



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, March 4, 2009**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1400)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the recent announcement of the government of over \$10 million to build a new twin-pad arena in my riding of Brant and to rebuild the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre.

We are creating jobs by doing this and making Canada stronger by investing in it. We are delivering results in these difficult times by building roads, bridges and water treatment systems across Ontario and by investing in projects like these.

Not only will people in Brant have greater access to physical activity opportunities as a result of this development, but the community will benefit from job creation, improved recreational facilities and the sport tourism dollars this will bring to our area for years to come.

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### CAPE BRETON

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recently Cape Breton has seen its heroes and stars.

On January 27, the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department rescued six passengers from a bus that crashed into the ice filled river.

This past weekend we had winners at the ECMA Awards. Tom Fun Orchestra won the rising star recording, Sydney Mines Brenda Stubbart took home the roots/traditional solo, the Burkes from Waterford took home the gospel recording, Ronald Bourgeois from Chéticamp won francophone recording and, last but not least, Gordie

Sampson won Vibe Creative Single and SOCAN Songwriter of the Year.

Two basketball teams also made us proud. CBU's Caper's women claimed their third AUS banner and Breton Education Bears won their first Coal Bowl.

On February 23, our entire island celebrated the 100th anniversary of the first flight of the Silver Dart with a re-enactment on Baddeck Bay.

We are proud of each and every one of these outstanding Cape Breton accomplishments.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

### SAINT-HUBERT AIRPORT

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in this, the 100th year since the first Canadian flight, I wish to draw attention to the importance of aeronautics to the riding of Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. This is an economic sector in which Quebec expertise is recognized world wide.

The Saint-Hubert airport is the oldest civil airport in Quebec and in Canada. For many years, it was also the most important.

Life on the Montreal south shore, and in Saint-Hubert in particular, is very much dependent on the airport and the aerospace industry. The multitude of small, medium and large innovative businesses in this field, and their subcontractors, employ thousands of workers. I am thinking of the likes of Héroux DevTech, Pratt & Whitney, Dev-Yhu and the Canadian Space Agency. Saint-Hubert is also the home of the École nationale d'aérotechnique, a campus of Cégep Édouard-Montpetit, which plays a lead role in Quebec in the field of technical training in aeronautics.

But our reputation in aeronautics is also showcased by a dynamic foundation, Fondation Aérovision Québec, headed by Lucien Poirier. It promotes Quebec's exceptional contribution to the conquest of the air as well as being dedicated to the preservation of our aeronautical heritage.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the last three years of the Conservative government have been a disaster for the advancement of women, economically, socially and politically.

Women's organizations have lost their funding and many have, sadly, disappeared. Those that remain are denied the resources needed to advance women's equality in our country.

One case is that of l'accès des femmes au travail, which had submitted an important proposal to Status of Women Canada to develop a program to improve the representation of women in predominantly male employment sectors and maximize the opportunities for greater economic security for women. After meeting all SWC funding requirements, the organization was abruptly denied funding after publicly criticizing the Conservative attack on pay equity and women's rights.

The Conservative government is turning back the clock on equality and is trying to silence the voices of women who stand in its way.

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**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege as a member of the agriculture committee to work for the benefit of farmers in my riding of Wild Rose and all across Canada. However, I doubt Liberal members hold that same conviction.

The Liberals recently tried to undermine the Canadian Cattlemen's Association's support for expanding beef exports by siding instead with organizations that favoured failed protectionist policies.

However, the Liberals' stance now is much different from what they told farmers before the election. On October 9, 2008, in response to a CCA questionnaire, the Liberal Party said, "The key to supporting cattle production is to expand export opportunities".

Since that is exactly what this Conservative government has been successfully doing, I have to wonder what it is in the Liberals' DNA that compels them to reject the very few good ideas they actually come across.

Why do Liberals always say one thing and do another?

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**HOCKEYVILLE**

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Harbour Grace Hockeyville organizing committee and all the residents of Harbour Grace and the surrounding areas for their support and determination to bring Hockeyville to their community. Harbour Grace has made it to the top five and voting is now underway to determine the title of Hockeyville 2009.

It is wonderful to see the effort, enthusiasm and friendly competitive spirit of Harbour Grace during the qualifying period. That, combined with their individual efforts, is commendable and I

congratulate them for their hard work and dedication in this initiative.

"Vote for the Home of the Champions" is their slogan. This explains the underlying momentum in the race for Harbour Grace to be recognized as Hockeyville. "Home of Champions" represents historical connections with the town of Harbour Grace.

Native and local champion Danny Cleary increased local enthusiasm when he made history by bringing the Stanley Cup to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2008. The long-standing rivalry between the Cee Bees and other provincial teams showcases many local champions during the battles for the top prize at Herder Memorial. Hockey moms, hockey dads and all participants in local minor hockey programs are all champions.

Let us vote Harbour Grace and vote often.

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**ELLARD POWERS**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay respects to Mr. Ellard Powers, a leader in the farming community. Ellard was born the eldest of five children in Ross Township, Renfrew country during the depths of the Great Depression in 1934. That experience tempered his resolve to help the plight of fellow farmers.

I got to know Ellard when he served on my beef task force that was set up to deal with the border crisis over BSE. Ellard was always available to provide advice. In addition to farming dairy and beef, while working for Dominion Magnesium, Ellard during the 1960s was vice-president of the Ontario farmers union three times. Through the OFU, he became a member of the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, moving on to become a commissioner on the Canadian Dairy Commission and to its chairman and CEO three years later.

Ellard would continue to serve the farming community in a variety of other capacities over the year, most recently as vice-president of the Renfrew County chapter of the NFU.

Ellard was committed to rural living and the family farm. His contribution to the public life of our country in agricultural matters will always be appreciated.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

**RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY**

**Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention today to the important contribution to society that has been made by Rights and Democracy in its 20 years of existence. Created by an act of Parliament, Rights and Democracy is a non-partisan organization whose mandate is to promote democratic development and defend human rights.

The work carried out by the staff of this public institution, in conjunction with civil societies of a number of countries, is remarkable. On numerous occasions, we have sought their expertise and knowledge, both legal and practical. Whether in connection with events in Burma, the Philippines, Tibet or China or the actions by Canadian mining companies abroad, the huge role this organization fulfills in providing information and speaking out against breaches of human rights is invaluable.

I and all my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois would like to thank this organization for its contribution to the defence and promotion of human rights. We hope that, through its recommendations, it will continue to be a part of our deliberations for many years to come.

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[English]

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today during International Women's Week to recognize the amazing contributions of a young lady from my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country. Alaina Podmorow was struck by the plight of women in Afghanistan. Proving that one person really can make a difference, Alaina founded Little Women for Little Women in Afghanistan. Alaina's organization raises money to help pay for teachers and supplies.

Working with Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, Alaina's group has made a huge impact on the lives of young women and those who teach them. Just last year, the Minister of International Cooperation recognized the hard work and dedication of this young lady and agreed to match the organization's fundraising efforts dollar for dollar.

Alaina Podmorow, who is on Parliament Hill today, is an outstanding example of how average Canadians, determined to make a better life for Afghan women and girls, can make a difference. Canadians can be proud of our development efforts in Afghanistan. They can also take pride in what this young lady from my riding has achieved in such a short period of time.

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[Translation]

#### LOBSTER FISHERY

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the lobster fishery in the Northumberland Strait is in crisis, and this Conservative government is refusing to act. The factors that led to this economic disaster may be complex, but simple solutions are available.

The fishing effort must be reduced immediately. In other words, fishermen need a federal licence buyout program before the season begins this spring.

[English]

A licence buyout is key, but it alone will not be enough to save this critical industry. Other conservation and marketing measures are also required. The government should start listening to fishermen, who have good ideas and want to contribute.

#### Statements by Members

[Translation]

Before the budget, the minister seemed interested in helping these lobster fishermen. Now, she has nothing to say. That is too bad, because the economic and social survival of thousands of people is at stake.

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[English]

#### SEAL HUNT

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is continuing its attack on Canadian sealers.

Yesterday on Tom Clark's *Power Play*, one of the Liberal leader's senators called the seal hunt an "embarrassment to Canadians" and called it "bad trade". Is this his idea of standing up for a great tradition in Canadian industry, by buckling to European demands that want to destroy the livelihood of Canadian sealers?

Let us take a closer look at some of the other priorities the Liberal leader has for Canadians.

We must remember that he is the father of the Liberal carbon tax. During his first run at the Liberal leadership, he promised to impose a carbon tax on all Canadians, driving up the cost of everything. He even claimed that it would be good for the economy. The Liberal leader is so out of touch that he actually believes that driving up the cost of everything would be good for our country.

Canadian sealers cannot afford the Liberal Party. In fact, no Canadian can afford the Liberal Party. It is time the Liberals stood up for Canada and stopped their—

● (1415)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

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#### BROADCASTING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as Canada's local television signals fade to black, the Conservative government is asleep on the couch. We have seen an unprecedented loss of local television coverage in communities like Ottawa, Victoria, Hamilton, Windsor, and this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Local broadcasters play a valuable role in our communities. They tell our stories. They build our identities. Their staff volunteer for charitable work.

These losses are not simply about economic restructuring. It is about a radical rewriting of the Canadian broadcast landscape and we are going to lose our local voices.

These losses are compounded by the long-term failure of media policy in this country. The government and the CRTC have allowed the consolidation of the media into fewer hands. They cannot sit back now and allow an economic meltdown to erase the final obligations for regional commitment to broadcasters.

It is time the government stood up for local broadcasters in our country.

*Oral Questions***LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC):** “The day is coming”, Mr. Speaker, “the day is coming”. Those are the words of Liberal Senator George Baker when he said the day is coming for the creation of a Bloc Newfoundland and Labrador that will eventually see that great province leave Confederation.

The Liberal leader's tolerance of these statements from the most senior Liberal parliamentarian is truly unfortunate. However, it is not surprising. The leader of the Liberal Party himself once said, and I quote, “I'm not in bed with the Bloc Québécois; okay, they're at the corner of the bed”.

At the rate the leader of the Liberal Party is going, when it comes to dealing with separatists, there is not going to be much bed left.

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[Translation]

**OIL SANDS**

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a number of observers, including *National Geographic*, recognize the environmental impact of oil sands development in Alberta. The leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, though, feels that the debate over the oil sands could divide the country and adds that he is proud of the oil industry.

Knowing that he will have an uphill battle getting support from Alberta in the next election, the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada has decided to ally himself with the oil companies, stating that “The stupidest thing you can do is to run against an industry that is providing employment...not just in Alberta, but right across the country.”

He claims, falsely, that Quebec is reaping benefits from oil revenues in terms of transfers from Ottawa, but Alberta is not the only province that generates wealth in Canada.

What is very clear to us is that the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada has decided to turn his back on Quebec by showing support for the oil companies in Alberta in a bid for votes, just as he did in supporting the budget.

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[English]

**CANADIAN FORCES**

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in sorrow to salute the bravery and devotion to Canada of the three soldiers who died in Afghanistan yesterday.

Dennis Raymond Brown, Dany Olivier Fortin and Kenneth Chad O'Quinn gave their lives to protect fellow soldiers and Afghan civilians. They had defused one roadside bomb when their lives were claimed by another.

We in the House bear the burden of sending these soldiers to do their duty, so we must share the burden of sorrow now falling upon their families. We honour these families and we grieve with them in their hour of desolation.

Our soldiers in Afghanistan must know that in our respect for their courage and dedication, all divisions in this House are stilled and we rise in common tribute.

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● (1420)

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, recently on VOXM Radio in Newfoundland and Labrador, Liberal Senator George Baker said, “The day is coming”. He was referring to the day that would see the creation of the Bloc Newfoundland and Labrador party. He even went on to say the party would run in the next election.

With the most senior Liberal parliamentarian advocating for the creation of the Bloc Newfoundland and Labrador party, it is clear that the Liberal leader tolerates these views in the Liberal Party.

The Liberals were willing to make a deal that would see the Bloc Québécois have a seat at the governing table and now their most senior parliamentarian is advocating for the creation of a Bloc Newfoundland and Labrador party modelled after the separatist Bloc Québécois.

It is clear. The Conservative Party is the party of national unity; the Liberal Party is not.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES**

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the 2007 budget, Parliament approved infrastructure spending of \$4.6 billion for the current fiscal year, ending March 31. But the government spent less than \$1 billion, according to its own numbers.

Why did the government not invest the \$3 billion already approved in the 2007 budget when the economy needed it?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last year the government spent three times more on infrastructure than the Liberal government did in its last year in power.

The Minister of Finance already indicated in the economic and fiscal statement that we intend to double infrastructure spending this year, and this was even before the budget was tabled in January. The money is there. Obviously, we need to approve the estimates in order to continue spending.

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing for months that the economy is flagging. We have been asking the government to act since last fall. I will ask the question again.

Why does the Prime Minister need an additional \$3 billion for the coming fiscal year, without accountability I might add, when he has not even invested the \$3 billion he already has?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that \$3 billion is money needed to cover the expenditures approved in this budget for new infrastructure programs. These projects are ready and we do not want to wait until July. It is Parliament's responsibility to approve these expenditures so that we can ensure this economic activity.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is asking the House to authorize vote 35, which is a \$3 billion blank cheque, but he already has \$3 billion ready to go for immediate stimulus. Parliament approved that money in the 2007 budget, but the government has not spent it.

What is the Prime Minister doing to ensure that this funding flows before it lapses at the end of the month, or is he holding back needed stimulus to the economy in order to hide the size of his deficit?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government, in consultation with other levels of government, has estimated that we will need about this much money to make sure that we get some of these new programs that have just been designated in the budget out before July. The country and other levels of government are waiting for this. I encourage the Liberal Party to stop playing games and simply let the money flow into the economy.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fallout from the softwood lumber sell-out deal is ongoing. Sawmills in four provinces are now subject to a 10% export tax.

Because of the Conservatives' bad decisions, several sawmills in Quebec and Ontario will be forced to close because of insurmountable losses.

How can the Conservatives still stand by the softwood lumber sell-out?

• (1425)

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when two countries reach an agreement, like the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement, that is an accord. If there is a problem, a dispute or a challenge, one side can take the matter to a court, which will rule on the case. Once the court has issued its ruling, the parties must abide by it. We will also work with the provinces to determine the funds to be distributed.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec and Ontario companies will have to pay in excess of \$68 million to meet the 10% export charge levied upon them. The Conservatives are standing by a flawed softwood lumber agreement when forestry workers face layoffs and shutdowns.

When will the Conservatives admit that their softwood lumber deal does not work? When will the Conservatives return to the table to help our lumber industry in these tough economic times?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before this deal was in place, there were innumerable cases constantly going before the courts and costs were being assessed to Canada. Once we had the deal, almost \$5 billion was returned to the industry, \$1 billion of that going to communities.

Now we have an agreement that if there is a dispute, there is a dispute settlement process, and in the process, we agreed beforehand, we will go along with whatever the referee decides. We do not like the agreement, but it is something we have agreed to follow. Now we will work with the province to see about the distribution of this.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to extend my condolences to the families of the three soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

According to an American report on human rights obtained by the media, detainees transferred by Canadian authorities to Afghans were tortured. The Department of Foreign Affairs has refused to confirm this information.

Given that he is answering questions from the American media on the Afghanistan mission, can the Prime Minister tell us whether or not his government has received complaints about torture from prisoners transferred to Afghan authorities?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised by this question today.

We would like to offer our condolences to the families and comrades of the courageous soldiers killed in Afghanistan. They are doing a good job over there, an important job for the Afghan people, for the world. On this side of the House, we honour their sacrifices.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we honour their sacrifices as well. However, I find that, once again, the Prime Minister is using the death of these soldiers for purely political purposes. It is shameful. He should answer the question.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie has the floor.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe:** Mr. Speaker, a spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs stated that it was the responsibility of the Afghan authorities to ensure the safety of transferred detainees. However, transferring a prisoner who may face torture contravenes the Geneva Convention.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his government is responsible for ensuring the safety of detainees transferred to the Afghan army?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is the Leader of the Bloc who has chosen to ask a question that is so inappropriate today.

Our soldiers respect their international commitments. They have reviewed and changed their procedures to ensure that they respect these responsibilities.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I want to once again, in both languages, thank the Canadian military for the tremendous sacrifices and dangers they undertake on our behalf.

I do not think they have to put up with that kind of stuff from a separatist party.

[Translation]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the same applies to the protection of Canadian soldiers taken prisoner. We are also asking this question on behalf of our own soldiers.

The Prime Minister recently acknowledged that the success of the Afghan mission cannot be guaranteed by military means. Respecting human rights is always imperative. However, by transferring prisoners who are at risk of being tortured, Canada is in violation of section 12 of the Geneva convention.

Will the Prime Minister remain consistent with his recent statements and immediately halt the transfer of detainees to Afghan authorities?

• (1430)

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the simplest answer is no. In the context of NATO actions, our soldiers, like other soldiers, must respect international codes and all rights on the ground in the Afghan theatre.

As Minister of National Defence, I have full confidence in our soldiers, particularly on such a sad day.

I hope all Canadians appreciate the sacrifices our soldiers are making in Afghanistan.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister acknowledges that success in Afghanistan will not be achieved by military force, which is even more reason to rebalance the mission, particularly through respect for human rights, international laws and the Geneva convention.

At the next NATO summit, will the Prime Minister raise the question of torture by Afghan authorities and the application of the Geneva convention to the conflict in Afghanistan? This also concerns the protection of Canadian soldiers.

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our soldiers obey all international laws. The success of our mission in Afghanistan cannot be guaranteed by military means alone, as the Prime Minister said, which is why we have adopted a whole of government approach there.

It is important to remember the efforts being deployed every day to protect our interests as well as the interests of the Afghan people.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants a \$3 billion slush fund for his ministers' pet projects. The Prime Minister has to report to Parliament before expenses are incurred, not afterward. The Auditor General is opposed to this kind of fund.

If this is not, in fact, a slush fund, then will the Prime Minister direct the President of the Treasury Board to ask for the members' approval before each expenditure?

Will the government submit the details to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to ensure at least a minimum level of transparency?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General is not opposed to this but understands, in fact, the necessity of getting out the money. We have in fact made sure that there are appropriate checks and balances in place. Treasury Board approvals must be placed. Existing requirements on accountability and reporting must be met. And of course, our probation officer, the Leader of the Opposition, is sitting across the way. We will be filing parliamentary reports in respect of the funding to our probation officer and I expect him to be fully satisfied with what we will produce.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government may think it is fine for the probationary officer over here to give approval after the crime is done. What we are trying to do is prevent the misuse of the funds before it happens.

Now, in terms of accountability and transparency, the Prime Minister is sounding an awful lot like the party he used to criticize when he was in opposition. I am trying to imagine him on this side of the chamber and what he would be saying about a \$3 billion fund that circumvents all the rules and that gives the money to cabinet ministers to dole out.

Why will he not at least bring it before the standing committee and insist that his President of the Treasury Board does that?

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** What a hypocrite, Mr. Speaker. What a hypocrite. There is a man who in fact—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I think the hon. President of the Treasury Board used the word "hypocrite" in relation to another hon. member. He knows that would not be proper and he would want to withdraw that. I did not hear the exact word.

• (1435)

**Hon. Vic Toews:** Mr. Speaker, now there is a leader who continuously speaks out of both sides of his mouth. His members come to me and ask for money for projects so that they can get their projects funded quickly and his members stand in the House continuously, voting against these initiatives.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the difference between our party and the government's approach here is that we would be perfectly happy to submit our ideas for public spending to public debate. In fact, we have done it many times. We would do it before a committee of the House and accept the decision.

But, instead, the government is proposing a kind of a blind trust where ministers can take money and send it out to perhaps their ridings, to the exclusion of others; to their pet projects, to the support of their public private partnership approach to life. This is not the way to get things done.

Why will the government not, at a minimum, table a list of projects before the money is gone out the barn door?

**Hon. Vic Toews (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the member does not understand is that in fact these projects are in co-operation and in partnership with provincial, municipal and non-governmental agencies. In fact, one of the partners is the NDP government in Manitoba.

We are working together with provincial, municipal and other authorities to get money into the hands of these projects, so that they can stimulate the economy. Why will that member and his party not get out of the way and let it happen?

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**INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the news everyone had been dreading finally arrived Tuesday morning in Sudbury when 261 employees with Vale Inco were laid off, along with 160 more across the country. Yesterday the industry minister told us that he was reviewing an agreement with Vale Inco not to cut jobs until October 2009. His efforts were obviously futile.

This is a government and a Prime Minister in denial. What is the government actually doing to save jobs in northern Ontario and to ensure meaningful work for laid-off workers?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said the other day, we are certainly reviewing the commitments that were made by Vale Inco to the Government of Canada. We expect every company to live up to its understanding.

However, in answer to the hon. member's question, there is a lot going on in northern Ontario and, indeed, throughout Canada. There is the community adjustment fund, forestry measures, building Canada fund communities component, recreational infrastructure Canada, extending access to broadband, and improving infrastructure at universities and colleges. That is what this budget is all about. Let us get it out of the Senate, get it out of Parliament, so we can actually do our jobs.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, reviewing is not enough. U.S. Steel in Hamilton, formerly known as Stelco, will be closing its doors affecting 1,500 jobs. This is in addition to the 700 lost last November. Auto, forestry, manufacturing, mining, and now the steel industry are suffering badly. One by one we are witnessing the pride of Canadian industry slipping away.

