



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, May 16, 2005**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 16, 2005

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1100)  
[English]

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. After consultation with all parties, I believe you would find unanimous consent to adopt the following unanimously without debate or amendment. It is the same motion I was looking to move last week on three different occasions. In the spirit of cooperation and to enhance the civility, certainly in this House, I think all parties now have come to an understanding and agreement. I move:

• (1105)

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice, the second reading stages of Bill C-43, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 23, and Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, shall be disposed of as follows:

1. Any division thereon requested before the expiry of the time for consideration of government orders on Thursday, May 19, shall be deferred to that time;

2. At the expiry of the time for consideration of government orders on Thursday, May 19, all questions necessary for the disposal of the second reading stage of (1) Bill C-43 and (2) Bill C-48 shall be put and decided forthwith and successively, without further debate, amendment or deferral.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader 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)

**Mr. Jay Hill (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while my party has agreed to the motion from the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, I would like to point out that the respectful course of action would have been for the government to allot a day to the official opposition after it lost the vote last Tuesday. I would like to refer the Speaker and the government House leader to pages 280 and 281 of *Erskine May*, 22nd edition:

From time to time the Opposition put down a motion on the paper expressing lack of confidence in the Government—a 'vote of censure' as it is called. By established convention the Government always accedes to the demand from the Leader of the

Opposition to allot a day for the discussion of such a motion. In allotting a day for this purpose the Government is entitled to have regard to the exigencies of its own business, but a reasonably early day is invariably found. This convention is founded on the recognized position of the Opposition as a potential Government, which guarantees the legitimacy of such an interruption of the normal course of business. For its part, the Government has everything to gain by meeting such a direct challenge to its authority at the earliest possible moment.

We regret that after the issue of confidence became a question, that it will take nine days to resolve it. This is not in keeping with our conventions and it is not at all respectful to our system of government.

I would note in closing that it has now been some six weeks since the official opposition has had an allotted supply day, five weeks since the Bloc Québécois had its last day and that is out of the ordinary to say the least, especially during a time when the government's confidence in this place is called into question.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a different point of order. On Friday unanimous consent was refused by the Liberals for a motion to divide Bill C-43 that would have ensured speedy passage of the Atlantic accord. I hope the government has reconsidered. Therefore, I seek consent for the following motion:

That Bill C-43, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 23 be divided into two bills: Bill C-43A an act to provide payments to provinces and territories and implement the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador arrangement and the Canada-Nova Scotia arrangement; and Bill C-43B an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 23;

That Bill C-43A be composed of parts 12, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador arrangement and the Canada-Nova Scotia arrangement, and 24, payments to certain provinces and territories;

That Bill C-43B be composed of all the remaining parts of Bill C-43;

That the House order the printing of Bill C-43A and Bill C-43B and that Bill C-43A and Bill C-43B be immediately placed on the Order Paper for consideration of the House at second reading and referral to the Standing Committee on Finance; and

That the law clerk and parliamentary counsel be authorized to make such technical changes or corrections that may be necessary to give effect to this motion.

The Prime Minister said that the quickest way to pass this is through the budget and the onus was on the opposition. The onus now is with the government.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1110)

**Hon. Tony Valeri:** Mr. Speaker, on the same issue, if you can recall, the order to set the budget vote was accepted for Thursday at the end of government orders. I know the hon. member will have the opportunity to support that budget, which includes the Atlantic accord. I know the hon. member is under some pressure at home to support that budget and I think he should. The Atlantic accord is there and it would ensure speedy passage of the Atlantic accord.

**The Speaker:** I do not see any point of order. We had the point of order to put the motion. The member got his motion put, with a speech. The government House leader on the guise of a point of order has responded.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I hope this is a different one.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps we can arrange some time for the hon. member to sit with the desk officers so that we can review normal parliamentary procedure.

Of course legislation appearing before this House must go through first reading, second reading, committee, report stage, third reading, on to the other House and then for final royal assent.

What the hon. member is misconstruing to this House is the fact that his partners, in their new-found alliance with the Bloc Québécois, refuse to support the Atlantic accord and that is not being made clear.

