
Boulianne, Marc	Mégantic—L'Érable	BQ
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	BQ
Clavet, Roger	Louis-Hébert	BQ
Cleary, Bernard	Louis-Saint-Laurent	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Côté, Guy	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	BQ
Cotler, Hon. Irwin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	BQ
Demers, Nicole	Laval	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	BQ
Desrochers, Odina	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Minister of the Environment	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Drouin, Hon. Claude, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Rural Communities)	Beauce	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	BQ
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Lib.
Frulla, Hon. Liza, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women	Jeanne-Le Ber	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Gagnon, Marcel	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Gagnon, Sébastien	Jonquière—Alma	BQ
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gauthier, Michel	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	BQ
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Jennings, Hon. Marlene, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Canada—U.S.)	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Kotto, Maka	Saint-Lambert	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lapierre, Hon. Jean, Minister of Transport	Outremont	Lib.
Lapierre, Réal	Lévis—Bellechasse	BQ
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Loubier, Yvan	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Marceau, Richard	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	BQ
Martin, Right Hon. Paul, Prime Minister	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Denis	Brome—Missisquoi	Lib.
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Perron, Gilles-A.	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Pettigrew, Hon. Pierre, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Papineau	Lib.
Picard, Pauline	Drummond	BQ
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Poirier-Rivard, Denise	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Proulx, Marcel, Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Robillard, Hon. Lucienne, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Saada, Hon. Jacques, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie	Brossard—La Prairie	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Sauvageau, Benoît	Repentigny	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Simard, Christian	Beauport—Limoilou	BQ
Smith, David	Pontiac	Lib.
St-Hilaire, Caroline	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Thibault, Louise	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Batters, Dave	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Fitzpatrick, Brian	Prince Albert	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Minister of Finance	Wascana	Lib.
Harrison, Jeremy	Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River .	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Ritz, Gerry	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Skelton, Carol	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Lynne	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources .	Yukon	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of December 3, 2004 — 1st Session, 38th Parliament)

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André Bellavance
Gary Lunn

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Lloyd St. Amand
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Vice-Chairs:
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Diane Bourgeois	Nina Grewal	Rob Merrifield	Kevin Sorenson
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Gord Brown	Stephen Harper	Bob Mills	Belinda Stronach
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Bill Casey	Loyola Hearn	Anita Neville	David Tilson
Rick Casson	Russ Hiebert	Rob Nicholson	Vic Toews
David Chatters	Jay Hill	Pat O'Brien	Bradley Trost
Michael Chong	Betty Hinton	Gordon O'Connor	Merv Tweed
David Christopherson	Brian Jean	Deepak Obhrai	Peter Van Loan
Joe Comartin	Dale Johnston	Bev Oda	Maurice Vellacott
John Cummins	Peter Julian	Brian Pallister	Mark Warawa
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Navdeep Bains Diane Bourgeois	Ed Broadbent	Peter Goldring	Paddy Torsney

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Bonnie Brown

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Ruby DhallaSteven Fletcher
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Dave MacKenzie
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HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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Rob Anders	Diane Finley	Carole Lavallée	Lee Richardson
David Anderson	Brian Fitzpatrick	Judi Longfield	Gerry Ritz
Dave Batters	Steven Fletcher	Tom Lukiwski	Andrew Scheer
Don Bell	Hedy Fry	Gary Lunn	Gary Schellenberger
Leon Benoit	Marcel Gagnon	James Lunney	Werner Schmidt
Stéphane Bergeron	Cheryl Gallant	Lawrence MacAulay	Christian Simard
James Bezan	Marc Godbout	Peter MacKay	Carol Skelton
Alain Boire	Yvon Godin	Dave MacKenzie	David Smith
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Ken Boshcoff	Gary Goodyear	Inky Mark	Monte Solberg
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Ed Broadbent	Gurmant Grewal	Ted Menzies	Darrel Stinson
Gord Brown	Nina Grewal	Rob Merrifield	Belinda Stronach
Paule Brunelle	Helena Guergis	Larry Miller	Greg Thompson
Colin Carrie	Art Hanger	Bob Mills	Myron Thompson
Bill Casey	Stephen Harper	James Moore	David Tilson
Rick Casson	Richard Harris	Rob Moore	Vic Toews
David Chatters	Jeremy Harrison	Anita Neville	Bradley Trost
Michael Chong	Loyola Hearn	Rob Nicholson	Merv Tweed
David Christopherson	Russ Hiebert	Gordon O'Connor	Maurice Vellacott
Denis Coderre	Jay Hill	Deepak Obhrai	Robert Vincent
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Rodger Cuzner	Brian Jean	Pierre Poilievre	Mark Warawa
Libby Davies	Randy Kamp	Russ Powers	Jeff Watson
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Dave Batters	Nina Grewal	Inky Mark	Werner Schmidt
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David Chatters	Betty Hinton	Rob Moore	Myron Thompson
Michael Chong	Rahim Jaffer	Rob Nicholson	David Tilson
John Cummins	Brian Jean	Gordon O'Connor	Vic Toews
Stockwell Day	Dale Johnston	Deepak Obhrai	Bradley Trost
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Hon. Larry Bagnell	to the Minister of Natural Resources
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Hon. Jerry Pickard	to the Minister of Industry
Hon. Raymond Simard	to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Minister responsible for Official Languages and Minister responsible for Democratic Reform

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

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