The backbone of our economy is snapping. When is the government going to step in and prevent permanent damage?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. member that Canada is not an island. We have a world economic recession, economic turmoil I would indeed say, and every indicator indicates that our government's actions before the budget, during the budget and after the budget are helping Canada to the extent that we are doing better than many other countries.

Yes, we are still in this situation and we are doing everything we can. Every minister in the House is doing everything that they can, focused like a laser beam on the issues, without, quite frankly, her party leader having any positive input and any positive idea to help this country.

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**AFGHANISTAN**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government of France announced today that it is appointing a special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The government of the United States has done it, the government of Great Britain has done it, and the government of Germany has done it.

I wonder if the minister can tell us, why does the government still continue to reject an approach that was put forward by John Manley that will make sure that our political efforts are equal to the sacrifice of our troops?

• (1440)

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do have an envoy to Afghanistan. His name is Mr. Ron Hoffmann. He is our ambassador. We have an envoy in the form of a high commissioner in Islamabad. We have confidence on this side of the House in our foreign affairs professionals, even if the opposition does not.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as others here have already pointed out, according to the U.S. Department of State, it is clear that the facts surrounding the treatment of Afghan detainees are disturbing. The U.S. Department of State has made its reports available on line.

Why is the department refusing to disclose existing complaints or tell us exactly what is going on with this very important issue?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada, as the hon. member knows, transfers prisoners to the government of Afghanistan, which, as a sovereign state, has the primary responsibility for ensuring the rights of detainees are respected.

We continue to work closely with the government of Afghanistan to strengthen its capacity for the treatment of prisoners. Since modifications were made in 2007, there have been no complaints to the Department of Foreign Affairs about the treatment of prisoners.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Bernard Généreux, the chairman of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités has spoken out against the political bad faith, or lack of imagination, of the Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), who maintains that the Conservative government cannot help the forestry industry under the softwood lumber agreement.

Can the minister tell us clearly and simply just what section of that agreement prevents loan guarantees?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since my colleague must be familiar with the forestry file, he must also be well aware that this problem has been around for a number of years and that the main problem is the issue of market outlets. In order to sell our products, we need to be able to export them.

Since the loan guarantees given by Quebec and Ontario are now subject to arbitration, it would be inappropriate for me to comment and might be prejudicial to the case .

My hon. friend ought to know that we have put \$170 million on the table for the development of new products and outlets, and for further expansion of our businesses.

**Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister told us that, in the name of Canadian unity, Quebec ought to agree to pay 60% of the penalties the London Court of International Arbitration has imposed, when it is Ontario that is responsible for 60% of excess imports. That's Canadian unity for you. Quebec does not have to pay for Ontario.

Will the minister have the courage to tell the people in his riding, the people of Saint-Félicien who are losing their jobs, that Ontario needs to be protected, and it is just too bad for them? Will the minister admit that he is nothing more than a token Quebecker within this Conservative government?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has made it very clear. He is concerned about the people in this industry. It is clear, however, that the loan guarantee situation is before the courts at this time. We have also said that we were going to work with the provinces to distribute the amounts fairly according to the court's findings.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development is saying that adding five weeks of benefits will help those who need it most. If she really wants to help claimants, she should eliminate the unfair penalty of a two week waiting period for employment insurance.

Does the minister not think that eliminating the two week waiting period would be the best way to help all claimants, while also injecting money directly into the economy?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday and numerous times before then, we consulted Canadians before we prepared our budget. They told us that they wanted more weeks at the end of their regular benefits. So we provided five extra weeks as part of our economic action plan. That is what Canadians asked for and that is what we will give them. The Bloc Québécois should support Canadians, including Quebeckers.

● (1445)

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister really wants to help the largest number of people, she should make it easier to access employment insurance. The numbers coming out of her own department show that only 46% of unemployed people actually receive benefits.

Does the minister really think that she is helping the largest number of people when she insists on denying benefits to 54% of unemployed people?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he is wrong. Here are the facts: 82% of people who have paid into EI receive EI benefits and are eligible. In these difficult times when the economy is deteriorating, we are making it easier for people to access employment insurance.

[English]

They can get access to EI benefits earlier with less work qualifications and for a longer period of time. That is helping Canadians.

\* \* \*

**CHILD CARE**

**Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the assumption of the House is that members speak the truth. So even though the minister of HRSD continually gives the House wrong information, I assume she is just not aware that for example the so-called child care money her government sends to the provinces under the Canada social transfer does not actually have to be spent on child care. The number of spaces it creates is not known because the provinces do not have to keep track, because they do not have to spend it on child care. If it were known, it would be tens of thousands less than the 60,000 she claims.

Is the minister aware just how wrong her information is?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the provinces claim to have created over 60,000 spaces, thanks to the money that we provided them, which his government never did.

When that gentleman was minister in charge of child care spaces, how many spaces did he create? Zero.

**Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware that the average child care tuition in Canada is \$8,000 a year and the average university tuition is less than \$5,000? Is she aware that parents can better afford the cost of university for their kids because, being older, both are more likely to be in the workplace?

Is she aware that there are scholarships, bursaries and loans for university but almost nothing for child care? Is she aware that 20-year-old university kids can work part-time jobs but not many 3-year-old kids can?

Is she aware that her taxable \$100 a month has almost no impact on child care?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what I am aware of is the number of parents who have written to me or have stopped me in the streets to thank me for the universal child care benefit.

We are providing that money to parents so they can choose the form of child care they want for their families, whether it is nine-to-five day care or whether it is having a parent or another family member look after those children at home. I am aware of how much those parents appreciate the money that we provided, money that his government never provided.

\* \* \*

#### CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Ashley Smith of Moncton was jailed at age 13 and died cold, alone and uncared for in a Kitchener jail cell at the age of 17.

Today I sat with her family as they expressed support for the recommendations of corrections investigator, Howard Sapers, in what he called a preventable death.

Will the minister immediately endorse and implement those recommendations? Will the government keep Mr. Sapers around long enough for him to finish his investigation so there will not be another preventable death like Ashley's?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the story of the life and death of Ashley Smith makes for a sad account for anybody who reviews it. It highlights some of the very serious problems that we have had for some time in our correctional system, going right back down to the provincial level and the first instance of our health care treatment that we make available to those who are mentally ill.

We as a society need to do a lot better on mental health, and that includes in our corrections system. I thank Mr. Sapers for his work in that regard and look forward to building on it.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

#### JUSTICE

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have another question on a separate topic for the Minister of Justice. Has he ordered the Government of Canada to seek clemency for a Canadian citizen held on death row in Montana?

The courts are doing the government's job. Will the Minister of Justice report to this House today or tomorrow on how he plans to respond to this ruling by the Federal Court in defence of human rights?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, the government

has been very clear. There is no death penalty in Canada and there are no plans to change those laws.

Every individual abroad will continue to receive consular assistance. With respect to any judgments that have come down from the courts in the last few minutes, we will have a look at them and respond accordingly.

\* \* \*

#### TICKETMASTER

**Mr. Bradley Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for Canadians to secure tickets to their favourite sporting events and concerts, it can often be a very costly process. Often, as tickets go on sale, consumers complain of immediately being redirected to websites where prices are exponentially higher than face value.

I note that this week, the Ontario attorney general announced that he was launching a probe into Ticketmaster's practices and the Government of Saskatchewan is also investigating this matter.

Could the minister please inform this House of the actions our government is taking?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question from the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt is very timely. As a regular concertgoer myself, I have noticed this trend.

I can assure the House that the government will not stand idly by when there is potential that companies are engaged in uncompetitive practices that are hurting consumers, which is why I am referring this matter directly to the Competition Bureau for its review. If there are any uncompetitive practices that are being used, Canadians can rest assured that this government will take action.

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#### CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the office of the correctional investigator made public his report on the events leading to the sad and terrible death of Ashley Smith, a mentally disturbed teenager who choked herself to death while correctional officers stood by watching.

Howard Sapers concluded that her death was preventable and he warned that such deaths could happen again.

Why has the government failed to implement recommendations made time and time again that could have saved Ashley Smith's life?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very sad case, which we are all moved by when we review it. I appreciate the opportunity it presents to shine a light on the importance of focusing on mental health in our corrections system.

In recent years we have actually seen considerable progress by Correctional Service of Canada to improve the level of treatment that it provides to those with mental health challenges, to provide, for example, earlier assessments for those when they enter our correction system, but there still remains a lot more to do.

*Oral Questions*

I invite the other parties to join with me as we do that work to try to improve our correction system, and especially how we deal with the mentally ill.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, focusing light is not enough. It is very clear that we need action. The investigative report concludes that the government's actions are wholly inadequate.

The violations in Ashley's case include keeping her alone and in segregation for all of her time in federal custody, against their own rules; failing to provide her with a proper mental health assessment and treatment; and the improper use of force.

The report has been on the minister's desk for eight months and he has failed to go far enough and fast enough to prevent deaths in custody.

How many more teenagers who need mental health care instead of hard time in jail will have to suffer, or even die, before the minister acts?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, some considerable progress has been made already and I can highlight some additional changes that have been made by Correctional Service of Canada. It has now introduced mental health awareness training for staff, which is now provided to all individuals, not just in the institutional context but also in the community context. We are providing additional support there on a mental health level.

We are also working with the provinces and territories, which also have corrections systems that face similar challenges, to find how we can share best practices to improve that.

I look forward to extending these discussions to deal with the broader question of the mentally ill and how they end up in our corrections system, where that may not be the best place for them in the first place.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, we learned that Dow AgroSciences is taking court action under chapter 11 of NAFTA on the grounds that Quebec's pesticides management code violates its right to sell 2,4-D, a potent herbicide.

Will the Minister of International Trade promise to defend Quebec's pesticides management code in order to guarantee its right to legislate and adopt regulations that are in the public interest?

•(1455)

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yes, we will permit provinces and governments to defend the decisions they make in the public interest with respect to public health and we will work with the Province of Quebec to improve the situation and defend its priorities and its rights in this case.

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Trade says he wants to defend Quebec's position in relation to chapter 11 of NAFTA, while the Minister of the Environment, on the other hand, is telling the United States that we must ensure that our policies are compatible. They must not conflict with one another.

The Minister of the Environment is undermining the efforts of the Minister of International Trade. Does he realize that, based on his reasoning, he is also lowering environmental standards and thereby making things easier for Dow Chemical, to the detriment of Quebec?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not agree. My visit to the United States was very productive for our discussion on clean energy. I was able to talk to my counterparts about our plan for Canada and, of course, about a continental approach to fighting climate change. The Bloc should put partisanship aside and stand up to applaud us.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to an earlier report, public health officials in four provinces had been informed last July that strains of listeria had entered the food chain. According to news reports, these officials told the CFIA to intervene prior to the outbreak that killed 20 people.

Could the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell the House why he did not act immediately to protect the health of Canadians?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food safety has been and continues to be our number one priority. In fact, it was this government that named a very qualified investigator, Sheila Weatherill, to head a federal investigation into this matter, and we look forward to receiving her recommendations.

Canadians are pleased with the actions being taken. In fact, the *Ottawa Citizen* said:

The appointment of Sheila Weatherill...to head a federal probe into last summer's deadly listeriosis outbreak is a welcome step to restoring confidence in Canada's food safety system.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, is the government's concern over political fallout blinding it to its responsibility in this matter?

As my colleague stated, in July, four provinces informed CFIA that a listeriosis outbreak was occurring. We also know that CFIA officials and industry met in July and yet three weeks later the minister attacked opposition MPs for fearmongering for forcing an emergency committee meeting. Then he clammed up and went into hiding.

Did the Prime Minister order a cover-up here or was it his rogue minister gone astray?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about accountability. Under the Liberals, food safety was cut in 1994 and again in 1995. If that was not enough, they cut it again in 2005. It is a good thing they were not re-elected in 2006 or they would have cut it again.

This government has committed an additional \$113 million to food safety and we have put to work an additional 200 inspectors.

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#### STEEL INDUSTRY

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the shutdown of U.S. steel operations in Hamilton and Lake Erie has hit the people of my community very hard. Over 2,100 people do not know when they will get to go back to work. Now the Canadian press is reporting that the minister was unaware and was caught by surprise.

If the minister is that out of touch with the steel industry, he should resign.

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that I was informed of the industry's intentions just yesterday morning and it was public information by yesterday afternoon.

What I will not take are lectures from members of the NDP about protecting workers when they voted against our budget, which is there for the workers, for EI, for retraining, for infrastructure and for rebuilding our county.

• (1500)

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government's failure to include a domestic preference provision in the stimulus package is aggravating the challenges to Canada's steel industry. There is no strategy to protect the jobs of today and no strategy to create the green collar jobs of tomorrow.

I know I speak for the workers in Hamilton and Nanticoke when I say that we need a buy-Canadian policy in line with NAFTA and WTO and we desperately need a strategy for the future.

When will the government stand up for the steel industry and the thousands of working families that depend on it?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if we want to protect jobs, which we do and which we have addressed in a very significant way in our comprehensive economic statement, the way to do that is to open up opportunities for our products and for our services.

It is very clear that if trade walls are built up, economies will go down. We do not want that to happen, which is why we will be there for the steel industry, the forestry industry, the auto industry and the agriculture industry. We are there for the workers and the manufacturers of Canada.

\* \* \*

#### JUSTICE

**Ms. Dona Cadman (Surrey North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was wide media coverage of a recent study that

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found that more than one in five sexual assaults are aided by date rape drugs or other substances that sedate the victims. In recognition of this growing problem, bars are starting to introduce measures to protect female patrons from their drinks being laced.

Could the Minister of Justice please inform the House what actions the government is taking to protect Canadians from criminals who use these drugs on their victims prior to assaulting them?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday we tabled the most comprehensive bill to crack down on illegal drugs this country has seen in many years.

We are increasing the penalties for that kind of activity and will now classify date rape drugs along with cocaine and heroin. If anybody gets the idea that it would be a good idea to start selling these drugs to young people, if they want import, manufacture or export these drugs, we have a very clear message for them: they will go to jail.

\* \* \*

#### UKRAINE

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has cut consular staffing levels at the Canadian embassy in Kyiv by one-third. This drastic cut has led to a one-third decline in immigration from Ukraine to Canada and, according to departmental tables, the fourth-slowest processing time for visitor visas in the world. This Conservative policy is blocking Ukrainians from immigrating to Canada or visiting loved ones.

When will the minister increase staffing in Kyiv to previous Liberal levels?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member has only been here a few years, so he may not understand that consular staff actually work on consular files, not immigration files. If he wants to talk about consular staff, he should talk to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

With respect to immigration, we have a large and robust immigration program in Ukraine. I visited Kyiv in November and I am pleased to say that we are seeing a significant number of immigrants from Ukraine choosing to come to Canada, and a growing number through the provincial nominee program. In fact, when I was there, I saw over 20 employers from Saskatchewan working with our officials to identify Ukrainian workers to come and help build Canada, and we are proud of that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CFB SHANNON

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a number of grief-stricken people called out for help at the funeral for young Alexandre Mallette-Lafrenière, who had come to symbolize the fight against tainted water in Shannon. One person said, "For our whole lives, we are going to live with the fear that one day we will go through the same thing." And another added, "We hope Alexandre did not die in vain."

*Tributes*

In response to such distress, will the government finally show a human face to the people of Shannon and take real action to decontaminate the water table and compensate the victims?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has announced an approach to compensate the people of Shannon and an initiative to improve the water system. That is in addition to the other announcements the government has made. At the same time, we need to work with the provincial government, the municipality of Shannon and the military base to make sure that the water is safe in future.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**TAXATION**

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Swiss bank UBS has been sentenced to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in fines for complicity in tax evasion in the United States. This bank is also active in Canada. Nearly \$6 billion has escaped the grasp of the Department of National Revenue. Sound economic management is essential in times of crisis. Transparency must be the rule, and the rules must be followed.

Why do we have to learn about tax evasion practices in Canada through an American investigation? What will the minister do to remedy the situation?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, it is important that both corporations and individuals pay their taxes to the government. This is an important principle if we are to protect our tax base and ensure that some do not have to pay more tax because others are cheating or neglecting to pay what they owe.

As long as people do business abroad, file their returns and comply with our laws, that is okay. When they do not, that is not okay. We are partnering with other countries to try to find ways to eliminate tax havens.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Minister of the Environment travelled to Washington to meet with key officials of the Obama administration, as well as Senator Kerry and Representative Waxman, to continue the clean energy dialogue.

Could the Minister of the Environment please update the House on the success of his visit to Washington?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his extraordinary work on the environment committee.

I would like to report to the House that this government and the Obama administration share the same vision and the same principles with respect to reducing greenhouse gases. Our two countries believe in particular in expanding clean energy research as well as developing and deploying clean energy technology.

Our two countries will continue to lead green energy developments, including renewables and hydro, as well as carbon capture and storage to clean their coal and our oil.

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**HON. GILBERT PARENT**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on this day to pay tribute on the passing of the Hon. Gilbert Parent, who many of us knew as “Gib” and many more of us knew as “Gibby”. As one of those members who served with Mr. Parent in the House of Commons, I am very proud to stand in my place and pay tribute to him.

Gibby was born in Mattawa, Ontario. He was raised in Welland. In his younger days he was an athlete. Later he became an educator. His first foray in public office was as a school trustee. He was first elected to the House of Commons as a Liberal member in 1974. He was re-elected in 1979 and 1980. Following his defeat at the polls in 1984, he returned to teaching, but in his truly resilient style, he immediately began the arduous task of reorganizing his constituency association on the entire Niagara Peninsula in preparation for the next election.

He regained his seat in 1988 and was subsequently re-elected in 1993 and 1997. He retired from active politics in 2000 and was appointed Canada's ambassador for the environment.

Mr. Speaker, you will remember that after the 1993 election, while refusing to campaign for the position, Gib Parent let it be known that he would let his name stand should his colleagues decide to name him Speaker. As he put it, it was up to others to make the case for his speakership. Evidently the strategy worked, because after several hours of balloting and many votes, the House named him as its 33rd Speaker.

I have had the opportunity over the last 30 years or so to sit with many extraordinary members from the Niagara Peninsula. I think in particular, as I am looking at the Minister of Justice, of Robert Welch, who I am sure was one of his mentors, as he was a great presence in the legislature. We on this side think with great affection of Judy LaMarsh and of Larry Pennell, who was one of the great advocates for the abolition of the death penalty and led that struggle in the 1960s.

My colleagues in the New Democratic Party will think always of the name of Mel Swart, who was such a beacon of hope and light and who was certainly a great energy in the Niagara Peninsula for his entire time in politics. I would also want to mention Gib's predecessor, Vic Railton, who was a well-known doctor in the Welland area and was famous for his espousal of medicare at a time when it was not always politically popular or correct to do so.

In paying tribute to Gib, who died after a short but painful struggle with colon cancer, we think of the man's great laugh, his great smile, his great energy and his great determination on behalf of the country that he loved so well.

[*Translation*]

Gilbert Parent was born into a Franco-Ontarian family in Mattawa, in northern Ontario, and grew up in Welland, in the Niagara Peninsula. He excelled in sports in his youth, and went on to teach French before his time in this House.

Unfortunately, his laughter and his voice will no longer be heard among us, and we will no longer be treated to his familiar smile, but his memory will remain with us.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, I extend my most heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

● (1510)

[*English*]

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to follow and echo the comments made by the member for Toronto Centre.

Gib served in this House for exactly 8,100 days. Any of us who have the opportunity to be elected and sit in this House would see it as quite an achievement to reach that level. He served as the member of Parliament for St. Catharines from 1974 to 1979, one of 17 proud Canadians to have represented St. Catharines since Confederation.

While politics certainly was Mr. Parent's passion, teaching was his love. In 1996 he launched the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy, a professional development opportunity that brings 70 teachers from across the country to the capital each year for an insider's view on how Parliament works.

I thought I would share with the House a short story about a student, actually a very close friend of mine, Mr. Wayne Schmidt. He was a student of Mr. Parent's. As a vice-principal in the public school board at Thorold, Mr. Parent reached out to Wayne, not in a mean way, not in a direct way that would have him think anything less of himself, but in a way that allowed him to think more clearly about the future that he wanted to lead and the importance of his education, of community-mindedness and of community spirit.

I hear from Wayne on a regular basis about how he used to knock on doors for Gib just because of the commitment that he made to him, as an educator and as a friend, to help him along not only with his education but also with his steps in life. That is a strong testament for any individual who aspires to leadership. Wayne used to vote for Gib in that party; thankfully he has now converted, but nonetheless he continues to speak highly of Mr. Parent and the impact Gib had on him.

When we look at his political focus, he certainly did lose an election in 1984, but came back that much stronger in 1988 and was returned to this House. He won his seat back, showing the commitment he had to his community and what it meant to him.

I want to echo somewhat the comments from the member for Toronto Centre when he spoke about the fact that Gib was elected as Speaker of the House. What is interesting is that in 1993 there was a majority led by former Prime Minister Chrétien, who did have his choice for who he believed should be the Speaker at that time. Mr. Gauthier, a member at the time, was the former prime minister's choice, but Gib, after thoughtful reflection, determined that he would put his name forward. Two members who sit on this side of the

### *Tributes*

House now, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and our current House leader, and this will speak to the type of camaraderie that this side of the House would like to continue to work by, assisted Mr. Parent in his endeavour to become Speaker of the House.

That evening it took a long time for Mr. Parent to actually become the Speaker. Ironically, it was a tie vote on the second-last ballot. A number of members in the House had assumed that this was the final ballot and that they could leave. One of the members of the former Reform Party, Mr. Ray Speaker, was actually getting his hair cut at the time. He saw on TV that it was a tie. He was only halfway through getting his hair cut, and he ripped off the cover and stormed back into the House. Of course, as legend would have it, it was the first time ever that a fellow by the name of Speaker actually determined who the next Speaker would be.