**The Speaker:** We are getting into a debate.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have all agreed to do everything in our power to ensure that the House functions properly. I hope that the message also reached the Liberal side, so that we can speak freely here.

I just wanted to point out that the motion put forward is rather interesting. I believe that, under our standing orders, it is very likely that we would be able to split a bill. This would ensure that, whatever happens following Thursday's confidence vote, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and certain provinces and territories can enjoy the proposed benefits.

If the government objects, that will go against the interests of these people.

**The Speaker:** This is not really a point of order.

[*English*]

The hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl got a point of order to propose a motion.

[*Translation*]

The House did not give unanimous consent for the motion. The matter is closed. We cannot debate the issue at this time.

[*English*]

It being 11:13 a.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Mr. Speaker, on this point of order.

**The Speaker:** I have indicated there is not a point of order.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Mr. Speaker, it is a different point of order.

**The Speaker:** On a different point of order, the hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn:** Mr. Speaker, it is common in this House that we not provide information which is incorrect. The member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte made—

**The Speaker:** This is clearly debate. I invite hon. members to get on with the debate after private members' hour is over. We will be on Bill C-48, I understand, which is the bill the hon. member wants to divide. I would suggest he get into a lively debate one hour from now.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### TAIWAN AFFAIRS ACT

**Mr. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC)** moved that Bill C-357, an act to provide for an improved framework for economic, trade, cultural and other initiatives between the people of Canada and the people of Taiwan, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-357 is a private member's bill tabled by myself as member of Parliament for Kootenay—Columbia. There are members from all parties of the House who support this bill in principle and I expect that if it comes to a vote at second reading the bill will pass and be forwarded to committee for consideration.

In 1970, when Canada recognized the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of China and terminated its diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Canada only took note of and neither endorsed nor challenged China's claims to sovereignty over Taiwan. Cabinet records show that the Canadian government policy intended to maintain a de facto relationship with Taiwan after de-recognition of the country.

The position of Prime Minister Trudeau was to leave flexibility in Canada's domestic or international relationships with Taiwan. This allows the various international jurisdictions and competing interests to work out their relationships without interference from Canada or Canadian interests.

In a letter dated May 9, 2005, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote:

Canada maintains a one-China policy under which we formally recognize the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the legitimate, representative of government of China. At the time of its recognition of the PRC in 1970, Canada "took note" of the position that "Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Peoples Republic of China", but did not formally recognize this claim.

*Private Members' Business*

I am in complete agreement with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and this bill is complementary to the position of the Government of Canada on the one China policy. If there is a difference of opinion, it lies in the government's interpretation of the minister's own phrase, "but did not formally recognize this claim". I believe Canadian government practices are demonstrably contrary to its expressions.

Last year the House voted by a margin of 2:1 to have Canada lead action at the World Health Organization to include Taiwan as a health entity. The Canadian Senate passed a similar motion of instruction. In spite of this direction by both chambers of Canada's Parliament, the Canadian government chose to ignore that instruction at the 57th conference of the World Health Assembly. This morning the general committee of the 58th World Health Assembly decided Taiwan's WHO case will not be included on the conference's provisional agenda. This is a matter of extreme consequence to the world's health.

This bill is more than three decades overdue because of action taken by our mutual trading partner, the United States. Months after the U.S. recognition of the PRC, it enacted its Taiwan relations act. Canada and its interests are in a significant disadvantage to their U.S. competitors. The Canadian government gives advantages to the U.S. in Taiwan commercial, criminal and security regulations. It ignores the U.S. Taiwan relations act while condemning the tabling of this Canadian Taiwan affairs act.

For Canada to take its rightful place in influencing world affairs, our Canadian government should rationalize policy with the U.S. to help build democracy and democratic values. A unified voice with the U.S. in China affairs would bring Canada into this sphere as a player rather than a pretender.

Canada is Taiwan's 11th largest trading partner. Bilateral trade reached \$5 billion Canadian in 2004. Taiwan is Canada's seventh largest source of foreign tourists and foreign students with more than 150,000 people visiting Canada each year and 150,000 additional affluent and highly educated Taiwanese live in Canada as landed immigrants.