One further thought I would leave the House with is one that Gib Parent made when he became the Speaker. He pledged his best efforts to ensure that MPs would comport themselves with dignity, respect and civility in the strenuous debates that were sure to follow, considering the potentially intractable positions represented in the 35th Parliament.

● (1515)

I would suggest that those words for the 35th Parliament are just as needed, just as ready, and just able for us to follow here in the 40th Parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois were saddened to learn of the death of the hon. Gilbert Parent, the Franco-Ontarian who was our Speaker from 1994 through 2001. I had the honour and the pleasure to get to know him as an MP and as a minister.

A man of principle, a man of courtesy and respect for his opponents, he was also a man of extreme competency and efficiency. He was a man of ideas as well. He left the mark of his initiatives on the departments of Youth, International Development and Labour.

I also had the pleasure of getting to know him personally. Just by chance, one of his friends lived in my region and once in a while gave me mail or documents to pass on to him. After question period, I would make it my duty to go and hand these to him personally, and each time he would invite me for a chat. Hon. members will understand that his Franco-Ontarian vision of the future of Canada and Quebec differed greatly from my own, but he was extremely welcoming and we had some long discussions. I must admit, however, that he was a very straightforward man as well, and when he had something to say, he did not beat around the bush. You knew his point of view right away and there was no doubt about it. I have lasting memories of those personal meetings with this great man.

*Points of Order*

Of course, I also knew him as the Speaker, an impartial man who cooperated with all parties and all members. When he was made Speaker, he did not have an easy job before him. There was a new government and two new parties: the Bloc Québécois formed the official opposition and the Reform Party was the third party. What is more, of the 295 members, 205 were new MPs. As one might guess, he often had to make decisions, some of them difficult ones. Each of his rulings, however, was always met with unanimity in the House.

So, au revoir to Gilbert, au revoir to the exceptional human being that he was, au revoir to the devoted member of parliament, au revoir to the competent Speaker who served this House so well.

In closing, I wish to offer my condolences and those of the entire Bloc Québécois caucus to his family and friends. Knowing his love of literature, I will close with these words by Alexandre Dumas, “Those whom we have loved and lost are no longer where they were, but they will always be with us, wherever we may be.”

• (1520)

[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to his wife, Sandra, and his daughters, on behalf of my leader and New Democrats federally and provincially across this country, I express our sincere prayers and condolences on the loss of Mr. Gilbert Parent.

Gibby, as I affectionately called him, had lost a son at a very young age. He carried that burden throughout his entire life, but he carried it with the grace and dignity of an extremely proud father.

I remember when we came here, in the class of 1997, when Gib Parent was the Speaker of the House of Commons, we were sitting at the end. My voice was fairly loud at that time, and some people say it still is, but Mr. Parent said, “Peter, I can’t hear the question because you are sitting right next to me yelling at a minister”. Bill Blaikie today says it is because of my voice that NDP members were moved down to this corner. When we continued our lambasting of a Liberal minister, he said, “Peter, if you keep it up, there is only one other place for you to go”. After that, I learned about decorum in the House of Commons.

Gibby was a man who absolutely loved to sit in what we call “the big chair”. He had grace, dignity, humour, and nobody could ever forget the twinkle in his eye when he would make a comment or suggestion to a new member of Parliament.

His portrait hangs at the back of the chamber and we all get to see it forever and ever. Mr. Gib Parent was a decent, kind, and caring gentleman. He helped an awful lot of new MPs from all parties get their first walk in life, as is said in the House of Commons. He is also known for many rulings, and those rulings will be with us for a long time.

He was present for the procedural presentation of the publication, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which we refer to as “Marleau and Montpetit”. He was also very proud of the fact that he was one of the members who started the prayer group that met for breakfast. He took great comfort in knowing that members of Parliament and senators from all sides can find comfort and grace in prayer. Whatever people believed in, he believed there was a superior being who looked after us all.

On behalf of all members of Parliament, I express to his wife, family, and friends, and to his extended Liberal Party family as well, our sincere condolences on the loss of a great man, a man who obviously would say, on a day that we have lost three brave soldiers and others were injured, “Forget talking about me; worry about the men and women who serve our great country.”

We salute Gib Parent, offer our prayers and condolences and say to God, who now has Gib in his hands, “Take good care of a wonderful man.” He graced this Parliament. We are all honoured to have met him and are better people because of it.

**The Speaker:** I will add a few brief words, if I may.

Gib Parent was elected Speaker of the House on January 17, 1994, and re-elected in 1997, only the second Speaker in history to be chosen by secret ballot, as was mentioned.

[Translation]

As the Speaker of the 35th and 36th Parliaments, Gib had to deal with a number of challenges. Among the toughest of these was the fact that there were five official parties in the House, four of which demanded the right to be recognized as the opposition.

[English]

Gib Parent used the speakership for a variety of constructive purposes. During his mandate he took significant steps to make Parliament more accessible to Canadians, and he worked to raise awareness of this institution’s rich history and traditions.

Inspired in large part by his own experience as a teacher, he launched the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy, as has been mentioned, to promote education about democratic institutions. Today the Teachers Institute is in its 13th year and continues to be as successful as ever. It is only one of his many gifts to Canadians and it typifies his love of learning, love of country, and love of his fellow citizens. It is a tangible and lasting result of his heartfelt desire to share those loves with all who seek a better understanding of how we govern ourselves.

He will be missed very greatly by all of us in the House, and he will certainly be remembered.

• (1525)

[Translation]

I would now ask hon. members to rise for a moment of silence in honour of our departed colleague.

[A moment of silence observed]

\* \* \*

[English]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

COMMENTS BY MEMBER FOR OAK RIDGES—MARKHAM

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention comments made yesterday by the member for Oak Ridges—Markham. I quote from *Hansard*:

Liberal MPs have been quoted in the media and even today in the immigration committee saying that anti-Semitic organizations...should receive taxpayer support.

One of the members in committee that the member for Oak Ridges—Markham referred to is me. This affects my personal privilege to do my work as a member of Parliament.

Let me be clear. At no time have I or any member of our party, to my knowledge, made any anti-Semitic remarks.

In discharging my duties as a member of Parliament, I advocate and support funding for groups that provide support for settlement services in my riding. Many NGO organizations are non-profit and their board members are volunteers. In order to get funding, they go through all kinds of checks and balances and jump through hoops.

In the case in question, certain negative adjectives were used to describe the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. The minister, disagreeing with their remarks, has publicly threatened to cut their funding. The minister is directly intervening, directing bureaucrats and ordering them to make certain decisions.

The minister is contravening the Prime Minister's guide for ministers and ministers of state, which states:

Ministers and Ministers of State must act with integrity. To ensure public trust and confidence, not only in our Government but in government generally, Ministers and Ministers of State must uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality... Ministers are responsible for ensuring that their departments are managed soundly and with complete integrity...Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the use of all powers vested in them.

The minister from the Conservative Party is using such words as "anti-Semitic" when one questions his party's accountability and credibility.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for you to review such comments and matters and come back to this House with guidance as to the proper use of the language by members.

**The Speaker:** I will review the matter and get back to the House if necessary. I think the hon. member's comments sound more like debate on the matter, but I will, at his request, examine the matter.

The hon. member for Vancouver East is rising on another point of order.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, having just listened to the very fine tributes to former Speaker Parent, I think we can understand and I would certainly concur with the comments from the member for St. Catharines who pointed out the importance of the role of Speaker in this place and in maintaining decorum.

Today in question period, the President of the Treasury Board, in reply to a question from the leader of the NDP, made very unparliamentary comments.

Mr. Speaker, you intervened and we certainly support you in that intervention. I believe that you asked the member to withdraw his remarks. He has not done so. So I would ask the member to heed your words, withdraw his unparliamentary language and apologize to the leader of the NDP and to all members of the House.

His language was unbecoming to a minister of the Crown. He should heed your words and withdraw the remark that he made.

#### Routine Proceedings

● (1530)

**The Speaker:** I will examine the record at the request of the hon. member. I thought the minister did withdraw but I will look at the record and get back to the House again if necessary on this point.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES SECURITY AGREEMENT

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 20(5) of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, I have the pleasure to table, in both official languages, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Security Agreement.

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on International Trade on Bill C-2, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the States of the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland), the Agreement on Agriculture between Canada and the Republic of Iceland, the Agreement on Agriculture between Canada and the Kingdom of Norway and the Agreement on Agriculture between Canada and the Swiss Confederation.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member but he has leapt a little ahead of the game. We are still on tabling of documents, not on presenting reports from committees. We will treat that as having been tabled in the appropriate place in routine proceedings, but I thank him for his enthusiasm.

\* \* \*

### ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT ACT

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-16, An Act to amend certain Acts that relate to the environment and to enact provisions respecting the enforcement of certain Acts that relate to the environment.

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

\* \* \*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties and I believe you would find consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, for the remainder of the current session, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs shall have the same power with respect to the membership of special committees that it has with respect to the membership of standing committees pursuant to Standing Order 114(4).

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.  
(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2009**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following order. I move:

That all questions necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill C-10 be put to the House at 5:30 today, and that a recorded division be deemed to have been requested.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.  
(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Stockwell Day:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Following the important interventions this afternoon, I ask for unanimous consent to revert to tabling of documents.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that we revert to tabling of documents?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a report entitled, "Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan".

\* \* \*

• (1535)

**PETITIONS****TRADE**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present in the House a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians from major cities across the country, in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and from various cities in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, from Dartmouth to Bathurst to Toronto to Cambridge to Sudbury.

The petitioners call upon the government to halt the negotiations on Canada-Colombia trade deals. They are deeply disturbed by the complete abdication from human rights that we have seen in Colombia, the fact that more trade unionists are killed in Colombia

than anywhere else on earth, and the ongoing paramilitary violence and connections between the paramilitaries and the Colombian government.

The petitioners do not believe the government is keeping human rights at the forefront in the current negotiations. They therefore ask that the government halt any further negotiations on Canada-Colombia trade deals until there is a full, complete and impartial human rights assessment in Colombia. Following that, they ask that any trade agreement negotiated be done on a fair trade model, ensuring social, environmental and labour rights are maintained.

[Translation]

**ANIMAL WELFARE**

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a group of citizens from the riding of Vaudreuil-Soulanges are asking for federal support for a United Nations document seeking to establish an international agreement on animal welfare. I am tabling a petition on their behalf.

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am also tabling a petition on behalf of many citizens in my riding of Vaudreuil-Soulanges who are active in Amnesty International and Development and Peace. Many signatures and post cards were collected by my office to denounce the Conservative government's apathy with respect to the report from the national round tables on corporate social responsibility and the Canadian extractive industry in developing countries such as the Philippines, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

After more than two years of questioning and letter-writing by citizens and NGOs, it is time that the government clarify its position. I am tabling this petition on their behalf.

[English]

**ASBESTOS**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition signed by thousands of Canadians who ask the House of Commons to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known and that more Canadians die from asbestos than all other industrial causes combined, yet Canada remains one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms, to end all government subsidies of the asbestos industry both in Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

### MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2009

The House resumed from March 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on January 27, 2009 and related fiscal measures, be read the third time and passed, and of the motion that this question be now put.

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this stage of the budget.

To say that I support the budget would be a bit of a stretch, but we have decided we will let the budget pass. We believe there are some measures in the budget that are of benefit to Canadians and we have to let it pass. However, we also have very serious concerns, which have been outlined in our amendment, and we want to ensure that the government is kept on a tight leash. It is about time, too.

We have heard in the last few days about how the \$3 billion of infrastructure spending has to be rushed out the door, that there is a special need to get it out there and it is urgent. It is about time the government took action. When the economic storm clouds were gathering in late summer, rather than do something about it, the government called an election.

When President Barack Obama was elected President of the United States in the November election, he was already talking about a massive stimulus package. People in Canada were also talking about the need for the same kind of thing. Instead of doing something then, the government came forward with an economic update that had nothing in it in the form of stimulus.

In December when Barack Obama's plan was already working its way through the United States system and people were getting excited about some of the things they were hearing, Canadians were talking about what we could do in the form of stimulus. Instead of bringing something in then, the government decided prorogue Parliament.

Finally at the end of January, the government decided to do something about it and put something together. I must admit some parts of the budget are better than what we saw in November, but some serious concerns remain. Personally the most serious of those concerns relates to the protection of those who are most vulnerable, so I will address that first.

We have literacy organizations across the country, and we do not hear as much about literacy in the House as we should. Literacy

### *Government Orders*

organizations, like Literacy Nova Scotia in my province, were among the first victims of the meanness of the government back in the fall of 2006 when it cut \$17.7 million cut from literacy as part of the famous \$2 billion cuts that it came out with.

Literacy organizations do not know where the money is. If we talk to the minister, we get one story. If we talk to officials, we get a different story. However, literacy organizations across the country need help so we can be a more productive nation, so we can educate our citizens and so we can provide support for people.

One of the saddest stories I have heard as a member of Parliament is about a person who was offered a promotion. He came to my office. He was employed and doing okay. By some people's standards, he was not doing that well, but he had a job and he was productive. He then was offered a promotion. The problem was he had to take a literacy test. He knew he could not pass it so he had to turn the promotion down. That person is asking for help.

We have literacy organizations across Canada, like the Dartmouth Literacy Network or the literacy organizations in the Annapolis Valley, that do such good work. When we talk to a learner, somebody whose life has been changed by having access to that kind of education, it is amazing we do not do more to support them.

I want to talk about employment insurance, which I have spoken to at other stages of the bill. Five weeks at the end of EI is helpful, but it is a very small measure. There is some money for training, and I give the government credit for that. However, when we think of what the government could have done for EI, it is a shame. There are all kinds of measures. The government could eliminate the waiting period. It could make EI benefits a bit higher percentage of previous earnings. It could equalize access, both regionally and across income groups.

One of the real weaknesses of our EI system is that a lot of low-income part-time workers, who tend to be women, cannot access EI. This is the perfect time to speed that up.

EI is a very positive way to provide stimulus into the economy. In fact, some studies note there is payback on EI. Ian Lee from the Sprott School of Business indicates that EI has a multiplier effect of 1.61%. For every dollar we spend on EI, it goes out and multiplies in the economy, which is higher than infrastructure and dramatically higher than tax cuts.

The tax cuts in the budget are unfair. The tax cuts help me, but in my view I am not the kind of person, nor are any other members of the House, who should be a priority for the government.

The government should have increased the GST rebate. It should have increased the child tax benefit. It should have put money into the pockets of people who most need it. It helps us all because they spend it, not because they want to spend it, but because they have to spend it. That is where the stimulus should be.

*Government Orders*

● (1540)

I want to talk about another issue that we have started to hear about in the last few days. This week *The Chronicle Herald* had an editorial with the headline, “Laid-off workers stuck in EI limbo”, and stated, “Thousands of recently laid-off Atlantic Canadian workers are paying the price”, and that is the EI wait lists.

On the weekend I was delighted to see that the Leader of the Opposition, when he was in Nova Scotia for the annual general meeting along with the next premier of Nova Scotia, Steve McNeil, the leader of the Liberal Party spoke about EI very strongly. The headline in the paper the next night was, “Late EI payments to Atlantic Canadians unacceptable”—the Leader of the Opposition—“says”.

This is a very important issue. People are waiting. I have letters from people from across the country who have been waiting for EI. The government says that 80% of EI claims are processed within 28 days. That is not the case and it is not just in the last few days. In December I wrote a letter to the Minister of Human Resources saying that people are waiting for EI. People told me that they are being told that they have to wait the standard 40 days. That is not the worst case scenario; that is the standard processing time. The standard processing time has gone from 28 days to 40 days.

I wrote a letter to the Minister of Human Resources in the middle of December. The mail must be pretty slow, because I have not had a response yet.

I received an email from somebody in my riding on January 27 which states:

Tomorrow, on day 50, I'm supposed to call back and get another update as to what is going on with my claim. When it finally does get processed, I'll drop you a line just to let you know how long it finally took.

I got an email from the same lady a few days later saying:

Thank you so much!! I did get a phone call late this afternoon actually saying my claim had been processed and approved which was a surprise because I got a voicemail when I got home last night saying there may be more delays.

She went on to say:

I just thought you might like to know that it may have been [the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour], not Conservative promises, who helped this first nations person get their cheque.

We have received emails in my office from across the country. We have one from the riding of the member for Halifax West, saying:

I am a resident of your riding and wanted to be sure that you were aware of the current situation in obtaining EI benefits. It is virtually impossible to reach an agent on the phone.... On several instances I waited on hold over two hours only to be cut off without reaching an agent.

I want to be very clear. I do not blame the people at Service Canada. They are working very hard. They have had to take on more responsibilities in the last few years. I do not have any problem with the people who work at Service Canada. I do have a problem with the political masters who are not recognizing that more and more people are being laid off, and if they are among the lucky ones who actually manage to qualify for EI even though they have paid into it, they have the right to get EI when they need it.

A person from Vancouver wrote:

Ceased to work at the end of November. Applied for EI January 8, 2009. It has now been 54 days. Still no final decision.”

Here is one from Prince Edward Island:

I have applied for EI sick benefits and have been told it will be eight to ten weeks to process my application and receive benefits.

I have one here from the city of St. Johns in Newfoundland and Labrador saying that our riding office has been helping many constituents who have been waiting six weeks or more in the processing of EI claims. Across the country people are waiting for their EI cheques. Even though they are entitled to get their EI, they are having a very difficult time getting it.

My colleague from Don Valley East asked a question on this in the House, if I am not mistaken. I think my colleague from Cape Breton—Canso asked a question in the House on this, about a constituent of his whose name I cannot recall, but I think it might have been Norma Peck, who was waiting and waiting.

Thank heavens that people have members of Parliament like the member for Don Valley East and my colleague from Cape Breton—Canso, who stand up. My colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche spoke in this House on behalf of somebody who was waiting, I think it was 47 days. Thank heavens there are some members providing leadership for those who actually need help the most.

On employment insurance, there is a great deal more the government could be doing to help people. I expect we will talk about that tomorrow.

I want to talk about child care. Canada is, and I want to be generous, a laggard on child care. In the last few years we have gotten worse. A survey was released in December by the United Nations and of the OECD nations, Canada ranked last out of 25 countries on 10 benchmarks dealing with early learning and child care. We were last.

● (1545)

I would expect that some of the Scandinavian nations that are very progressive in this area would be ahead of us, but many other nations were as well. I believe we only went halfway on one benchmark. The province of Quebec had six out of the ten benchmarks because it has an early learning and child care plan, and I commend that province for that. We need to do more.

The Leader of the Opposition came to a meeting in Halifax on Saturday. We met with about 20 child care advocates. Somebody said that child care does not stop at six either, referring to the measly \$100 a month. And education does not start at six. Education has to start at age zero. Education needs to be accessible to all. If any one of us knew of somebody with a child who was six or seven years old and that child was denied access to elementary school, there would be an outcry, and rightly so. Yet every single day in every community in Canada children are being denied access to early learning and child care. That is a shame. That affects our productivity in a huge way.

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I am delighted that the Leader of the Opposition has made it clear that when the Liberals form the government, and I hope and expect that will be after the next election, he will bring back an early learning and child care plan similar to the one brought forward by my colleague from York Centre, the former goalie who was minister of human resources and skills development. It was a wonderful plan for child care. He actually implemented it but it was thrown out on the scrap heap to the consternation, dismay and the agony of people across this country to whom \$100 does not mean anything. People at our session on Sunday said that the \$100 does not help when child care costs \$800 to \$1,000 a month, but more important, they cannot find a child care space. Child care cannot be delivered in the mail.

I want to talk about a specific organization which does some great work in this country. It is called the Canadian Council on Learning, CCL. This organization is set up to measure how we are doing on education in relation to other countries and the standards that we should have in Canada. This organization has been operating for five years. It has some concerns. It is not a political organization at all. Dr. Paul Cappon heads it up. He is universally respected. He is not a Liberal, nor a New Democrat, nor a Conservative. He is just a guy who cares about education and helping us understand where we are in educating our citizens. This organization was told that its funding was not going to be renewed past the end of March or April of this year. That does not make any sense.

At committee a couple of weeks ago, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development was asked by the chair of our committee, a very good chair in spite of his Conservative label, if the funding for CCL would be extended and what the status of it was. The minister said, "The funding for that has been extended to the end of next year. There will be discussions about the future".

Two days later her officials came to committee and I raised the issue of CCL. My question was, "I want to ask about the Canadian Council on Learning. On Tuesday the minister indicated that their funding would be extended for another year. My understanding was it was going to run out at the end of March. Our chair asked the question. Is that the fact, that they have another year of funding that will take them to 2010?"

The assistant deputy minister said, "That's correct". I said, "It is not just that they are using the money they were given before for an extra year, but they have an extra year of funding", which is what the minister said. The answer was "My understanding is their original funding was reprofiled to extend into 2010". That is a quizzical thing. I pursued that and said, "Reprofiled under certain governments means different things. Does that mean stretched or does that mean added?" The answer was, "It means there was no increase in the funding they received".

On Tuesday the minister told us the funding had been extended until the end of next year, yet two days later we found out that was not the case at all. This is an organization like the Centre for Social Development and many others that are doing great work but it seems they have to fight for their funding every year.

I work in the area of human resources, and there are a number of issues that are of great concern to me.

● (1550)

What is happening on the research side is scandalous. The CAUT, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, went to see the Secretary of State and its members were told to shut up. They were told that they have burned their bridges. I can see shock on the faces of members opposite that one of their own would say that to somebody.

As ministers or MPs, there is a certain tone and level of respect that we have for people who are advocating when they come to see us, whether we agree or disagree. I know the people who went to see the minister. I know Jim Turk. He is the head of CAUT. I know the two people who were in that meeting. These are reasonable people. They came to see me while I was on the government side and they have come to see me in opposition. Sometimes I agree and sometimes I disagree, but I would never question their motives or suggest that anybody would use that tone of language in dealing with people who are advocating for issues like education.

I have concerns about the budget and the tone of the government. I have an awful lot of concerns about the direction of the country. My colleagues from the NDP will say that since I have all these issues, maybe I should vote against this budget. I can say with great sincerity that I support the position our leader has taken. There are some measures in this budget, such as the five weeks of EI and some of the infrastructure money if it gets out the door, that could be very positive for Canadians.

We are not supporting this budget so much as we are letting it pass. We are going to keep a close eye on it. This country is headed into difficult times. We may be there now. I can recall two or three times in the last couple of months when I have talked to people who said that they did not think it would get this worse. We hear about further losses with each passing day and week. Yesterday, we heard about the job losses in Hamilton. In my own area, we have lost the Moirs plant, which employed over 500 people. We are all going to be hurt.

We are in this together. This is Canada. We are a rich nation, but we are hurting. However, the strength of this country is that we have a social infrastructure and we believe in it. We believe in national health service. We believe in employment insurance. We believe in social supports that provide assistance to those in need, like the GIS and the child tax benefit.

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I think that in a difficult time it is important that we as Canadians focus on those people who are hurting the most. We need to provide support to people who need help. We need to invest in their health, education and the social supports that make their lives livable, whether it is EI, health care, or education for aboriginal Canadians, low-income families and persons with disabilities. These are the people who need our help. Those are the measures we are going to be watching as this budget unfolds. That is how we will be holding the government to account. For now, it is a pass, but it is pretty close.

• (1555)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour says that he is reluctant to follow the government's agenda. He also says that he is concerned about job losses and the fact that people cannot get employment insurance, many of them because this budget does not provide for about half the workers who lose their employment insurance benefits.

I am prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt on both of those comments that he has made. However, the next item on the government's agenda is the European Free Trade Association agreement. That is coming forward to the House. The shipbuilding industry, including his constituents in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour who work at the Halifax shipyards, is unanimous in saying that there has to be a carve-out on EFTA. If there is not, they will lose their jobs. That will mean that they will be subject to the very meanspirited employment insurance provisions that are contained within this budget.

I would like to ask the member a very clear question. There is a carve-out, an amendment that we proposed in the House. Is he prepared to vote for that amendment that is supported by his constituents in the Halifax shipyards in order to carve shipbuilding out of EFTA, ensuring that more of his constituents will not be subjected to the punitive provisions of EI that are in this budget?

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to sit in on the committee last week where EFTA was discussed. The Minister of Industry came to that committee.

The member is right that shipbuilding is an important part of my community. In fact, in Nova Scotia, shipbuilding is a long and honourable tradition. I do not think that this country has done enough to support shipbuilding. The EFTA deal will take us into a deal with four countries, including Norway, who have a very strong, robust and subsidized shipbuilding industry.

Canada needs not to close its eyes to what is happening in the rest of the world but to look at Norway and ask what it did and whether we should do that here. We need a strong shipbuilding policy. Less than an hour ago, I met with members of the CAW, who were here to meet with us and people in our leader's office to talk about the shipbuilding policy we need. Whether it is putting together the SFF and the ACCA or whether it is a national procurement policy that includes direct allocation and continuous procurement, there are solutions. The shipbuilding industry, including those who own the companies, those who manage the companies as well as the workers, is aligned on this issue.

I was very disappointed that there was not more stimulus in the budget. The Minister of National Defence had indicated in

December that shipbuilding would specifically be part of a stimulus plan and then we were very disappointed by the budget. In my view, we need a national shipbuilding policy that emulates countries like Norway because we have the people, the technology, and the ability to do it here ourselves.

• (1600)

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his intervention today and for his support in previous votes on our economic action plan.

I wonder if he could inform the House how he will be voting tonight on our economic action plan.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the budget tonight on third reading. I cannot divulge any details about whether my fingers will be crossed behind my back or not but I will be voting for it tonight.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I finally get a chance to ask my hon. colleague, the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, a question.

My colleague has been a passionate proponent of social justice. As we heard from his speech, he talked about the early learning and childhood strategies. I have heard him speak about student loans, helping the poor and helping communities in distress.

I know the budget is difficult for a lot of us because it is such a mixture of good and bad. Could the member give some indication on what he thinks of some of the other measures the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance put in, the hodge-podge things like the Competition Act, pay equity, Navigable Waters Protection Act and probably EFTA? Is the Conservative government really serious about a stimulus package or is it really playing games on the backs of ordinary Canadians?

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is one of the most impressive and passionate members of the House. It is easy for us to be critical, because I know there are many good members on the other side of the House, but I believe the government has been very punitive and is gratuitous in what it put in the budget, particularly on things like pay equity.

If the government were really serious about stimulus, it should remember that we can stimulate an economy, not just through bricks and mortar, but through flesh and bone by investing in people and in the social supports that provide the safety net in this country. That money would not only go to the people who need it, but it would go right back into the economy because they would spend the money.

I think that spending in areas of social need should be the priority of any government in a difficult time.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I will go back to my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour because he did not answer the question.

The member was asked by workers from the Halifax shipyards just an hour ago, and he knows his constituents are impacted by this, to vote for the carve-out to save shipbuilding jobs in his constituency. Is he prepared to vote for the carve-out and, if not, why not?

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, it is because it was ruled out of order. However, I will tell the House, because I do not have any secrets on this issue, that it is my intention to support the free trade deal with the EFTA countries, but, on top of that, working with my colleagues from Kings—Hants, Halifax West and others in the House.

In the discussions I had today with members of the CAW there was no mention of EFTA. The discussions were about procurement and national shipbuilding. That does not mean that it is not an important issue to them, it is, but they also recognize that after the next election one of two parties will form the Government of Canada. One of them will have a real shipbuilding policy and one of them will not. We will.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member's constituents have been very clear on this. People in Nova Scotia have been very clear that they want the carve-out. The shipbuilding industry has been unanimous. Shipbuilding yards across the country, the owners and the workers have been unanimous, as the member well knows, before the committee on international trade.

Therefore, because it is very much in order to carve out and delete certain clauses of the bill with EFTA that is being brought before the House, the member will need to make a choice between his constituents or a theory. Will the member choose his constituents or will he vote for the carve-out, yes or no?

• (1605)

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, the committee ruled the amendment on the carve-out out of order. The expectation is that it will be ruled out of order here. If it is not, then I will deal with that.

I would ask my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster to ask the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore if I believe in shipbuilding. Ask him if he believes that I listen to my constituents and try to do the best that I can for them.

Does the member not think that I want to support my constituents? The discussions I have had with them are respectful. I have never turned down a meeting. If the member were to ask them, I think they would say that the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour stands up for their interests. That is what I did before. I do not hide from that but sometimes it is not as easy.

Members of the NDP would like to have an election every second Friday, which is an easy thing for them. However, we will be the government in this country and we will bring in a shipbuilding policy that will be as good as any in the world, a policy that people who work in the shipbuilding industry and who run the shipyards will be very proud of.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been an incredibly passionate defender of the shipbuilding industry in his riding and across Canada. In meetings we have had together with shipbuilding companies and labour, they have said that the hon. member and the Liberal Party continue to be strong proponents and defenders of shipbuilding.

Does the hon. member agree that yesterday at committee, when the chair made a ruling on the legal advice of the clerk, to challenge the chair on that would have indicated a lack of confidence in the

non-partisan clerk, the clerk who does not work for the government but who works for the House of Commons?

Not only is the NDP member economically illiterate, he has absolutely no idea of the rules and procedures in this House when yesterday at committee he accused the clerk, the legal clerk, of being partisan. The NDP member talks about defending the public service and yet yesterday he attacked the public service.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is quite well and good to have a political discussion here but to invent something that did not happen, as the member for Kings—Hants just did, is something that merits a withdrawal.

I would ask, Mr. Speaker, if you could ask the member for Kings—Hants to withdraw his comments that are untrue and defamatory.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I obviously was not at the committee yesterday. This was a question to the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. I would like a very short answer before we resume debate.

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague from Kings—Hants had it right. We all know the great work and the great support we get from the staff here at the House of Commons. They do not favour one person over another.

What I want to say in closing is that I do not question the motives of my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster. I have been at that committee and I have seen how it operates. It is not the way I would do it but I do not question his motives or his belief in supporting his constituents.

If he has a reason to believe that I do not support my constituents, then he should table it. He should talk to his colleague from Sackville—Eastern Shore who is passionate about this industry. I think he would tell him that this is a guy who believes in shipbuilding. I have every faith that when the Liberals form the next government, we will bring in a national shipbuilding policy that people can be proud of.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will follow on the comments that were just made in the House. In regard to Bill C-10, they were quite appropriate. However, the reality is that there will be no shipbuilding industry left if the Liberal Party does not stand up for shipbuilding when the carbon amendment comes before this House in the next few days. I certainly hope they will, and the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour has indicated that he is considering it, which is very important. We are making some progress.

Where we are not making progress is on Bill C-10.

What we have seen over the past 20 years is a slow and profound crisis in this country. Family income over the past 20 years has been steadily declining. That is even before the very sharp and acute crisis that we have all felt over the past six months and what Canadians have been living through.

Most Canadian families have been living through a slow and prolonged decline in the resources they have to feed their families, to keep a roof over their heads, to do all the things that Canadian families feel strongly about doing and all the things they hold dear.

*Government Orders*

Under both the Liberals and the Conservatives, we have seen a steady decline in the quality of life and income over the past 20 years. This comes at a time when Canadians are working harder than ever. It is up over one-third during that period but the lowest income Canadians have seen a catastrophic fall in income. On average, they have lost about a month and a half of real wages every year since 1989, which was the year of the implementation of NAFTA. Working class families have lost about two weeks of income per year over the last 20 years. We would find it hard to live on two weeks less of income than what we had 20 years ago. Middle class families have lost about one week.

In short, we have seen a slow and steady economic catastrophe developing and the last six months has put that even more clearly in the public eye. Over the past six months we have seen the collapse of many of our economic sectors, such as the softwood lumber sector, which started with the softwood lumber sellout that cost tens of thousands of jobs across this country, and we continue to pay. We saw with the arbitration last week that it was inevitable under a softwood lumber agreement that the anti-circumvention clause prohibits any sort of support for softwood lumber and the industry. We have seen Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba all having to cough up money.

Two years ago, the NDP said that was exactly what would happen but, unfortunately, Liberal and Bloc members refused to heed what we told them. They ended up voting for a softwood lumber sellout and the result has been a catastrophe.

[*Translation*]

It is a catastrophe that has hit Quebecers particularly hard. The people whom the Bloc say they are supporting are those who are losing their jobs and whose communities are having to absorb tens of millions of dollars in penalties because of the softwood lumber agreement.

This catastrophe in an industrial sector could have been avoided if the other parties had studied the agreement more closely.

• (1610)

[*English*]

It is not just softwood and shipbuilding. We are now operating at one-third capacity and that one-third capacity will be killed off under EFTA. We are seeing in the automobile sector that our exports are falling by about a third. It is catastrophic. It is tens of billions of dollars every month in lower exports. In the manufacturing industries we are looking at about a quarter of a million lost jobs over the course of the last few months alone.

We are seeing, in short, a catastrophic and sharp economic crisis that brings to bear a focus on what has happened over the last 20 years. What is the remedy? The Conservatives, with Liberal support, are bringing forward a budget that does not deal with any of those realities. There is no industrial plan or sector-by-sector strategy being brought in.

Essentially, the Conservatives want a \$3 billion slush fund to use for whatever political objectives they may have. At the same time, they want to tie any other funding to investments that are first made by municipalities, cash-strapped cities and hard-hit province, so

taxpayers at those other levels of government have to cough up first before there is any relief from the federal government.

It is hard to say that this is an economic stimulus package when it is tied funding and there is a slush fund of \$3 billion set aside, we fear, for political means. We have been asking for transparency around that money.

My colleague, the member for Outremont, has been calling for that in committee and here in the House. So has the NDP leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth. Yet, the Conservatives refuse any sort of transparency or clarity around the money that they intend to spend. They basically want a blank cheque from Parliament to use that money however they see fit. We saw from the sponsorship scandal that that is not a good idea.

What is in Bill C-10? If it does not deal fundamentally with the economic stimulus and the industrial strategies that we need, what is in Bill C-10? Members in this corner of the House have been saying very clearly what is in it. This is an ideological attack on many principles that the Conservatives have wanted to attack for some time.

Now, because they have a functional majority, since the Liberal Party has given up any sort of opposition role, they are making those attacks. They are attacking collective agreements and not only collective agreements in the public sector but public sector agreements that affect hard-working RCMP officers, stopping them from fairly-negotiated wage increases. All public sector workers and public servants who have been working very hard with less and less over the past few years are stymied. Bill C-10 is effectively an attack on collective agreements.

Bill C-10 attacks students. It treats them very harshly. This is the same government that believes that corporate tax cuts should be shovelled off the back of a truck. However, in this particular case what they want to attack are students who, through no fault of their own, because of a complete lack of support for post-secondary education that we saw develop under the Liberals and continued under the Conservatives, may end up with tens of thousands of dollars of student debt. Instead of the government providing some measure of debt relief, it is treating those student debtors even more harshly.

Bill C-10 allows, basically, for the fire sale of Canadian assets and businesses to go full rein. It is lessening any remaining remnants of foreign ownership qualifications. There actually is a vetting when there are takeovers of Canadian companies. Now they are opening up whole sectors that used to be considered Canadian because it was in the public and Canadian interest to do so. Bill C-10 ideologically attacks that provision for some vetting when Canadian companies are taken over and sold offshore.

We have seen over the past few years company after company purchased at fire sale prices. Canadian companies were bought up because of lax foreign ownership rules. In fact, of the foreign investment that has come into Canada, it is estimated 97% of it goes for takeovers, not for new investment or job creation but a simple takeover of what exists now.

*Government Orders*

●(1615)

Bill C-10 enhances that fire sale of Canada. So much for standing up for Canada. Conservatives are selling out Canada. We have seen it with the softwood lumber sellout, the shipbuilding sellout, the NAFTA amendments they are bringing forward with the relaxed foreign ownership provisions, so any Canadian company can be a target. The government will simply not stand up for Canadians.

I want to talk about environment assessments. Canadians feel very strongly about protecting our quality of the environment, our quality of life. Yet, Bill C-10 essentially strips environmental assessments from a whole range of projects. That is not in the public interest. No Canadian asked for that. In fact, if the Conservatives had promised that in the election campaign, there would be a lot fewer of them on the other side of the House. However, that is indeed what they are doing because the Liberals are giving them a functional majority with the new Liberal-Conservative coalition.

My colleague from Outremont called it the Conservative-Liberal Alliance party yesterday in the House. We remember the acronym that existed with the Conservative-Reform Alliance party, CRAP. It did not last very long. That was changed. Now we have a new one. Like the member for Outremont said so well, the acronym actually refers to venereal disease. Perhaps the budget is just as painful in its impact on Canadians.

Perhaps the worst aspect of the budget bill, the most ideologically meanspirited attack that we see in Bill C-10, is the attack on the fundamental human right to pay equity. It is simply unbelievable that the Conservatives would try to pretend that in some way, in some Orwellian twist of phrase, they are trying to save pay equity by killing it.

They have stood in the House and tried to confuse Canadians, and have pretended that in some way this is somewhat similar to something that other administrations have brought forward. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is a full-fronted attack on pay equity. It eliminates pay equity. It does not in any way protect pay equity or provide recourse for pay equity.

Paul Durber, who is the former director for pay equity for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, said very clearly in his letter just a few days ago that he could not imagine any party in the House knowingly adopting a measure that would contradict such a fundamental value as the equality provision of section 15 of the charter.

It is very clear that this is an attack on pay equity. This kills pay equity. So much for a so-called economic stimulus budget. This kills a fundamental principle of Canadian law and the Liberals are well aware of it. They have said with crocodile tears that somehow they feel that those provisions on pay equity are unfair, but each and every one of them is voting for these provisions that kill pay equity. Canadians will not forgive that incredible shortsightedness and hypocrisy.

Pay equity is being killed and a whole range of other, meanspirited, right-wing, ideological measures are being proposed in the budget. The budget is not one of economic stimulus. The budget is not one that helps Canadians. The budget does absolutely nothing to help the increasing number of Canadians who become

unemployed. Not a single, additional person will have access to employment insurance as a result of the budget at a time when tens of thousands of jobs are hemorrhaging out of this country, tens of thousands of people and families are losing their breadwinner.

Yet, not a single new person can claim employment insurance than those who qualified prior to the budget. There is no change to the harsh qualifications that legally the government cannot put in place, but under the budget we are in this Orwellian world where the government now redefines what its legal responsibilities are and redefines employment insurance in a way that half the workers who become unemployed will not be able to access it.

●(1620)

Canadians are not fooled by those few who qualify getting a few extra weeks at the end. They are not fooled by that because they know that in their communities people are losing their jobs as Canadian industries shut down one after the other, after 20 years of completely foolish and irresponsible economic policies from the economic illiteracy twins of the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party putting Canadian industry and manufacturing at risk with catastrophic implications today.

As their neighbours, friends and families lose their jobs, Canadians are not fooled by the fact that there are a few weeks at the end of employment insurance for those who qualify. They are concerned and the reason why they are coming to constituency offices across the country is because they know now that they do not qualify.

This is a meanspirited budget, not a budget that addresses the crisis that we are living in. It is an ideological attack on Canadians and for that reason, New Democrats are voting against this budget.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, our colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster spoke about how this government treats women. We know that this is not the first time this government has attacked the means that women have to improve their lot in society. It went after women's shelters: of the 16 shelters, there are only four left to support women's groups. And it is now taking on employment equity.

I would like to know what the member thinks about this situation. The Liberals, like all of us and like the NDP, have been highly critical of this measure that would keep women from turning to the courts to have their rights recognized. Even worse, this measure would see fines of up to \$50,000 slapped on unions wanting to defend women. What does he think about the Liberals, who have suddenly done an about-face and jumped into bed with the Conservatives, setting women's rights back more than 50 years?

*Government Orders*

•(1625)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, it is disgusting. That is the only word I can use. It is the most hypocritical thing that a political party can do; that is, defend women here in House but vote in favour of a budget that fundamentally attacks women's rights. There is no other word for it. I think that the people in the Liberal Party should be ashamed of their position.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while we are on the rather broad topic of Liberal Party hypocrisy, can the hon. member tell us his how he felt when he heard a member from the Liberal Party of Canada rise during question period this afternoon and speak out against the softwood lumber agreement, which was after all supported, signed and upheld by that same Liberal Party?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question asked by the hon. member for Outremont regarding softwood lumber. It is a very important one.

Two years ago, we indicated the impact this agreement would have. We were the only party to read the agreement. The Conservative members said they supported the agreement, but they did not even read it. The Liberal members said they would vote to support the agreement, because it looked fine. I cannot help but think of the members from northern Ontario who no longer sit in this House, because the people of that region said no to the Liberal Party during the most recent election, partly because of the Liberal Party's decision to support the softwood lumber agreement. Now I know my friends in the Bloc Québécois also understand that their party made a monumental mistake in supporting an agreement that was not good for Quebec, that cost thousands of jobs, that took away Quebec's autonomy in how it managed the forestry industry, which is, after all, a matter of provincial jurisdiction.

So it is very clear and very obvious. Now that the other parties see that the NDP was right, we hope they might listen to us from the beginning next time, to prevent the kind of crisis that arises when people do not fully understand the consequences of their actions.

[English]

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, given the Conservatives faced a coalition that would have thrown them out of office just two months ago, why would they put add-ons in the budget when all opposition parties would find them objectionable? Why would they do that given they almost lost the government a couple of months ago?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. My only answer is the Conservatives thought the Liberals would simply roll over. There is no principle that governs Liberal Party members. They are willing, at all costs, to give up any principle they support if they do not think their electoral chances are particularly good.

I think the Conservatives simply thought they could do anything they wanted. They knew the Liberals would not stand up to them. They now have a functional majority, a coalition government, Liberal-Conservative, or Conservative-Liberal-Alliance party, or CLAP, in the House of Commons. It is very unfortunate for Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by pointing out that my NDP colleague, with whom I sit on the Standing Committee on International Trade, is an expert on softwood lumber and a staunch defender of the softwood lumber industry in his region. He is also an authority on shipbuilding in his region.

In this case, my colleague has great respect for the people of his riding and his province, and he is fulfilling their expectations by trying to remove this sector from the free trade agreement. However, he still refuses to accept that the Bloc had serious reservations about the softwood lumber agreement. He should bear in mind that we, too, responded to the needs of softwood lumber stakeholders in Quebec. We responded to the needs of Quebecers, just as he responded to the needs of shipbuilding stakeholders in British Columbia.

Now, once and for all—we have covered this dozens of times already—given that he is dealing with the same situation when it comes to shipbuilding as we did with softwood lumber, I would like to hear him say that the work we did was just as much about responsibility as the work he thinks he is doing now.

•(1630)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I did not say anything bad about the Bloc Québécois. I even congratulated the Bloc Québécois on recognizing that it made a mistake by voting for the softwood lumber agreement.