While the Canadian government emphasizes the importance of trade with China, the government has given very little thought to the shape and substance of our relations and the legal framework necessary to carry it out. In the recent foreign policy white paper there was no mention made regarding Canada-Taiwan relations. Given the trade, political and security importance of Taiwan to Canada, Taiwan issues have become a multi-party concern in Parliament in recent years.

●(1115)

This is well illustrated by the example of the WHO, which I raised earlier, and by issues frequently raised in the House question period. There have been several additional resolutions passed in both Houses as well as the foreign affairs committee.

Taiwan is an economic and democratic success story with a population of 23 million people. Taiwan is a fully functioning democracy governed by rule of law. President Chen Shui-bian's electoral victory in 2000 was the first peaceful democratic transfer of power in the 5,000 year history of the Chinese peoples. His re-

election in 2004 confirmed the solid democratic foundation that has been established in Taiwan.

Observers of China affairs noted that while President Chen was re-elected, the explicit will of the Taiwan electorate to move toward sovereignty softened. It was therefore distressing to see the PRC respond to the Taiwan peoples by enacting the PRC anti-secession law in mid-March of this year. This action was an intentional buildup of pressure by the PRC in response to Taiwan's citizens taking the steam out of the Taiwan Strait question.

China observers cannot help noting the PRC's growing military strength, with an estimated budget of \$65 billion U.S. According to a U.S. defense department report, China now has 725 missiles positioned across Taiwan Strait aimed specifically at Taiwan.

I note that after China passed its anti-secession law, Canada's foreign affairs minister issued a statement saying that any unilateral action, including the use of force, to change Taiwan's status is unacceptable to Canada. In fact, in April 2004 in a public speech, Canada's then foreign affairs minister called on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume dialogue without preconditions and to resolve cross-strait issues peacefully.

Taiwan honours the rule of law, preserves the free market, protects the environment and respects human rights. The world community cannot afford to let Taiwan fail because it is a symbol of the success of democracy and human rights as a universal value. Taiwan is a living rebuttal to the theory that these values are incompatible with the Asian way of life.

In a telephone conversation with a representative of the People's Republic of China I was told that the PRC is firmly opposed to this bill. The PRC in Beijing has called the bill "a brazen interference in China's domestic affairs". It states:

By proposing this so-called Taiwan Affairs Act, some individual members of Canada's parliament are preaching 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan'.

Their assertions are simply not supported by the facts. In part, Bill C-357 states that this is "an act to provide for an approved framework for economic, trade, cultural and other initiatives between the people of Canada and the people of Taiwan".

I ask members to note that the bill intentionally does not use words to describe state to state or nation to nation relationships. For greater clarity on this point, the first paragraph of the preamble states:

WHEREAS on October 13, 1970, the Government of Canada formally recognized the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate Government of China and took note of its claim that Taiwan is part of China;...

*Private Members' Business*

In the absence of recognition and diplomatic relations between Canada and China, the best approach is to adopt this bill as domestic law of Canada and to spell out the specific manner in which relations with Taiwan would be conducted by Canada without trying to define Taiwan's international legal status.

Due to the lack of recognition and diplomatic relations between Canada and Taiwan, a host of specific matters have arisen, resulting in important legal and pragmatic problems in the interactions. Clauses 4 through 8 of the bill contain explicit provisions to create a workable mechanism to regulate de facto unofficial relations between Canada and the unrecognized entity of Taiwan.

• (1120)

These clauses are borrowed directly from the U.S. Taiwan relations act. The Taiwan relations act provides a strong, solid legal framework between the U.S. and Taiwan. It has been a success in strengthening U.S.-Taiwan commercial relations.

Canadians interests compete daily with their U.S. counterparts. As matters sit today, Canadians suffer a growing disadvantage in trade with Taiwan.

Clause 4 of the bill provides that the absence of diplomatic relations should not affect the application of any Canadian laws with respect to Taiwan, and the laws shall apply to Taiwan exactly as they do to other countries. Thus:

Whenever the laws of Canada refer to or relate in general terms to foreign countries...such laws are deemed to refer or relate also to Taiwan.