All I have to go on are the facts. Thousands of people in Quebec lost their jobs after the softwood lumber agreement came into force on October 2, 2007. Since then, thousands of jobs have been lost in Quebec. Last week, a decision was made that will cost Quebecers tens of millions of dollars. Even if it were to be distributed according to the formula proposed by the Bloc, the result would be the same: Quebecers will have to pay tens of millions of dollars.

It is clear that the effect on Quebec will be just as the NDP predicted a few years ago. We were right when we said that the agreement should not be signed. They should have waited for the final court decision, which ruled in Canada's favour.

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, our colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster keeps playing his softwood lumber tape.

There was an election campaign last September and October. The NDP had candidates in all Quebec ridings, including those where forestry is the main industry. That was their message during the election campaign and they came in dead last.

Two-thirds of Quebec MPs are members of the Bloc. This truly reflects what my colleague from Sherbrooke just said: we expressed the wishes of our citizens. We are not retreating from the decision we made. On the contrary, we will continue to represent the opinions and wishes of our constituents.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to elaborate for our Bloc Québécois colleague. We have to say that it is becoming increasingly evident to everyone in Quebec that it was a bad agreement. Last week's decision will unfortunately be reinforced by another to be given in a few weeks, one that will go against Quebec, as we said. The next time, we will campaign in all Quebec ridings and the result will be different because you made the wrong decision whereas we made the right one.

**Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Chambly—Borduas. Ordinarily, members say it is a pleasure to speak to a bill, but in this case, it is more my duty to the people in my riding and everyone in Quebec. Like my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I will vote against this bill.

Quebec is the big loser in the government's recovery plan. We know that the plan includes roughly \$4 billion to help Ontario. We understand that this is important to the automotive industry and all that, but Quebec is getting nothing but crumbs. The forest and manufacturing industries are very important, but the recovery plan provides only \$170 million for research and development for the entire country.

Last week, Guy Chevrette, president and CEO of the Quebec Forest Industry Council, appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance and again impressed on us that the forest industry in Quebec is in deep trouble. Companies could close in the near future and need loan guarantees like the ones the automotive industry got in the recent recovery plan. Loan guarantees would also enable forest companies to take part in research and development programs and at least survive the current financial crisis.

Mr. Chevrette mentioned that the forest industry currently accounts for 825,000 direct jobs in Canada, compared to 500,000 jobs in auto manufacturing. He talked about the forest industry's strategic and economic importance to Canada. But the budget contains no support for the forest industry in Quebec, which is why it is turning to the Government of Quebec for loan guarantees that the industry was hoping the federal government would provide but that have not been forthcoming. As members are aware, the Government of Quebec is not in a very easy economic situation at present.

I would like to talk about the immediate action on the economy that we were expecting from this recovery plan, such as the guaranteed income supplement and employment insurance. With regard to these sorts of measures, if you increase the amounts people are receiving, that money will be invested directly into the economy. People will not be able to take a trip or buy stock in a company with the extra money. This is therefore the best stimulant, especially since the government took so long to introduce a real recovery plan. That would have had a direct, immediate impact on the economy.

The budget has not yet been officially passed. It may be tonight when the bill is passed at third reading and after it goes to the Senate. If only the industry could benefit from certain measures without delay, the stimulus plan would be more effective.

The guaranteed income supplement is one of those measures. Last year, I had the opportunity to introduce a bill to improve the guaranteed income supplement. I should point out that people receiving the supplement because they do not have enough income

are now below the low-income threshold, which was once called the poverty line. It is therefore unacceptable for a government not to take advantage of the fact that it has to invest in the economy to give them at least enough income to reach the low-income threshold, particularly since these are people who already need help from the government.

We also asked for automatic enrolment in the guaranteed income supplement program. Once again, the government is playing hide and seek with seniors, who, in many cases, do not know which forms to fill out. In Quebec alone, an estimated 40,000 people who are eligible for the guaranteed income supplement are not receiving it because they did not apply.

• (1635)

Throughout Canada, 135,000 people are entitled to it. Last year, the Conservative government said that the program would cost too much. All told, we estimate the cost of implementing the program to be \$2 billion, but the government thought that that was too much money.

The government should make the most of this year's stimulus plan. Since it wants to invest, it could invest that money directly and, by the same token, give these people a reasonable income so that they can live with dignity.

The same goes for employment insurance. The government adopted a measure to extend the benefit period by five weeks. The maximum benefit period will increase from 45 to 50 weeks. However, as we have pointed out numerous times, only some 10% of people receiving employment insurance benefits will collect the extra five weeks' worth of benefits. Most of them are resourceful and find new jobs. Also, fewer than half of the people who contribute to employment insurance actually collect benefits. For various reasons, many do not work enough hours. So fewer than 50% collect benefits, and of those, barely 10% reach the end of the benefit period. These are the people the government wants to help with its stimulus plan.

We in the Bloc Québécois had called for the elimination of the waiting period. Under the current employment insurance system, people who lose their jobs have to cover the first two weeks. Doing away with the waiting period would have meant a direct, immediate investment. It would have meant that, as soon as they lost their jobs, people could have counted on a reduced income, but at least some income during what is a critical time for them. Here again, the government is not looking after these people. Despite the need to stimulate the economy, these people are being ignored. The government is not going to suddenly think of these people when times get better.

*Government Orders*

I wanted to talk about social housing. Quebec alone is estimated to need 52,000 social housing units. I live in Laval, and my riding is in the eastern part of Laval. More than 1,000 people in Laval alone are waiting for social housing, because there is not enough. The current government's position seems to be that families and people in need who cannot find decent housing at market prices should be left to fend for themselves.

Yet the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has a surplus of about \$8 billion. We have no idea what this surplus is used for. The Auditor General has said that a \$2 billion surplus would be more than enough to respond to an emergency.

My riding has a federal penitentiary, the Saint-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary. An old part of this institution, the Old Pen, has been unoccupied since 1989. The building has been abandoned since then. It has been shown that the building needs about \$1 million in repairs to remain in good condition. I have not yet had a satisfactory answer from the minister about whether the government is going ahead with this project. A conversion project is under consideration, and that project could include social housing. But the government is turning a deaf ear. Here again, even though there is a cost involved, this would have been a perfect opportunity to build social housing.

I would have liked to talk about pay equity, which was mentioned earlier. That has been a real scandal. The dynamic men and women in my riding are very concerned about this issue. To them, pay equity is a right, not something they have to negotiate. It is truly unfortunate that the government is proceeding in this way and forgetting all about the current pay equity provisions of legislation. Not only is the government not meeting Quebec's needs, but it is also penalizing Quebec by changing the equalization formula, which will cost Quebec \$1 billion.

• (1640)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Québec, the environment; the hon. member for Richmond Hill, the environment; the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, Air Canada.

• (1645)

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his speech in which he made his opposition clear. I would also like to point out that we are currently asking for money. I am responsible for the social housing file, and there is most likely a possibility that non-residential buildings will be converted into residential units.

I would like him to tell us to what point, in his riding, this project would answer the needs of those who are not necessarily the poorest of the poor, but who have modest incomes. I would like him to talk about that project.

**Mr. Robert Carrier:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I did not know about the project he mentioned. However, it is clear that we need many social and affordable housing projects. Currently, low-income families with two, three or four children cannot find housing at an affordable price. Any projects that can help these people would be appreciated.

There is a need in my riding. That is why I was questioning the government about a building it owns. It is the government's responsibility to convert it into housing units for the public.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, given that the Prime Minister nearly lost his government in December and we would think that he would not want to antagonize the opposition, especially not the Liberals, why does the member think he would add on all these measures that have absolutely nothing to do with the budget? Why would he want to do that if he is hoping for their support to continue his government?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Carrier:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. NDP colleague for his question. Clearly, it would be overly optimistic to hope that any adjustments or amendments might be made, considering the current Liberal-Conservative coalition. The Liberals are supporting this budget, which offers nothing worthwhile.

I deplore that. I am particularly concerned that the 10 Conservative members and the 14 Liberals members from Quebec are supporting this budget, which does nothing to help their own region, Quebec.

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague from Alfred-Pellan for his excellent speech and his valuable contribution to the Standing Committee on Finance.

He did not have the opportunity to address the question of equalization and the fact that, in this budget the government is reneging on its own commitment to the provinces. For Quebec, this means a shortfall of about \$1 billion. Can he share his thoughts on that?

**Mr. Robert Carrier:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Chambly—Borduas for his question. Indeed, I ran out of time and was not able to talk about equalization. In addition to failing to introduce effective economic stimulus measures, the government will undermine the effectiveness and integrity of Quebec by its frankly unilateral changes to equalization payments, despite a unanimous motion by the Quebec National Assembly calling on the government not to change the formula for calculating equalization without allowing some time to discuss it and explore other solutions. The federal government simply decided to deprive Quebec of \$1 billion in the next budget. This will automatically lead to a deficit in Quebec, since the provincial government was counting on that money. That is what is appalling.

Furthermore, the Government of Canada decided that revenues from electricity distribution in Ontario by Hydro One would be considered corporate revenue and would therefore not be factored into the equalization calculation, although the same calculation method does not apply to Hydro-Québec. Quebec will lose another \$250 million in equalization because of this decision, which is unfair to Quebec.

*Government Orders*

● (1650)

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** It is difficult to know where to start when it comes to Bill C-10, the budget implementation bill. This budget contains so many items that are not in the interest of major groups in society, and that penalize Quebec in particular, that it is hard to know where to start. I will first look at an issue raised previously by other colleagues, the treatment of women.

With this government we had become accustomed to policies with misogynist undertones. In the previous budget, cuts were made to programs that supported women's organizations, especially women's centres that provide support to organizations in every region of the country. There used to be 16 such centres; only four remain and they are barely surviving because they are forced to find money wherever they can. Nonetheless, over the years, our society acquired these tools thanks to the struggle—especially by women, unions, and workers' and grassroots movements—to give rights to women in our society.

Despite our reactions here in the House of Commons, the government has gone ahead with this measure. To our great surprise, this budget contains an attack against women once again. This is inexplicable and has nothing to do with kick-starting the economy. Women will no longer be able to go before the courts to have their right to pay equity within the public service recognized. It is unbelievable. What is even more unbelievable is that the Liberals will be supporting it. It is beyond comprehension, even more so because they say they oppose this measure. Under the pretext of not triggering an election, they are prepared to stoop this low and take us back to the 1940s. It makes no sense.

What is even more despicable is the clause saying that if a union dares to file a complaint before the courts, that union could be fined up to \$50,000. Where is the logic in that? We tell women that not only can they not go to the courts, but that the organization that is normally there to support them and ensure that their rights are recognized will be penalized if it dares to do so. They are saying that we need to trust free collective bargaining, but if the employer refuses, where does that leave us? What is more, they are saying that if the employer does not agree with the union, if there is a disagreement and they want help and want to take a complaint before the courts, the employer will also be penalized and could face a \$10,000 fine. Why should one pay \$50,000 and the other \$10,000? We have to find the answer. We do not know the answer, but we are faced with an illogical argument that does not hold water.

There are, of course, some embellishments around these measures to try and make us forget them. There are accessories and buffers. That is the main gist of it, however. And it is nonsensical. It is something that we cannot agree with and something that we must object to. We thought that there would be objections from the Liberals as well as the NDP and ourselves. But the Liberals just making a symbolic last stand. They say they disagree with it, but they are in a bit of a bind, because otherwise they will have to go through another election. What better than an election for having debates about our society? This is a topic for a real societal debate.

Have we, in 2009, not reached the point where we must stand up for recognition of the rights of just over 50% of the population of our society, that is, the rights of women?

● (1655)

I wanted to start by addressing this element. It alone ought to be sufficient grounds for rejecting this budget. There are many other measures, for example, that affect Quebec.

There are such anti-Quebec measures as the matter of equalization. Other provinces are also affected. The government has reneged on its commitment regarding the distribution of equalization. That means a \$1 billion shortfall for Quebec.

Then there is the centralized securities commission. The government is going to say that Quebec can continue to have its own. But we know very well that, as soon as there is a centralized body and financial institutions or companies have the choice of registering with one or the other, there is always pressure created where the most transactions take place. This is also called the passport system. We know that in the long run, the Quebec body will be undermined. That is, moreover, the reason the Quebec National Assembly unanimously condemned this measure. The premier of Quebec backed down a bit afterward, but there was nevertheless a motion against this measure. It is the duty of the premier of Quebec to come and defend it here, along with his finance minister.

What does this budget have to offer society's most vulnerable? Sure, it has some measures, some tax deductions, but they actually benefit high income earners. These deductions will benefit high income earners more than anyone else.

For the unemployed, this budget is a disaster. That alone should prompt us to vote against it. Like us, the Liberals said that the government should improve access to employment insurance. We agree with that. They even made that one of their election promises. They debated it, and it was part of the platform when they created the coalition with the NDP, a coalition that we supported. They also talked about measures for women. This budget does nothing to improve access to employment insurance. Even so, they plan to vote for it.

Worse still, this budget contains a provision stating that workers' and employers' contributions must remain at \$1.73, their lowest level since 1982. What does that mean? It means that we are giving the government permission to make it impossible to improve the employment insurance system. That makes no sense. The government is going back on yet another promise, betraying the people to whom it promised it would fix the employment insurance system.

According to Human Resources and Social Development, only 46% of those who lose their jobs are eligible for employment insurance benefits. Women, in particular, get the short end of the stick because only 33% of them have access to benefits.

I have just one minute left, so I will wrap up. This budget is a gift when it comes to tax havens. The government is getting rid of any tools it had to prevent excessive use of tax havens. This is party time for tax havens. There are measures to help oil companies and measures to help nuclear development, but no measures to reduce poverty. That is the budget the Liberals are about to support. We refuse to support this budget because it is not in the best interests of Quebec or Canadian society.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to the comments by the hon. member for Chambly—Borduas. I find some parts of his speech contradictory. He speaks of the very obvious suffering of Quebeckers and Canadians who are unemployed. He is absolutely right. There is nothing worse than being out of work.

Does he think that the economic issue is an urgent one, and that jobs must be created as quickly as possible? Does he think that public sector money should be spent to lower the unemployment rate? If so, does he not think that we need to be practical right now, and get spending that money in order to raise the employment level? Would he rather have an election, with a potential eight weeks of campaigning, followed by another two months when the House would not sit until there was a throne speech? Does he think we ought to wait until fall to take practical economic measures to fight the recession?

● (1700)

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very relevant question. First, we had a useless, or almost useless, election because the Prime Minister ambitiously thought he would get a majority government. In addition, he violated his own law on fixed-date elections. As a result, we have not sat since last June, which is quite outrageous.

This government could have taken action to kick-start the economy without coming before the House and without having an election. When it needed a mandate, all of the elements were there to take action to stimulate the economy. We all know about the government's disastrous attempt in November.

We agree that there have to be measures to create jobs. But what about the people living in regions where there are no jobs? That is the question. Should we abandon them? Is that what our colleague's question is suggesting? I hope not. We have to recognize that in this time of crisis, despite all our efforts, people will remain on the streets because they will not be able to find work. Do they not deserve to be supported, even more so given that the money is right there in the employment insurance fund? Instead of continuing to skim money from the employment insurance fund, the government should be supporting those people who are losing their jobs.

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my question will be simple and relates to the question asked by the hon. Liberal member for Lac-Saint-Louis. The Liberal Party was offered the chance to solve the crisis through the coalition, but they refused. That was their decision. The party decided to abandon the most vulnerable members of society. The Liberals decided not to govern. They were handed the opportunity on a silver platter. We were not even going to participate in governing; we were going to leave it up to them.

My question is simple. What does my hon. colleague think of the Liberal Party, which has, once again, abandoned the forestry and manufacturing industries in Quebec, as well as Quebec's unemployed workers?

**Mr. Yves Lessard:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure if this is parliamentary, but I think it is when applied to a party.

I think this is an act of cowardice. The courageous thing to do would have been to consider two things. First of all, this side of the House had the majority. Also, the opposition is mandated by the people to prevent the government from deciding whatever it likes. The Liberal Party is allowing it to decide whatever it likes and, more importantly, to implement very ideological measures.

My colleague is quite right. A platform was created based on points that the three opposition parties agreed on and that would have been very beneficial. That is what should have been done. It would have been an act of courage and, more importantly, responsibility and respect for the mandate we are given here.

● (1705)

[English]

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage my Liberal colleagues to stop and think about what they are about to do if they vote in favour of Bill C-10 this evening. They are handing out a death sentence to pay equity in the country.

Women have fought long and hard for the right to equal pay for work of equal value. By standing in the House and voting in favour of Bill C-10, the Liberals are undermining the aspirations of women for equal pay for work of equal value, throwing away their human rights, disrespecting the contribution women make to our communities and our economy. It is a slap in the face to all women in Canada.

Yesterday afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition told reporters, just outside the chamber, that he was willing to “swallow” the loss of pay equity. This is profoundly disrespectful and unapologetic to a breathtaking degree. Violations of human rights are not something we as Canadians should be willing to just “swallow”.

We are not talking about lofty academic principles here. We are talking about real people, real women who are fighting for equality right now. With the passing of Bill C-10, our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be tarnished and women will be told loud and clear that women's equality means absolutely nothing to the Liberal and Conservative members of the House.

I want to ensure that my colleagues hear the names of the groups of women who will be denied justice if they pass Bill C-10. They are not faceless or nameless. They are women who will be denied justice if we pass Bill C-10 tonight.

The first is file number 20000209 filed by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Local 70396, against the Canadian Museum of Civilization on March 31, 2004. It involves a number of women.

Next are file numbers 2000257, 2000258 and 2000451. Again, the women involved are with the Public Service Alliance of Canada. This complaint is filed against the Treasury Board of Canada and Citizenship and Immigration. It was filed on March 31, 2006.

Next is file 20010822. Again, it is the Public Service Alliance of Canada against Correctional Service Canada. This was filed July 25, 2006.

*Government Orders*

Next is file 20021375 filed by Local 404 of the Professional Employees Union against Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. It was filed on March 27, 2006.

Next is the Canadian Association of Correctional Supervisors against Correctional Service Canada. It is an employee complaint filed July 6, 2006.

Next is the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union, Local 404, against Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. It was filed March 7, 2007

File H30055 by Cathy Murphy against the Treasury Board was filed June 21, 1984.

I have a list of a number of complaints, as everyone can see.

File number 2000209 involves the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Local 70396, against the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This complaint was filed December 22, 2003, a very long time ago. This group is waiting for justice with regard to pay equity because the Government of Canada keeps appealing the decisions of the Human Rights Tribunal.

• (1710)

Conservatives say they care about women. They say that they want to propel these cases to a decision and not be entangled in the court, but they keep going back to the courts and appealing every chance that they get in order to stop what women are entitled to, and that is their pay equity settlements.

File No. XOO180, on behalf of Chris Jones, a real woman, was filed against the Government of the Northwest Territories on June 10, 1993.

COPEU, another union representing a number of women, filed against Atomic Energy of Canada on March 30, 2007, only two years ago, but two long years of waiting and fighting against government trying to get justice. This is justice denied.

I have a number of complaints from the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

File No. 20000257 was filed against the Treasury Board of Canada on March 31, 2006.

I will only address some of the complaints. I have at least 35 pages and all of these are complaints against various agencies of government.

The next file is No. 20050721, Arlene Abrey, against Social Development Canada, filed on November 28, 2005. Arlene also filed against the Treasury Board of Canada and the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, again on November 28, 2005.

I will move through a few other cases.

Gloria Allan filed against Social Development Canada on May 3, 2006.

Cindee Andrusiak filed against the Social Development Canada in November, 2005. Cindee Andrusiak also filed against Treasury Board and PSHR.

Elizabeth Antony filed a complaint in November 2005 against Social Development Canada and the Treasury Board.

These last few, Arlene, Gloria, Cindee and Elizabeth are all nurses and they do important work. Unfortunately, and it is painfully clear to me and I would guess to the women of Canada, their contribution as experts and vital contributors at the Museum of Civilization, Treasury Board, Citizenship and Immigration, Corrections Canada, Atomic Energy means nothing to the Conservative government, nor the Liberal government before it. Neither does the work of hundreds of women who are nurses matter.

In the eyes of the government, or the previous government, they do not have the right to equal pay for pay of equal value. That is why both parties are supporting Bill C-10. It is a travesty perpetrated against the nurses who work for Social Development Canada Human Resources. In short, it is a travesty against the people of Canada.

For years, the government has constantly appealed these pay equity complaints. For years, justice was delayed. This evening justice will be denied.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to talk about a true travesty. The member brings up travesty, but the real travesty here today is the NDP. Those members do not care about Canadian workers. They mean nothing to them. I listened to the member's speech and it was all fearmongering, all against the budget. Members of the NDP decided to vote against the budget before they even saw it.

I come from Oshawa. Oshawa has been hit hard by this economic downturn. In this budget we have an improvement to the EI system. We have increased benefits. We have increased work sharing benefits. Oshawa needs that right now. We have money that will flow through this budget for the auto sector and we need it now.

What does the NDP want to do? It wants to obstruct and stop the passing of the budget.

There is money for our university, our infrastructure and our research, but the NDP says no. Its members are obstructing. We need that money now. There is money for our recreational facilities. This stimulus needs to go through right away. Every time the members of the NDP have a chance to vote for our workers, they vote against it.

Will the member stand today and ask her leader to pass the budget with unanimous consent?

• (1715)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, I would like to know how removing human rights for women is going to help a single auto worker in Oshawa.

I would like to remind the member that New Democrats stood in the House month after month and year after year asking the government and the previous government to adopt economic policies that would help workers through a green job strategy that would address the needs of the auto and construction sectors while still protecting our environment. The response we got from this bunch and the previous bunch was that they were not interested. They made it crystal clear that they were interested in nothing but their own power.

*Government Orders*

If they want to talk about obstructionist behaviour, I would like to talk about prorogation. The Conservative government had an absolutely perfect opportunity in October and November to come back to the House with something constructive that would address the needs of Canadians in this economic downturn. What did the Conservatives come in here with? They came with a throne speech that was vacuous and an economic update that was insulting, one that took away labour rights, took away women's rights and proposed to sell off assets. Then they prorogued the House because they could not get their way. They had a temper tantrum and we called them on it, so they ran out of this place. They had months, Madam Speaker, and they did nothing.

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the hon. member for London—Fanshawe. The other day I pointed out that Bill C-10 was 527 or 528 pages. She categorically gave us a list of individuals, and I respect that. Then she talked about a death sentence for pay equity.

First of all, we Liberals are very respectful of that issue and have been in the past. However, I want to ask her this simple question: is she telling me that she is going to deny my constituents or people who live in the greater city of Toronto the money they need to repair their roads and sewers? The budget is a multi-faceted bill. Unfortunately, there are areas in there that we find disagreement with. I want to ask her to stop touching on these hot-button issues and move forward.

She can go ahead and laugh. How can you sleep at night? It is because of the NDP and their betrayal to Canadians that the party is where it is today. We have to work with it. Unfortunately, you know very well—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Order. I would like to remind the member to address himself to the Chair.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe has about 37 seconds to respond.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, I would again question how on earth taking away women's fundamental human rights is going to fix a single street or help a single community. The basic truth is that this party, which is so full of bombast and self-righteousness, has a choice today. They have a choice to stand up for principles, for women and for the unemployed, and they are going to pass it up because they apparently do not have the principles that they espouse.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when we were dealing with this matter at report stage yesterday, I said it was a minute to midnight. We had an opportunity yesterday to stop this elimination of basic human rights for the women of this country, but the Liberals refused to do what was right. They refused to stand up for their principles and vote with us on those amendments to separate out the pay equity provisions of Bill C-10, the budget implementation act.

Today we are hearing that all we are doing is talking about and focusing on some hot-button issues that are really small and insignificant. We are hearing that we should just put them aside and deal with the bigger issues. I cannot think of a bigger or more important issue than the elimination of fundamental human rights in this country. That is what is happening today.

• (1720)

**Mr. John Cannis:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, for the benefit of Canadians, I respectfully ask the member for Winnipeg North to withdraw her comments. I never even used those words. They are putting words in people's mouths, and she should be ashamed of doing that and misrepresenting Canadians. I ask her to withdraw those words.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I did not hear the comments the hon. member is referring to, but I would ask all members to be judicious in the way they speak to each other.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Obviously the truth hurts.

What the Liberals are doing, propping up the Conservatives and in the process eliminating pay equity in this country, is a shame. I will stand in this House every minute of every hour to say shame on the Liberals and shame on the Conservatives for allowing the death of pay equity today. That is what will happen unless those Liberals clue in to what is really at stake here. This is not a side issue. This is not a hot-button issue. This is a fundamental human right.

The member for Oshawa can stand all he wants and pretend that we are blowing things out of proportion and that it is really not the case. Well, when it comes to pay equity, he just has to listen to every expert in this country and every organization that deals with human rights to know that what his government is doing and what his Prime Minister has set out to do and is accomplishing today is to kill a fundamental human right, the right to be able to take a complaint or a concern about whether a woman is receiving equal pay for work of equal value to a higher body to ensure that she is able to obtain justice. That is a fundamental issue in this country.

I do not understand the Liberals. It is what Pierre Trudeau fought for years ago. Civil liberties and the charter are at the heart of everything we stand for in this place. I cannot understand how any Liberal can sit there today and smirk and try to suggest that this is a hot-button issue when we are dealing with something so basic, so fundamental. This is the darkest day I have yet experienced in the 20 years I have been in elected political life. I cannot understand how anybody can sit here and not stand and say that we will not let this happen.

In fact, the Liberals could have done so. They said they could not because this section of the budget implementation bill was deemed to be a matter of confidence by the Conservatives, and they had made this foolish commitment to prop up the Conservatives no matter what.

When they realized what the Conservatives were really doing and how they had trapped them and cornered them into supporting a budget that was not only far from adequate in terms of the question of dealing with the recession but was also filled with all kinds of poison pills, such as the destruction of pay equity, the elimination of environmental assessments when it comes to navigable waters, and more, the Liberals should have realized what was happening to them and found a way around it.

*Government Orders*

In fact, I dare say that if the Liberals had stood up to the Conservatives and said that they wanted to see this section on pay equity removed from the budget bill, set aside, and dealt with separately, the Conservatives would never have come back and said that it was all confidence and that if the Liberals didn't like it, they were going to go to the polls and to the Canadian people on a platform of eliminating pay equity. I do not think so.

I think the Liberals just lack the guts and the gumption and the courage to stand up for their principles, as has been the case for Liberals over the last 20 to 30 years that I have been around.

I may get very heated in these debates. I may express some very emotional feelings, but that is what is at stake here. This is not just a fly-by-night issue. This is not just some sideline. This is not a frivolous matter. This is not a soft social policy issue. This is fundamental justice. This is human rights. This is pay equity.

This is something we fought for in this country and achieved more than 30 years ago. In 1977, the women's movement had documented systemic discrimination in this country and had clearly shown that the only way to deal with that discrimination and to eliminate pink-job ghettos was to move toward a concept of equal pay for work of equal value. We could compare jobs dominated by men and jobs dominated by women and find a way to balance the equation.

It is a simple concept.

What do the Conservatives want? They want to take us back to the 1950s, when equal pay for equal work was the dominant way, the only way, that people compared men's and women's jobs and dealt with the wage gap.

When I started off working in this area 30 years ago, the wage gap at that time was that a woman made about 55¢ for every dollar a man made. As a result of work in this country on equal pay for work of equal value, we have been able to get that up to about 70¢.

•(1725)

In a province like Manitoba, which has a pervasive program of equal pay for work of equal value, we are well above 90 cents for every dollar that a man makes. We can see what a difference it makes.

We are talking about economic security for women. We are talking about bread-and-butter issues. We are talking about the ability of women to be paid what they are worth so that they can contribute to the economy, can actually ensure that their families are cared for, and can grow the economy and be a part of it. That is what we are talking about.

This is not some airy-fairy academic issue that has no bearing on real life. It is bread and butter. It is about the right of women to earn what they are worth. For the government to take this away is an absolute abomination. It makes no sense. The way it is turning the clock back to the 1950s is absolutely deplorable. I presume this fits with its ideological agenda, along with the Prime Minister who called pay equity a rip-off, who called this a stupid idea that should be gotten rid of.

The Conservatives over there, especially the President of the Treasury Board, stand up and try to tell me that what they are doing

is much better and that they are going to make this happen for women.

How does that explain the nurses in the federal system, who just won their case before the Canadian Human Rights Commission? They would not have won if we did not have that provision. How is it that justice will be served if there is no avenue at all for women to pursue their rights under the charter, a fundamental right that I thought we all believed in?

Maybe we really are dealing with a group of Conservatives who, along with Tom Flanagan, believe pay equity really is one of those bad ideas that has to be gotten rid of, as he said, along with "big hair and polyester leisure suits and Petro-Canada". Is that what these Conservatives believe? Is that why they are doing it?

I can think of no other reason, because it is not a cost savings. In fact, because they are breaching a fundamental right in society today, there will be challenge. There will be a challenge by women. There has to be one, to try to regain a right that has been taken away. It will cost the government millions of dollars to try to combat that challenge.

In the end the women will win. We will regain what has been taken away from us today, not because of the Liberals, not because we waited patiently for them to come to their senses, but because the women of this country will withstand this attack on their fundamental rights and freedoms and will decide to fight back.

We are not going to give up for one second. All my colleagues in this caucus, including our critic for the status of women who just spoke so eloquently, and all my other colleagues who believe passionately in this as a fundamental principle, will not sit idly by. My colleague, our finance critic, has spoken out on this issue in committee and in the House.

We will work together until we achieve that day when women once again will be treated with respect and dignity and will have access to the law for all their just rewards and their rights. We will ensure that pay equity and true equality reign supreme in Canada once again.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** It being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, the question on the previous question is deemed put and the recorded division is deemed to have been demanded.

Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

•(1755)

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

(*Division No. 23*)

YEAS

Members

Abbott  
Aglukkaq  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambrose

Ablonczy  
Albrecht  
Allison  
Anders

*Government Orders*

Anderson	Andrews	Strahl	Sweet
Ashfield	Bagnell	Szabo	Thompson
Bains	Baird	Tilson	Toews
Bélanger	Bennett	Tonks	Trost
Benoit	Bernier	Trudeau	Tweed
Bevilacqua	Bezan	Uppal	Valériote
Blackburn	Blaney	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Block	Boucher	Vellacott	Volpe
Boughen	Braid	Wallace	Warawa
Breitkreuz	Brisson	Warkentin	Watson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooogé	Wilfert	
Byrne	Cadman	Wong	Woodworth
Calandra	Calkins	Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis	Young	Zarac — 204
Carrie	Casey		
Casson	Chong		<b>NAYS</b>
Clarke	Clement		<b>Members</b>
Coady	Coderre		
Cotler	Crombie		
Cummins	Cuzner	Allen (Welland)	André
D'Amours	Day	Angus	Asselin
Dechert	Del Mastro	Atamanenko	Bachand
Devolin	Dhaliwal	Beaudin	Bellavance
Dion	Dosanjh	Bevington	Bigras
Dreeshen	Dryden	Black	Blais
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Bonsant	Bouchard
Dykstra	Easter	Bourgeois	Brunelle
Eyking	Fast	Cardin	Carrier
Finley	Flaherty	Charlton	Chow
Fletcher	Foote	Christopherson	Comartin
Fry	Galipeau	Crête	Crowder
Gallant	Garneau	Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Glover	Goldring	Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Goodale	Goodyear	Desnoyers	Dewar
Gourde	Grewal	Dorion	Duceppe
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay	Dufour	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Harper	Hawn	Faille	Gagnon
Hiebert	Hill	Gaudet	Gravelle
Hoback	Hoepfner	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)
Holder	Holland	Harris (St. John's East)	Hughes
Ignatieff	Jean	Hyer	Julian
Jennings	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Laforest	Laframboise
Kania	Karygiannis	Lavallée	Layton
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent	Lemay	Leslie
Kerr	Komarnicki	Lessard	Lévesque
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	Malo	Maloway
Lauzon	Lebel	Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
LeBlanc	Lee	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Lemieux	Lobb	Mathysen	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Lukiwski	Lunn	Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mulcair
Lunney	MacKenzie	Nadeau	Ouellet
Malhi	Mark	Paillé	Paquette
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayes	Plamondon	Pomerleau
McCallum	McColeman	Rafferty	Roy
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Savoie	Siksay
McLeod	McTeague	St-Cyr	Stoffer
Mendes	Menzies	Thi Lac	Thibeault
Merrifield	Miller	Vincent	Wasylycia-Leis — 78
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)		
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray		
Nicholson	Norlock		
O'Connor	O'Neill-Gordon		
Obhrai	Oda		
Oliphant	Paradis	Cannon (Pontiac)	Demers
Patry	Payne	Deschamps	Freeman
Pearson	Petit	Guay	Guergis
Poillievre	Prentice	Lalonde	MacKay (Central Nova)
Proulx	Rae	Mourani	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte	Ritz	Verner — 12
Ratansi	Rathgeber		
Regan	Reid		
Richards	Richardson		
Rickford	Rodriguez		
Rota	Russell		
Savage	Saxton		
Scarpaleggia	Scheer		
Schellenberger	Sgro		
Shea	Shiple		
Shory	Silva		
Simms	Simson		
Smith	Sorenson		
Stanton	Storseth		

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[English]

The next question is on the motion that Bill C-10 be read a third time and passed.

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it you will find agreement to apply the vote on the previous motion to the motion now before the House with the Conservatives voting yes.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** There is no consent.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 24)*

**YEAS**

Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Ashfield	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Bélangier	Bennett
Benoit	Bernier
Bevilacqua	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Block	Boucher
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannis
Carrie	Casey
Casson	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Coady	Coderre
Cotler	Crombie
Cummins	Cuzner
D'Amours	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dhaliwal
Dion	Dosanjh
Dreeschen	Dryden
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Foote
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Glover	Goldring

Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay
Harper	Hawn
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Holland
Ignatieff	Jean
Jennings	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kania	Karygiannis
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKenzie
Malhi	Mark
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	McTeague
Mendes	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Minna	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill-Gordon
Obhrai	Oda
Oliphant	Paradis
Patry	Payne
Pearson	Petit
Poilievre	Prentice
Proulx	Rae
Raït	Rajotte
Ratansi	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Rodriguez
Rota	Russell
Savage	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Silva
Simms	Simson
Smith	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Szabo	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Trudeau	Tweed
Uppal	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Volpe
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Wilfert	
Wong	Woodworth
Wrzesnewskyj	Yelich
Young	Zarac — 204

*Government Orders*

**NAYS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Beaudin	Bellavance
Bevington	Bigras
Black	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Bourgeois	Brunelle
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Comartin
Crête	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille

*Private Members' Business*

Desnoyers	Dewar
Dorion	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Faillon	Gagnon
Gaudet	Gravelle
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Harris (St. John's East)	Hughes
Hyer	Julian
Laforest	Laframboise
Lavallée	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysse	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mulcair
Nadeau	Ouellet
Paillé	Paquette
Plamondon	Pomerleau
Rafferty	Roy
Savoie	Siksay
St-Cyr	Stoffer
Thi Lac	Thibeault
Vincent	Wasylcia-Leis— 78

## PAIRED

## Members

Cannon (Pontiac)	Demers
Deschamps	Freeman
Guay	Guergis
Lalonde	MacKay (Central Nova)
Mourani	Preston
Ritz	Verner— 12

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Bill read the third time and passed)

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

• (1805)

[English]

**CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT**

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP)** moved that Bill C-311, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we are faced with the biggest challenge in the history of the civilized world. We have choices. Canada can choose to lead, we can follow the world's leaders and scientists, but what we cannot do is just get out of the way.

My riding is vast and covered with boreal forests and lakes. Today the boreal forest is under extreme stress: from insects and disease, not only the mountain pine beetle; from more forest blowdowns because of more wind extremes; from record low water levels in Lake Superior; and, of course, forest fires, more forest fires all the time.

Greenhouse gases, up to a point, are a good thing and give the earth an average temperature of 15° Celsius. Without them, we would not be here to complain about cold winters in Canada because even in the tropics life as we know it could not exist. However, in the last century, especially in the most recent decades, human activities have resulted in more greenhouse gases and the global average temperature is increasing steadily.

Let us look at a little history. How did we get here?

Temperatures are closely linked to the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Temperatures have varied in the far distant past but human civilization has been here for a relatively brief period as a civilized entity, a mere 10,000 years. During this period, global average temperatures have been very consistent, with a variation of less than 1° over the past 10,000 years.

Droughts and little ice ages took place that forced people to move or perish. However, climate extremes, prolonged temperature shifts and weather catastrophes have been mostly limited to regional areas. They were not, as today, global in scope or scale.

The amounts of greenhouse gases were stable for this entire period. Humans used some wood for heating and cooking. Nevertheless, new plant growth easily captured that carbon. Around the beginning of the industrial revolution, CO<sub>2</sub> was at 280 parts per million.

Worldwide concern about climate change had its first peak in the 1980s. World gatherings of policy makers and scientists studied the problems and issued directives to parliaments and congresses around the world.

Right here in Canada, in 1988 the United Nations conference in Toronto called "The Changing Atmosphere" was the beginning of a more modern consciousness about climate change. At that conference, the UN established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC, to assess changes in climate, estimate their impacts and present strategies on how to respond.

Delegates from 46 countries all recommended developing a comprehensive global framework convention to protect the atmosphere and a 20% cut in global carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2005, and we have delivered a 28% increase. In many ways, we knew it all more than 20 years ago and we politicians did not listen to our own scientists.

The Rio earth summit in 1992 followed. Sustainability was the talk and there were more rehearsals about reductions. The Liberal government of the time announced an action program on climate change in 1995 but to no significant effect. There was so much well-intended talk but so little real action here in Canada.

The second peak in activity about climate change took place in the late 1990s. It was in response to new science and real world experience with nasty and extreme weather events. Some examples include: an unusual number of hurricanes; a number of billion dollar storms in the United States; a Chicago heatwave that killed 740 people; the Saguenay flood in 1996, Canada's first ever billion dollar natural disaster; and Winnipeg's Red River flood of 1997.

There was a lot of momentum leading to Kyoto in 1997 when almost all countries signed it, including Canada, to reductions below 1990 levels by 2012.

• (1810)

Unfortunately, the Bush years scuttled that process. The U.S., with nearly one-quarter of all global greenhouse gas emissions, refused to ratify that protocol. Canada did ratify but with a puzzling disregard for a binding treaty. We continued to increase emissions.

The big three of emissions per capita, the United States, Australia and Canada, made only token investments in renewable energy technology. In fact, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions actually increased considerably more than the United States on a per capita basis.

Today, Americans and Canadians emit more CO<sub>2</sub> per capita than anywhere else in the world.

When will we reach the tipping point?

Those familiar with Malcolm Gladwell's book, *The Tipping Point*, will remember the example he uses of the light switch. We can move it, more and more, but it still remains dark, it is still dark we can move it, it is still dark then the room is suddenly filled with light.

There is a consensus among many scientists that at 450 to 500 parts per million, a climate tipping point will be reached from which we can never recover.

Most of us in Canada would welcome a few extra degrees more warmth on certain days, but it is a package deal. Warm temperatures increase the range of insects, for example the mountain pine beetle, and disease, such as the West Nile virus and Lyme disease, with predictions of malaria for southern Ontario in the not too far distant future.

All of our regions are vulnerable. Atlantic Canada: more intense hurricanes and nor'easters; more frequent and extreme floods in central Canada, indeed throughout Canada; more drought, hail and tornadoes on the prairies; more blowdowns on the west coast, like in Stanley Park; and, most vulnerable of all, our Canadian Arctic where the land and the ice are already experiencing major change. Permafrost is melting and has the potential to release huge quantities of greenhouse gases, like methane. Polar bears and traditional Inuit culture are headed for extinction.

We must heed these warnings. The severity of ferocious bushfires in Australia a few weeks ago shocked probably everyone but especially people in countries that deal with wildfires. Some people fled while others chose to stay and fight, and die.

On television, Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, symbolized a shocked nation. He looked around, barely able to find any words, and publicly wept. The final death toll will be over 240 in Australia. Our deepest sympathies do go out to the families and the Australian people.

However, the tragedy should not have come as that much of a surprise. A grim warning was issued by Australian scientists a few years ago. Their equivalent of our national research council stated:

### *Private Members' Business*

...a new order of fires should be expected in south-eastern Australia [...] catastrophic fire events every five to seven years, with fires of such ferocity they would simply engulf towns in their path.

And here they are. Fire temperatures are estimated to have exceeded 1000 degrees Celsius, hotter than crematoriums typically set at 850 degrees.

Most of my own riding is in the boreal forest. I in fact I have spent most of my life in the forest as an ecologist, business person and forester. Forest fires are and have been a reality in our life there. It is not unusual for communities in my riding to be evacuated because of approaching forest fires. Some day we may be weeping when we lose entire towns full of people to wildfires right here in Canada.

Forest fires are part of a changing reality. According to the Canadian Forest Service, the area burned in Canada annually has almost tripled over the last three decades. Projected warmer temperatures and less reliable rainfall in the next decades may hugely increase that.

In the Arctic, the last two summers have featured records in ocean ice melting. There is the likelihood we that will see an ice-free Arctic in our lifetime. It is troubling that all these trends are predicted and, indeed, expected with increased greenhouse gases.

An essential part of the new weather is the higher frequency of extreme events. This is just a preview of the worsening next two decades. We need to act. Instead, we have Canada's inaction. We Canadian politicians have a sad record of inaction. Why is that?

• (1815)

Opinion polls keep saying that 80% of Canadians favour strict measures to reduce emissions, yet our own governments have been impotent and unwilling to confront what will be the defining issue of the 21st century: a changing climate and a dying world.

Voluntary compliance does not and will not work. I have already mentioned the failure of Sheila Copps' national action program on climate change in 1995. It is just one of many examples where we have failed. Canada is now approximately 28% above, not below, 1990 levels. To be blunt, Canada is an embarrassment on the world stage. We have retreated from recent world meetings in Bali and Poznan with a folder of fossil-of-the-day awards.

The next world conference in Copenhagen this December will provide another opportunity to regain some stature on the vital issue of climate change. This act would help re-establish our credibility at the bargaining table and increase the chances of persuading major developing countries to take on such commitments.

*Private Members' Business*

In this 40th Parliament, we have one last opportunity to take real action to prevent the threat of worsening economic and health effects of climate pollution. Bill C-311 would ensure that the government is accountable to Canadians on climate change and that Canada is accountable to the world.

This bill gives us a goal. It would require the Minister of the Environment, now and in the future, to implement measures to ensure that Canada reduces our absolute greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. It introduces greater government accountability by requiring the minister to prepare five-year target plans starting in 2015 and report on progress every two years. It would mandate an independent body, the national round table on the environment and the economy, to review and report on the feasibility of each target plan.