Clause 5 protects property rights of Taiwan and its citizens. Clause 6 provides for the capacity to sue and be sued in Canadian courts. Clause 7 enables the Canadian government to sign agreements with Taiwan, enabling the Canadian government to enter into agreements with Taiwan.

I emphasize that this bill explicitly recognizes Canada's one China policy—this is the fifth time I have tried to make that point—but at the same time it brings order to continuing discord.

Clause 8 imposes provisions to protect reciprocal legal rights for Taiwan and Canada when they do business and interact with each other.

Taiwan and Canada have very close relations. As mentioned earlier, every year approximately 150,000 tourists from Taiwan travel to Canada. From 1990 to the present, more than 150,000 high quality immigrants have settled in Canada. Two-way trade between Taiwan and Canada reached \$5 billion in 2004.

Taiwan is already Canada's fourth largest trading partner in Asia and is Canada's 11th largest trading partner overall. However, Foreign Affairs Canada claims that "as Canada does not recognize Taiwan as a state, it is not possible to negotiate a binding agreement with Taiwan". Foreign Affairs Canada boasts of administering 2,267 treaties, yet none of them is listed as with Taiwan.

Taiwan and Canada share the same social values, including respect for human rights, freedom and rule of law. Taiwan's justice system is comparable to that of Canada. We can cooperate with Taiwan in many fields, including the judicial and economic areas.

For combating transborder criminals, in March 2002 Taiwan and the United States signed the agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, which has been implemented smoothly during the past three years.

With the growing concern about security, international cooperation is imperative. However, Foreign Affairs Canada has refused to sign any kind of agreements with Taiwan. The issue is this: the U.S. Taiwan relations act enables its government to sign international agreements with Taiwan but we have no such agreement.

Between Canada and Taiwan, there is only a handful of exchanges of letters or memoranda of understanding and arrangements concerning some minor technical matters in the commercial and scientific fields. How can Canada promote trade and investment with such an important trading partner like Taiwan without the ability to sign any legal binding agreement?

Clause 9 of the act deals with issues around international cooperation. The purpose of the bill is to help to brighten the prospects for stronger Canada-Taiwan economic, cultural and other relations. The 25 year old U.S.Taiwan relations act, which is the model for this bill, has been a tremendous success in helping the U.S. to build a strong, unofficial relationship with Taiwan.

Canada's interactions with Taiwan are to our mutual benefit. Taiwan is a good friend and close partner of Canada, as Canada is of Taiwan. As such, Taiwan counts on sustained Canadian support as it addresses many important challenges. This very much includes Taiwan's efforts to develop its democracy.

I acknowledge protests from the PRC and certain Canadian business interests. They have said great harm will be done to the relationship between Canada and China and serious consequences will ensue after adoption of the bill. The Chinese took the same position against the U.S. on the adoption of the Taiwan relations act 25 years ago. With the Taiwan relations act in effect for two and a half decades, Canada's competitive position has continued to weaken.

For all the right reasons I am calling on members of Parliament to do what is in the best interests of Canada and the world. I am asking for support in principle for Bill C-357 to move to committee for consideration.

• (1125)

**Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the United States policy toward Taiwan in 1979 and so on. Why would he want Canada to follow a 26 year old foreign policy of the United States? A lot of the policies of the U.S. do not necessarily reflect Canadian interests. Could my colleague comment on that, please?

• (1130)

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an excellent opportunity to further expand on what I was trying to say earlier.

*Private Members' Business*

Canada does not currently have any formal relationship with Taiwan as an entity of any type. As a consequence, we cannot have any normal relationships in terms of legal relationships for trade, for criminal matters or even for security issues. That is the problem.

In contrast, the U.S. has the Taiwan relations act, which permits it to do so. Therefore, Canadian individuals and Canadian businesses are put at the disadvantage of not being able to have the same relationship with their Taiwanese counterparts as their U.S. competitors. We are at a disadvantage.