The bill offers flexibility. The government has the option of setting targets, including for 2020, if it can make a convincing case that those targets are part of an appropriate trajectory between here and the bill's 2050 goal.

This bill builds on Bill C-288, the Kyoto protocol implementation act. In particular, the accountability mechanisms where the government is compelled to public emissions reduction plans and have them independently audited would die with C-288 at the end of 2012 if this bill is not passed. This bill would continue where Bill C-288 ends.

This bill would give us certainty, with long timelines and much greater predictability for business and industry. The plan lays out targets for five-year periods until 2050, giving a very clear picture of future regulatory environments. Controlling emissions offers us new opportunities. Cutting emissions is promoted by some as being detrimental to industry, but in many countries cutting emissions has created abundance. New technologies in Denmark, Germany and other European countries are creating jobs and internationally marketable products, which Canada could also choose to do.

Reducing emissions creates financial opportunities with lots of money to be made in the green economy. Consider, please, the Canadian who came up with a new solar panel, and could find no Canadian buyer and whose company was bought up by Germany. ZENN electric cars are made in Quebec, but exported to the U.S. because Ontario will not buy or legalize them.

In reducing carbon emissions we would be building fresh companies that would be addressing our current energy and environmental needs. We would create rewarding green collar jobs by building solar and wind infrastructure, as well as safe and renewable energy for our future.

As parliamentarians we can choose to finally confront this crisis decisively. This crisis is about the survival of millions of species, including our own. This issue must not be a partisan issue. It is not about right versus left. This is about right versus wrong.

Albert Schweitzer said over 50 years ago that "Man has lost the capacity to foresee and forestall. He will end by destroying the earth". Let us prove him wrong. Let us join together to save a future for our children, our grandchildren, and our beautiful world.

● (1820)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of speaking with the member and talking to him about his bill. I let him know that I was going to be asking him some questions. I have a question regarding the cost of his bill and the massive impacts his bill would have.

We heard from his leader, when Bill C-377 was introduced in a previous session, that he had no idea how it was going to be achieved. He called it his impossible dream. He had no idea what the costs were going to be and he said it should be costed. He admitted that he had not written the bill, but an environmental group had written it for him. That environmental group also admitted that it should be costed.

My question for the member is, has it been costed? We know that the Kyoto implementation bill will have a 4% drop in GDP. This would be massive. Does he have any idea what it would do to the jobs in Canada?

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Madam Speaker, Bill C-311 is very straightforward. It sets science-based targets. It requires the government to publish a plan. It would ensure that the government has the tools to meet those targets and accomplish its plan. Therefore, the cost will depend on the measures chosen by the government in the plan.

This sets the direction we need to go and gives total flexibility on how we do it. For example, I hope that the Conservatives hope carbon capture technology will work. We do not know if it will work and it certainly cannot be the only tool in our toolkit, but if it works, more power to us. We must set the targets now so we know where we need to go by certain set dates between now and then or we are never going to get there.

● (1825)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, to follow up on the line of questioning from the climate denying Conservatives, my question is around the actual creation of jobs through implementation of such a bill. We have heard this recently from the Minister of the Environment, that it is one or the other for Canadians. It is either the environment and saving the climate, or jobs and the economy; that is, Canadians must make this choice.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague could help further dispel the myth that has been proposed by government after government as an excuse for concrete and serious action on climate change, that in fact Canada is missing opportunities made available to it and that such a bill would help aid the green economy that so many Canadians are looking for.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Madam Speaker, when I look at history, I see that at the turn of the 1900s, those who bought, sold and used horses were really concerned about the new automobiles that were scaring the horses and threatening their jobs. The future means change. It is time for us to change and being resistant to that change is foolish and probably economically foolish. We have no idea what the opportunities will be when we say no to ourselves and continue to glut ourselves with diminishing oil.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, without denigrating my hon. colleague's sincerity on the subject of climate change, I think we should be careful to avoid lumping every natural disaster that occurs under the rubric of that which is caused by climate change. I note his comments regarding the Australia wildfires. I am a former resident of Australia. While I lived there in the 1990s, I had the experience, living on the outskirts of Sydney, of having wildfires burn to within about 200 metres of the place where I lived. The wildfires in Australia were largely caused by the large supply of natural fuel that had not been burned off in previous fires due to the fact that fires had been forestalled. This I think is a better explanation for the terrible wildfires that occurred there recently.

**Mr. Bruce Hyer:** Madam Speaker, 8 out of 10 of the hottest years in the history of the planet as far as we can tell have been in the last 10 years. I have no doubt that some fires and some storms obviously are a natural variation, but we have 2,500 distinguished scientists from around the world who believe they have proven, and just plain believe, that this is not random, this is not natural, this is anthropogenic. It is time not to go with the Ronald Reagan "trees make pollution" kind of argument and move on.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by summarizing the key elements of Bill C-311, then I will outline the reasons why the government opposes the bill.

Bill C-311 is clearly both bad law and bad policy. Its implementation would have significant negative implications on the Canadian economy, impose unrealistic and impractical timelines, and may in fact be unconstitutional.

Bill C-311 would create an obligation on the Government of Canada to ensure Canadian greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to 25% below the 1990 level by 2020 and to 80% below the 1990 level by 2050.

The bill would also oblige the Minister of the Environment to establish an emissions target plan for every five year period from 2015 to 2045, and to put in place regulations and other actions to ensure that these targets are achieved.

The bill calls on the government to have regulations in place as early as December of this year designed to meet the 2015 target. Members of the House who are familiar with the regulatory process know the problems associated with that unrealistic timeframe.

Quite simply, this is completely unrealistic and shows that the NDP is more interested in political grandstanding than in finding real solutions to deal with the fight against climate change.

Unlike the party opposite, our government has been clear on the need to strike a balance between environmental and economic

progress. Our approach to addressing climate change will achieve that balance.

We are committed to stopping the increase in Canada's greenhouse gas emissions and then dramatically reducing them. We established a national target of an absolute 20% reduction in greenhouse gases, relative to 2006 levels, by 2020. By 2050 Canada's emissions will be 60% to 70% below 2006 levels. The government has also established a target that by 2020, 90% of our electricity will come from non-emitting sources. These are the toughest targets in Canadian history and some of the toughest targets in the world.

At the same time we are helping Canadians reduce their greenhouse gas emissions through programs such as the ecoEnergy for renewable power program, the trust fund for clean air and climate change, and supporting investment into research, development and demonstration of promising technologies, including large scale projects like carbon capture and storage. In fact, we are one of the world leaders on that technology.

Bill C-311 on the other hand does not endeavour to strike such a balance. When an identical bill, Bill C-377, was introduced in the last Parliament by the leader of the NDP, he admitted that he had made no attempt to calculate how much economic damage his bill would do to the Canadian economy. In fact, he called his bill the impossible dream.

Further, the massive costs would also have to be borne at a time when Canada's economy is under severe pressure as a result of the global economic downturn. Bill C-311 would impose a massive new burden on industries that are already facing very difficult and serious times.

It is clear that the NDP do not believe it is necessary to consider changing course slightly, despite the economic realities that we face. The NDP has learned nothing from its power in Ontario under the leadership of the member for Toronto Centre where the NDP policies led to record high levels of debt and unemployment.

Our assessment of Bill C-288, the Kyoto implementation act, an act with requirements that are quite similar to those in Bill C-311, suggest that an attempt to meet our Kyoto targets within the 2008 to 2012 period would result in a drop in GDP of 4%.

Given that the proposed 2020 target under Bill C-311 is significantly deeper than under the Kyoto protocol, of 25% below 1990 levels as opposed to the 6% below 1990 levels under the Kyoto protocol, the conclusion of massive, negative economic impacts reached under the KPIA analysis would also apply to Bill C-311.

• (1830)

Bill C-311 creates an economic uncertainty by suggesting that Canada should maintain a domestic policy and an international policy negotiating position based on the UNFCCC ultimate objectives immediately after royal assent of the bill.

*Private Members' Business*

There is uncertainty around the UNFCCC's ultimate objectives and the bill does not define what a responsible Canadian contribution is or indicate how it can be determined.

Bill C-311 compounds this uncertainty by asking Canada to take a radically different approach to climate change than our most important economic partner.

Do the sponsors of the bill really believe we can turn our back on the possibility of a coherent, co-operative North American climate change strategy in partnership with the President Obama administration? I think not.

The government must be able to fully represent Canada's economic interests and unique circumstances in international negotiations, including with the administration of President Obama.

I would now like to bring to the attention of the House the serious concerns we have over the constitutional aspects of the bill. Last year in discussion on Bill C-377, the predecessor of Bill C-311, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development heard testimony by respected lawyers as to their concern over the constitutionality of clauses that remain in Bill C-311. The primary concern remains whether the bill's authorities are soundly based on the peace, order and good government head of power.

Joseph Castrilli, counsel for Canadian Environmental Law Association said:

Peace, order, and good government would appear to be less likely to find favour with the Supreme Court as a basis for upholding the constitutionality of the regulatory limits authority of Bill C-377 under any circumstances because of the potential for major impact on provincial jurisdiction to act in a host of areas.

That remains in Bill C-311.

Mr. Castrilli went on to say that the bill was also unlikely to be upheld under the federal government's authority over criminal law because the law was not specific about the characteristics of the regimes contemplated or the actual substances to be addressed leaving this detail to the regulations.

Amendments of the bill were passed in the House of Commons to specify which substances the bill would consider, but there is much doubt as to whether these amendments were sufficient to address Mr. Castrilli's concerns, particularly against jurisdiction of the provinces.

Peter Hogg, professor emeritus and former dean of Osgoode Hall Law School of York University stated in his testimony that the bill would not be upheld under the federal government's peace order and good government authority or its jurisdiction under criminal law.

With respect to peace, order and government, Professor Hogg expressed concern over the lack of direction provided by the bill to the Governor-in-Council with respect to its regulation making power. Professor Hogg indicated the regulation making authority of the bill, as first introduced, was so broad as to potentially reach into every area of Canadian economic and social life.

I would like to reiterate the Government of Canada's opposition to Bill C-311.

We are working diligently to promote domestic, continental and international action to ensure lasting greenhouse gas emissions

reductions. Our approach is a balanced approach, an approach that will see Canada's greenhouse gases decline, while protecting our economy and the standard of living of the Canadian people. Our plan includes billions of dollars for technology, technology like carbon capture and storage, working with the United States, and the world is counting on us to work together. We are doing that through the clean energy dialogue with President Obama and our Prime Minister.

Therefore, I encourage the member to remove the bill or vote against his own bill because the bill will take us in a direction that would be bad for Canada, it would be bad for Canadian jobs and it would be bad for the environment.

• (1835)

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join the debate tonight on Bill C-311. The bill has been reintroduced under a new MP, a bill that was put forward in the last Parliament by the leader of the NDP. As such, it really has no material changes compared to its predecessor bill.

Before pronouncing on the bill, I want to take a few minutes to talk a bit about where we are now nationally with respect to this climate change crisis.

In the last three and a half years, I think it would be fair and objective to describe the government's performance as varied, at best. We really do not know any more where the government stands on the climate change challenge.

Just a year and a half ago the predecessor minister of the environment announced to the country and all the industries that operated their businesses that there would be, for example, no international trading. Yet the new Minister of the Environment says that apparently we will join the United States in a cap and trade system, as if the United States has even invited us to join.

The Government of Canada has said, de facto, that we have withdrawn from the Kyoto protocol. We are the only country in the world to have signed this treaty to have unilaterally declared we will not use, for example, 1990 as the baseline year or, worse, we will not even try to meet our targets.

In 2007 we saw a new plan emerge, the so-called made in Canada plan, called "Turning the Corner". We have seen no regulatory text in the country yet. It is apparently supposed to come on January 1, 2010. The problem is the 11 independent groups, not political parties, but third-party groups, left-wing groups like the C.D. Howe Institute, that have looked at the government's plan have said that its plan cannot possibly achieve the reductions it claims it will achieve.

Right now I think we are in a situation of great flux. There are some, for example, in the NGO movement that declare the bill is the right text, or it is reaffirming the science of climate change and the need to take an evidentiary approach to setting targets. I agree with that claim.

*Private Members' Business*

Others in the NGO sector are telling the official opposition that, on the contrary, we do not need to be fixated any more on targets. What we need to do is develop a robust plan in Parliament like we tried to do with the government's failed clean air act when it was rewritten in a special parliamentary committee, a clean air act that was inspired completely by the clean air act efforts of the former Republican administration in Washington.

Now we have a big change. The Democratic government in Washington and the new President are using 2005, so far, as the baseline year. They are saying that the Americans will reduce their emissions by 14% from 2005, effectively meaning we are going back to 1990 levels of U.S. emissions by 2020.

The government says that this is in line with its targets, that its targets are yet more advanced, more ambitious than the American targets. The problem is we are talking apples and oranges because the government is talking intensity targets and the United States is talking about absolute cuts.

Recently President Obama went to Congress, 535 members strong, and asked it to deliver a comprehensive cap and trade scheme, along with renewable energy strategies for the United States.

Right now in the 110th Congress, there are at least 10 different cap and trade schemes on the floor of Congress, not 1 or 2, but 10. The United States is proposing a massive auction of permits to raise up to \$80 billion by 2012, \$15 billion of which is go to renewable energy and \$60 billion for tax credits for modest-income Americans.

● (1840)

The United States is warning its citizenry that the cap and trade system it intends to bring in will have a profound effect on energy pricing. It will, to use the words of the Conservative Party, increase the price of everything, that unfortunate and infantile advertising claim the government used in the last election campaign to the detriment of the understanding of the Canadian people on the need to act now on the climate change crisis.

We have a situation where everything appears to be in flux. We found that the vast majority of the powers and the reporting provisions in Bill C-311 were already law as a result of the two Liberal private members' bills passed by the last Parliament: first, the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act; and second, the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

We also know that medium and long-term targets will be set internationally at a United Nations conference culminating in Copenhagen this December.

What troubles the official opposition about this bill is it does prejudice the outcome of those negotiations. However, we have no idea in this Parliament where those negotiations are. Nothing has been disclosed at committee or in the House. We do not know if Canada is effectively still participating in the post-2012 world of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Having abandoned the Kyoto protocol, I am not even sure how Canada can come to the negotiating table with clean hands, as they say in international law, and purport to put forward a position to be received by 170-plus countries that have signed the deal.

What concerns us as well on this side is if the NDP were really serious about improving Canada's climate change laws, would it not be seeking to amend the existing Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, extending it beyond 2012, for example? All the regulatory standards that we would like to see and the powers that might or should accrue to a government to follow through on these commitments are there. I see in the bill so far nothing that is conferred to a government, which it needs in order to move forward on the climate change challenge.

Other than enunciating medium and long-term targets, Bill C-311 contains very few provisions, as I said, that are not already under the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act. For example, 90% of the wording in the bill is word for word the same as those already granted by the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act.

Similarly, the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy is already required, under the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, to review the programs undertaken by the federal government to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets and to report on the effectiveness of the measures and to report to Canadians on how well things are going, or are not going.

There is an awful lot of overlap. There is also an awful lot of factors in play.

However, in my view it is important to take this issue further. It is important to take the bill further. It is important to have a close examination of its amendability, for example. Because the situation is so much in flux, because we are waiting to a certain extent, unfortunately, for Washington, because we have no climate change plan from the Conservative government, it is our position that the bill requires more analysis and more examination as we go forward.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to speak today about Bill C-311. I have to say that I am very surprised at the Liberal Party's position this evening.

It will be interesting to reread the speech given by my colleague, the Liberal environment critic. It is quite a change from past Liberal positions on the fight against climate change. I remember debates on the Liberal bill, Bill C-288, when the opposition was in agreement that greenhouse gas reduction targets should be established. I remember debates on air quality when we also agreed on setting targets.

*Private Members' Business*

Basically, that is the goal of Bill C-311, which is before us today. The preamble to the bill clearly states that temperatures must not be allowed to increase more than two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period. That is the key part of this bill. The scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change propose and recommend that the increase in temperatures be limited to two degrees over the pre-industrial period.

It is the only way to avoid major climate change. It is the only way to avoid the worst case scenario. How do we translate this scientific objective into tangible results? By adopting short-, medium- and long-term reduction targets, as proposed by Bill C-311. Experts say that to limit the increase to two degrees, we have to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in the range of 25% to 40% below the 1990 level by 2020. The following is found on page 3 of Bill C-311:

—25% below the 1990 level by the year 2020—

Some members of this house have said that targets are not important. On the contrary, this flows directly from a recommendation made by recipients of the Nobel Prize. It is the only way to reduce emissions and to avoid the worst case scenario in future.

We like this bill because, unlike the government's proposal, it establishes 1990 as the reference year, as provided by the Kyoto protocol. We are pleased that this reference year is mentioned in the definitions on page 3 of the bill and in the undertakings because, among other things, it acknowledges the efforts made by Quebec companies in the past. In recent years, they have reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by almost 10% compared to 1990. With 1990 as the reference year, we can take into consideration reductions made by Quebec companies. That would allow us to apply the polluter-pays principle rather than the polluter-paid principle. The government prefers to use 2006 as the reference year simply because it wants to reset the clock.

• (1850)

They would not want to take into consideration the greenhouse gas emissions over the past 16 years, that is from 1990 to 2006. It is not true that Quebec will accept that, for it has made efforts, some of its industries have made efforts to change their industrial procedures, because Quebec—along with others, such as Manitoba—has decided to put in place greenhouse gas reduction measures, because it has made efforts already. We hope that these efforts will be recognized by the government, and that is exactly what Bill C-311 does.

What is more, the bill proposes absolute greenhouse gas reduction targets, not intensity targets as the Conservative government recently proposed in its plan. When I compare the plans presented by the Conservatives with those presented by the Liberals in recent years, it is nothing more than cut and paste. One can see that since the Liberal party changed leaders, there has been a blurring of the lines between the Liberals and the Conservatives. This is a problem, and a very fundamental one, since it is going to weaken Canada's position internationally when the time comes for the post-Kyoto agreement to be negotiated in December 2009 in Copenhagen. We will have a government trying to water down the international agreements on the fight against climate change, with the backing of the official opposition. That is absolutely unacceptable.

Steps must be taken, therefore, to keep that opposition party from backing up the party in power. This is what we have been seeing in recent weeks, and it is a source of concern.

What is more, one of the interesting points in the bill we have before us is subsection 7(2), which reads:

—each province may take any measure that it considers appropriate to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

That means that the bill supports the idea of provinces implementing their own greenhouse gas emissions reduction plans, agreeing among themselves about how to apportion the targets and using different approaches to meet those targets. That is the European model.

I was in Kyoto in 1997. I was there when Europe proposed an 8% greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to the international community. Europe reached agreements with its partners, with sovereign nations, about how much each EU member nation would have to contribute. The model is an interesting one, one that is the basis of the bill before us, and it would enable Canada to go back to the international community with a better greenhouse gas reduction record than it has had up to now. Why? Because it would recognize that Quebec's energy policy is not the same as the rest of Canada's. By bringing in a territorial approach, we could optimize every dollar invested in the fight against climate change. It seems to me that the government should be able to understand an approach that involves optimizing public investments.

We will support this bill. However, I have to say that I am disappointed. Of course, the Liberal Party will support the bill, but we need firmer resolve on the part of the official opposition to make sure that, when we go to Copenhagen next December, we will have a bill that represents a broad consensus here in the House. I hope that the Liberal Party will be firmer and more determined when this bill goes to committee.

• (1855)

[*English*]

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today in support of Bill C-311 introduced by my hon. colleague. I wish to thank the hon. member who spoke before me for his very cogent and knowledgeable comments. Obviously, he has been working on the file a long time, and we appreciate his support.

*Private Members' Business*

Canada ratified the Kyoto protocol in December 2002 and it came into legal effect in February 2005. As a consequence, Canada is now legally obligated to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 6% below 1990 levels by 2012. The next targets are being negotiated as we speak here in the House. We are into a countdown to Copenhagen. It is necessary for the members in this House to wake up and realize that we must develop a position that Canadians will support taking to Copenhagen. We are informed by leading scientists that these targets may now be overly conservative, that more substantial reductions, and sooner, may be necessary to prevent, or at least mitigate, catastrophic climate change impacts.

In Canada international obligations must be implemented through domestic law. Regrettably, to date the government has rejected science-based reduction targets, failed to establish legally binding caps, failed to enact any national emission trading regime, and relied on and invested dollars in unproven and costly technology of minimal practical worth to actually reduce greenhouse gases.

In addition, at the past two international conferences of the parties, Canada chose to block progress toward urgent action on science-based targets. But it is not too late to change course, as my previous leader was wont to say, to join forces with progressive nations committed to serious credible action and to do our part to address climate change.

If we are truly to be in sync with the Obama administration's groundbreaking environmental agenda, if we are going to ensure our industries a competitive edge in producing and exporting clean energy, if we are going to provide a level playing field for all generators of energy, both fossil fuel and renewable sectors, if we want Canadian industries to benefit from a continental emission trading regime, then this Parliament must support the passage of Bill C-311. The substance of the bill already received the support of the majority of votes in the last Parliament, which incidentally included the Liberal Party.

The definition of a democracy is straightforward. To qualify as a democracy, the nation must agree to abide by the rule of law. The rule of law means that those who make the rules are democratically elected. They enact laws to govern the affairs of the nation. Those laws are committed to and enforced, which is a refreshing concept in this House.

Why is this important to climate change? The Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, which the Liberals are proud of, was enacted by Parliament in 2007 and prescribes in law the requirement to comply with the Kyoto targets by 2012. To date the government has refused to enforce that law despite its purported support of and strong commitment to enforcement of environmental laws. That is a law on the books. So much for its commitment.

Bill C-311 imposes a positive legal obligation on the Government of Canada to take action to meet specified reduction targets in the mid and long term, targets which can be revised over time based on science. It removes the current unlimited discretion to delay action. The bill introduces both legal certainty and government accountability, something the government professes to stand by.

At the same time it allows for flexibility in measures used by industry and government alike to meet the targets. It requires reports

on compliance by the minister and the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Why is this important? Legislative or regulatory measures have been proven empirically to be the most effective mechanism to trigger new investment in environmental technologies. Twenty years of reliance on voluntary measures, as my hon. colleague mentioned earlier, and subsidies to fossil fuels have given us monumental increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Binding targets with prescribed compliance dates provide advance notice and clear price signals to the current and future cost of carbon. It prescribes directions for Canada's position in international and bilateral climate negotiations and dialogues, including the dialogue going on now with the United States of America.

● (1900)

The economic crisis has fostered economic uncertainty. Legal certainty is needed to give industry a secure footing for recovery and to attract investment. This is backed by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who stated at the United Nations' COP 14:

We also urgently need a deal on climate change to provide the political, legal, and economic framework to unleash a sustained wave of investment. In short, our response to the economic crisis must advance climate goals, and our response to the climate crisis will advance economic and social goals.

The United States has announced its intent to move forward on a hard cap and a North American emission trading system. They have committed \$76 billion to renewable technologies, close to 100 times more than the investment by the government. The government's 2007 plan provides less stringent intensity-based targets, and budgets no new funds to incent renewable energy sources, despite an oversubscribed, successful program from an enthusiastic and burgeoning Canadian clean energy sector.

Billions of Canadian tax dollars will be redirected to subsidize experiments by the fossil fuel industry, with a vague promise to consider regulatory caps post-2020.

The government has refused to support the International Renewable Energy Agency, the recognized global forum for advancing technology for renewable energy. Bill C-311 gives the government a credible backbone for our role in the Canada-U.S. energy and climate change dialogue. It provides a credible action plan that Canadians support.

Current polls tell us that the majority of Canadians still want action on the environment. Canadians know that our environmental and economic crises are best addressed in tandem. In fact, 57% of Canadians support federal action on climate change even if it means a higher deficit.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

By supporting Bill C-311, Parliament can finally show leadership. It provides the clear signal to our trading partners that we are committed to genuine engagement in global and bilateral action. It sends a new, positive message to the world that we are finally taking action to deliver on our international obligations to address climate change and forge a greener economy.

• (1905)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin will have about three minutes.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the government's many concerns about the economic implications and potential unconstitutionality of Bill C-311 have already been brought to the attention of the House.

I would now like to comment on the action that the government is taking to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions, including working with the United States on a clean energy dialogue. Canada is also committed to working within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change towards a post-2012 implementation on global emission reductions, but it is Canada's domestic and continental efforts on which I will focus my comments.

Unlike the Liberals, who had 13 or so years to work on this issue and did virtually nothing, our government is committed to stopping the increase in Canada's greenhouse gas emissions and then dramatically reducing them. We have established a national target of an absolute reduction of 20% in greenhouse gases, relative to 2006 levels, by the year 2020. By 2050, Canada's emissions will be 60% to 70% below 2006 levels. This government has also established a target that, by 2020, 90% of our electricity will come from non-emitting sources.

While Bill C-311 would impose a long-term emissions reduction target that goes far deeper than anything proposed by the global community, our target would bring Canada in line with the accepted requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while striking the necessary balance between environmental and economic progress, as opposed to the economic evisceration of the Canadian economy, which is what the NDP is proposing to do through this bill.

Our government is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the industrial sector through regulations and is continuing to develop the regulatory regime. It will be the product of significant consultation, including the provinces, territories, industry stakeholders, and environmental non-governmental organizations. These industrial regulations will require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and will also create the incentives for development and deployment of new technologies such as carbon capture and storage, which will result in significant emissions reductions over time.

In addition, this government is using its regulatory authorities to increase renewable fuel content in gasoline and to strengthen the energy efficiency of a wide variety of products.

Through this government's suite of eco-action programs, we will drive emissions reductions beyond the industrial sectors of our economy. Eco-action investments cover a range of sectors and activities, including renewable power, home retrofitting, and commercial transportation.

For example, through the eco-energy for renewable power program, the government is investing \$1.5 billion to provide incentives to increase Canada's supply of clean electricity from renewable sources such as wind, biomass, low-impact hydro, geothermal, solar—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but he will have the rest of his time when this debate resumes.

[*Translation*]

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this is not the first time that I have asked for an adjournment debate on the issue of Shannon's contaminated water. I have made this request because we asked the Minister of National Defence several questions and because the Minister of Defence has been involved in this matter and has been negligent over the years.

We have known since 1978 that the water was contaminated by a degreasing agent—a solvent—containing TCE, a very toxic substance.

Today I would like to question the government again about this issue. Young Alexandre Mallette-Lafrenière died last week of cancer. We would like to have an epidemiological study to make the connection between the use of contaminated water and cancer. The government is hiding behind empty words and they are not at all encouraging for the citizens of Shannon. I know that the government gave \$13.3 million to supply the municipality with safe drinking water.

However, that is not what we are discussing. We are talking about the effects of drinking contaminated water, the exponential growth in cancers. We know that the rate of brain cancer in the United States is 1 in 25,000 people. In Shannon, however, the rate is 8 for less than 5,000, which is very alarming.

The Minister of National Defence has never shown compassion in addressing this issue. He has never called the citizens' committee to find out how people were handling the stress day to day and how the tainted water was affecting the quality of life of most of the people in Shannon.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

On the weekend, grief-stricken people cried out for help. They called on the government to make sure that Alexandre, who had come to symbolize the fight against tainted water in Shannon, had not died in vain. The government must take action and address this issue much more compassionately.

No one has ever called the chair of the citizens' committee, Ms. Speiser, who has given me permission to say so in this House. No one has ever gotten in touch with this person, who has important information and could convince the government to reach out to the citizens' committee and help them not only by decontaminating the soil, but also by compensating the members of several families who have developed cancer. When we read the file on the tainted water in Shannon and we see so many victims of cancer, we wonder. We cannot reassure the people of Shannon.

I do not want the member for Beauport—Limoilou to remind me this time about the \$13.3 million earmarked for the water system, because that is not the issue. If Radio-Canada had not broadcast a damning report on how the government has handled this issue, the city never would have been promised that \$13.3 million.

When the Liberals were in power, there was another investigation, and the government decided to shell out a little money for the first phase of the water system. I do not know whether the member knows what is going on in her riding, but I do. I have been following this issue since 1999, and the government has not moved. Meanwhile, some people have been going through a terrible time.

•(1910)

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as everyone knows, we are very concerned with what has happened in Shannon. The health and safety of the people of Shannon, of Quebec, and of all of Canada, are of the utmost importance to our government. This is why I would remind the Bloc Québécois that we answered virtually the same question on February 25, 2009. It is obvious that the Bloc is more interested in scoring points at the expense of the people of Shannon than in getting answers to its questions.

I would like to set certain points straight. We have corrected the water problem. We have worked unceasingly to defend the interests of the residents of Shannon and we have put forward a viable solution. Moreover, the mayor of Shannon has publicly acknowledged our good work and thanked us for resolving the problem. If the mayor is satisfied, why is the Bloc Québécois not satisfied?

The residents of Shannon are benefiting today from the efforts by our government and from the attention the Conservatives pay to Quebec. If the objective of the Bloc Québécois is to protect the interests of Quebec, how can it question this measure? Could the Bloc have some hidden agenda? Does it defend the interests of Quebecers only when it suits them? Really, that is a great party philosophy.

The Bloc chose to vote against our action plan, an action plan that will help build a new water system for Shannon. On February 13, the minister acted on the Conservative government's promise to deliver concrete results to the people of Shannon when she announced that the federal treasury had made \$13,345,000 available to carry out this vital project for them. We are working very hard with the

Government of Quebec to release the funds without delay so that the money can flow to the municipality as quickly as possible.

The mayor and the Government of Quebec support this initiative. When will the Bloc get on board and help us make Quebec and Canada a better place to live? The answer is that the Bloc is an anachronistic party that has lost touch with Quebecers and is now obsolete. The Bloc accused the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs of not caring about the human side of this story. That is an outrageous accusation, and the Bloc should be ashamed of itself.

Perhaps the Bloc should have voted for the economic action plan that enabled this government to do exactly what the Bloc wanted, which was to help the people of Shannon and Quebecers. The Bloc talks for the sake of talking, but when it is time for action, it smugly rests on its laurels.

•(1915)

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou has repeated the same speech she gave last week. I would have thought that after a week to reflect on this issue, she might have tried to push her analysis of what happened in Shannon a little further.

The water is contaminated. The people there think they might have water in a few years, but the government has been dragging its feet so much that there is no way the water supply will be restored any time soon. The water is contaminated. It has made its way into the humidifying system of some houses. Members of the citizens' group are concerned about TCE fumes in some homes. Some wells have not been sealed and are therefore virtual TCE chimneys. Levels of 9.5 mg of TCE per cubic metre were found in some houses.

Looking at this file, one must at least try to care. Based on the answers she is giving me, she does not seem to know the file. Because the CBC reported on this extensively to the public, \$13.3 million was allocated—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Madam Speaker, the Bloc does not care about anything but a hypothetical solution. Everyone knows that this case is currently in the hands of lawyers and judges.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon:** It has been since 1999. You were not even elected yet.

**Ms. Sylvie Boucher:** Madam Speaker, if the member would like me to answer her question, I will do so, but she has to let me speak. This is a democracy and I have the right to say my piece.

Our government has taken action. Not only has it taken action, but we have been having discussions—the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has been having discussions—with the people of Shannon since we were elected in 2006. Here on this side of the House, we are in a position to spend money because we are in power and we know what must be done. The Bloc has never spent one red penny for Quebec, since its inception. So they can spare me the rhetoric.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I stand tonight with regard to the issue of the environment and the fact that the government continues to say that it found religion and suddenly now they are concerned about climate change and that they have a plan. Clearly, they have not found religion and they have no plan.

In the three years that the Conservatives have been in office, they have not brought in one regulation to deal with the issue of climate change. In fact, when President Obama was here, we thought we heard from the third environment minister that somehow they were being tough on the environment, that they would have caps. They say that they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by the year 2020 but they have no baseline.

The Conservatives ask what the Liberals did. In November, Environment Canada said that between 2003-08 emissions were actually down by 2.8%. The government does not mention that during our time we had the greenest budget in history, \$10 billion in 2005, the most aggressive plan of the G8. The fact is that the government has not been serious on climate change. I do not even know if its members can even spell the word. It concerns me when the government talks about caps when it does not come clean on the baseline, on what it intends to do and on how it will achieve it.

It is all well and good to say that we want to have an agreement with the United States, but during the time when the United States had not signed Kyoto, 43 American states were very aggressive on the issue of climate change. The Conservatives, however, and the science deniers on that side of the House said that they did not even think that climate change was a real issue. They thought it was a socialist plot, as we all remember.

There really is a hard cap and trade system. In his very first budget, President Obama was very clear on caps and on what he would do in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, something the Conservative government has failed to enunciate. President Obama clearly indicated that his government might bring in \$3 billion in revenue in dealing with the cap and trade.

As a member of GLOBE International G8+5, we have made a series of recommendations each year to the leaders of the G8. In response, the Prime Minister has not been very forthcoming in support, but suddenly he hears President Obama's footsteps and decides that maybe this could be an issue. Over 57% of Canadians said that even if we had to go into deeper debt, they would support strong action when it came to climate change.

However, again we have the failure of a real plan. The Conservatives announced cutbacks dealing with retrofits. The first thing they did was to cut back. They cut back with people doing energy work on their houses and environmental audits. People who were in the system were cut out simply because an announcement was made in the middle of the night saying that they were sorry but that they were not going to go ahead with that. That is not leadership.

It is not leadership to say that we will follow what everyone else does. Leadership is standing and saying that we will do this because it is the right thing to do for Canadians. It is good for health and it is good for our children and our grandchildren.

I know what I am talking about because I was parliamentary secretary to the former minister of the environment. Under his leadership, the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartier, we were able to get the greenest budget in history because we had finance on board. We picked the allies around the cabinet table. I have not seen any allies supporting the current Minister of the Environment. Until the Conservatives do that, they cannot talk about caps when in fact they have no plan.

● (1920)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thought that the hon. member would have at least read the plan but obviously he has not.

The fact is the government tracks cuts and increases in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. It is required to do so under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to which we are a signatory. Canada is required to prepare and submit an annual national inventory of human induced greenhouse gas emissions from sources and removals by sinks.

In fact, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions in 2006 declined, unlike the 13 long dark years under the previous Liberal government where emissions continued to climb year after year, a time when that member was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment, a time that his leader describes as a time of creating an environmental mess.

Those times are over. Our government has taken important action on climate change. We have reaffirmed our 2020 target, which is more stringent than the U.S. target for 2020.

We are working with our U.S. counterparts, with President Obama, in pursuing a coordinated approach to the energy and environmental challenges that both of our countries face. In fact, the Minister of the Environment just returned from a three day, very successful, meeting with American officials.

President Obama's commitments on the environment create an opportunity to develop a North American regulatory regime and a level playing field that will alleviate past concerns about Canadian competitiveness.

We are proceeding to develop a regulatory system for industry that would not harm the Canadian industry, that is coordinated with other government policies, and that is harmonized with provincial policies.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In addition to moving forward with work on industrial emissions, we are taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in other areas. We are regulating emissions from other sources, including phasing out inefficient, incandescent light bulbs, improving the energy efficiency of many commercial products, enhancing the fuel efficiency and reducing emissions from vehicles, and requiring at least 5% of renewable fuel content in gasoline by 2010, that is just a year away, as well as 2% in diesel and heating oil by 2012.

Along with these regulatory initiatives, our government is implementing a series of program spending measures to help achieve its 2020 emission reduction target, which I remind the member, is the toughest target in Canadian history.

Primarily directed at the energy and transportation sectors, they focus on increasing the supply of renewable power, making more efficient use of traditional power sources, and encouraging the purchase of more fuel efficient vehicles.

In the 2009 budget the government committed to \$1 billion over five years for the establishment of a new clean energy fund which would support clean energy research, development and demonstration projects, including carbon capture and storage. That member and I know that the world is counting on that. To GLOBE G8 + 5 the world said 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. It is counting on that technology. Canada, under this government, is providing that leadership along with the Obama administration.

• (1925)

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Madam Speaker, I do not know whether the member believes the speech that was written for him by the department, but what he has said is clearly fiction.

There is no baseline to say 20% over by 2020. The fact is 11 independent analyses have concluded that the government's plan will not work. The government always says that we have not read the plan, but if there was a plan I would read it.

Has the member read Project Green? In 2005 it was the most aggressive plan of the G8. It was a plan that was actually going to do something, but unfortunately we had an election and now that do nothing group that came in said climate change is really not a priority.

The government says that emissions went up during our time. It is very interesting to note that the economy expanded like crazy. A lot of people were going to work, unlike now, where we have significant contraction in the economy.

We need to be dealing with the issue of the oil sands. The government has not done very much about this in terms of aggressive decisions.

The fact that President Obama has come up with a plan does not mean that what the U.S. is going to do is going to be the same as what we are going to do and the government should come clean and say that it is not.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Madam Speaker, again, I encourage the member to read the plan and then he would know that the baseline is 20% reduction by 2020 at the 2006 level. We went together to Berlin and he heard the same messages that I heard loud and clear, that the

world is counting on carbon capture and storage. It is a technology that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Together, with the Obama administration, Canada and the United States are working together. We are world leaders in that technology. With billions of dollars coming from this government and billions of dollars coming from the Obama administration, we are getting it done. Unfortunately, when that member had a chance, he did not get it done. What a shame.

[*Translation*]

AIR CANADA

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this adjournment debate. These debates sometimes serve to provide some clarifications. On February 13, I asked a question of the government and my reply came from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry. I got the impression he was not prepared for that question. With a concern for clarification, particularly for those involved, I am pleased to have the opportunity to ask the question again in order to learn the government's position on it.

The question of February 13 was simple. I will reread it:

Mr. Speaker, the dismantling of ACE Aviation, the parent company of Air Canada and Aveos, does not respect the spirit of the Air Canada Public Participation Act regarding maintaining overhaul centres in Montreal, Winnipeg and Toronto.

What will the government do to ensure that ACE and its corporations comply with this act?

ACE Aviation, Air Canada and Aveos have complex structures. Subsidiaries have been created for maintenance. The company has been divided up and that means that not all of the parts of the consortium, not all of these affiliated companies that were created, are subject to the Air Canada Public Participation Act. This means that the overhaul and maintenance centres, which were protected by the Air Canada Public Participation Act, and which should be in Montreal, Winnipeg and Toronto, are no longer guaranteed to remain in these cities. This is very important because, for one, a large fleet of Boeing 767s belonging to Air Canada must be replaced. This was supposed to happen starting in 2010, but there will be a delay in the delivery of the new Boeing 787s. They are four years behind, so that will mean a lot more work for these overhaul and maintenance centres. It is important that Air Canada and its parent company, ACE Aviation, understand that they must comply with the Air Canada Public Participation Act and maintain these overhaul centres.

We are worried because, as everyone knows, the economy is not doing well. We need these centres because the Air Canada fleet is not being updated. When we see that the government is encouraging more foreign ownership in Air Canada, moving from 25% to 49%, it is important to ask questions. If there is additional foreign ownership, will the maintenance always be done in Canada? If there are new financial partners, will they not be tempted to have the maintenance done in the United States, for example?

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Jobs in Canada are at stake. In the previous Parliament, the government introduced a bill that would require all new Air Canada and ACE Aviation components to comply with the Air Canada Public Participation Act. However, we have not seen the government introduce another bill during this new Parliament to guarantee this same protection for overhaul centres. Therefore, I am asking my question of the government again.

• (1930)

[English]

**Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his comments from last month on this particular issue.

This is about protecting Canadians' jobs. Indeed, I would suggest that the member is reading selectively. I know he is an extremely hard-working member. He works very hard for his constituents and he knows the file, but I would suggest that this is about protecting Canadians' jobs.

In budget 2009, Canada's finance minister delivered an economic action plan that will support Canadians, stimulate the economy and create jobs.

I direct my colleague specifically to page 142 of the budget, where in no uncertain terms it is stated that our government will be delivering an additional \$12 billion in urgent infrastructure stimulus in communities from coast to coast all around this country, including Quebec and his own riding.

Our investments will create jobs, hope and opportunity at a time when Canada needs it most because of the economic downturn that the world is facing at this stage.

Over the next two years, the government will provide a \$4 billion infrastructure stimulus fund, \$2 billion to accelerate construction at Canadian colleges and universities, \$1 billion to create a new green infrastructure fund and \$500 million to support the construction of new community recreation facilities and make upgrades to existing facilities. These are things Canadians have been asking for, things that will improve Canadians' quality of life. That is what the government will do.

We will also be accelerating existing provincial and territorial based funding. We will be sending more money to them more quickly, providing millions of dollars to every province and territory quickly.

I direct the member opposite to page 143 of the same budget, which lists priority projects that have been identified by the federal government in consultation with our provincial partners, such as Quebec and other provinces, including Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, right across this great country, including the territories and municipalities. This includes upgrades to water and sewer systems across the province of Quebec, my hon. colleague's home province.

These are among the great measures of budget 2009, and they will help Canada emerge from this economic slowdown faster than any other country and stronger than ever before.

The member has voiced his concern in relation to the change from 25% to 49% and the increase in the limit on foreign ownership in Canadian airlines. This increase is necessary because it is all about the economic viability of the airlines and providing them with access to more capital from other countries while ensuring that these jobs remain in Canadian hands and the companies themselves remain in Canadian hands and Canadian control. The Canada Transportation Act, with which the member is familiar, will continue to ensure this as it is laid out.

This increase would also help Canadian carriers to attract more investment and capital and potentially allow them to lower their financing and operational costs. That is what it is all about: remaining competitive in a competitive environment, especially during these hard economic times. This will help Canadian airlines prosper and become very competitive economically across the world.

Raising foreign ownership limits to 49% would place the Canadian airline industry on a par with some of its international trading partners, such as the European Union and Australia. This approach is consistent with Canada's international trade obligations, and it is certainly in the best interest of Canadians.

• (1935)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Madam Speaker, I thought my question was clear, but I will reword it.

Does the government plan to introduce a bill so that ACE Aviation, Air Canada and its Aveos subsidiaries comply with the Air Canada Public Participation Act, which provides that overhaul centres will be maintained in Montreal, Winnipeg and Toronto?

Will the government introduce a bill to require that Aveos and ACE Aviation comply with that section of the Air Canada Public Participation Act?

[English]

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Madam Speaker, the reality at this stage is that the obligations of the Air Canada Public Participation Act have been met.

I am not certain as to any other legislation that is coming forward relating particularly to what the member has asked for, but I want to remind him, my hon. colleagues and all Canadians that this member and his party voted against our budget, a budget that is bringing economic stimulus to the country, that is bringing competitiveness to the airline industry and that is going to ensure thousands upon thousands of jobs for Canadians and make sure that we have a strong and robust airline industry in this country.

This is the budget that will do it. That member and his colleagues should have stood up for Canadians and voted for the budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:37 p.m.)





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