Although the U.S. does not recognize Taiwan as a country or a separate entity and goes with the same policy as Canada says it goes with, which is a one China policy, it has still managed to get into a position where, whether with respect to security issues or criminal matters or legal matters, it can have a relationship with Taiwan. We are lacking that relationship. We are falling behind. Quite frankly, we are putting ourselves at a significant disadvantage to our most significant trading partner.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a supplementary question on what the member just said in his response.

It is my understanding that the 1979 United States Taiwan relations act was enacted by America really to establish a diplomatic relationship with China. Canada had already established one decades ago. I wonder if my colleague could explain how that difference helps.

I also have a question with respect to clause 5 of his bill, which talks about claims that Taiwan can make on assets. I have a concern about that. In the Taiwanese constitution, Taiwan calls itself the Republic of China, Taiwan's official name, and it claims that it owns Mongolia as well. Canada is currently the largest single investor in Mongolia. How will this affect our interests in Mongolia?

**Mr. Jim Abbott:** Mr. Speaker, in the case of the U.S., the information that the member has I believe is incorrect. The Taiwan relations act was established fully six months after the recognition by the U.S. of the PRC as the entity that is legitimate government of China. The Taiwan relations act was constructed, and under much protest by the PRC, fully six months after that actually took place. I think the member and I have a significant difference of opinion on that particular question.

The question raised about clause 5 is a good one, which is why I am hoping to get it to committee so that we could sort it out and put in the necessary stopgap. The point of clause 5 is that it is reciprocal. In other words, right now individuals or corporations do not have in commercial law any way of suing and being sued back and forth between the two entities. There is nothing we can do to enforce the commercial arrangements that we make one on one with Taiwanese interests or vice versa.

This is different from the relationships we have with every other entity that would be called a nation. We are not out to call Taiwan a nation. We are simply out to establish standard commercial relationships to protect the interests of Canadians and Taiwanese people.

**Hon. David Anderson (Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to debate the bill put forward by my hon. friend from the Kootenays.

I would like to preface my remarks by saying, as the hon. member has indicated, that I am sure everyone in the House regards the development of democracy in Taiwan as extremely important. My first visit was in 1967 and enormous strides have been made since that time. That said, it is a part of the world where democracy has been achieved and where an essentially Leninist dictatorship has disappeared.

In that same timeframe, Canada and Taiwan's relationship has been transformed dramatically. It began with trade and immigration, but it now takes into account many areas. As indicated by the hon. member, health, education, science, technology and the environment are many of the areas of relationship between our two peoples. In fact, one of our largest trade missions in the world is located in Taipei.

That is where we are today and as we can expect in any bilateral relationship, there will be occasional times of stress, but we do not expect to always have all issues settled all the time with all countries. However, we should bear in mind the contrasts where those areas of Canadian and Taiwanese priorities differ and consider also the big picture, dealing essentially with the subject which is paramount, and should be paramount in the interests of all parliamentarians, and that is the interests of the Canadian people. Our job is to serve our Canadian constituents in a manner that contributes to their overall well-being and prosperity. I am looking at the proposed legislation from that point of view, from that Canadian perspective.

Back in the 1970s, when we switched our recognition from Taipei to Beijing, we did so in a way which provided for flexibility to remain substantially engaged with Taiwan and, at the same time, leaving the door open for a growing and important relationship with mainland China. In short, we created a deal whereby we did not need to choose entirely between one and the other as the choice had been presented at that time. We chose to engage with both and the results of this balanced approach speak for themselves.

Since then our relations with Taiwan have expanded dramatically, as I indicated. We now have a variety of memoranda of understanding between the Canadian government departments and agencies and their Taiwanese counterparts. We have had a large number of high level trips to China by Canadian ministers, one of whom was myself.

I believe I was the first western minister to go to Taipei after the missile rattling event of some seven or eight years ago. We have had frequent interaction between officials and between 2002 and 2004, Canada received 18 visits by cabinet level Taiwanese officials, including the vice-minister of economic affairs, the minister of justice, who came twice, the chairman of the council of aboriginal affairs and the minister of transport and communications.

Economically, Taiwan is one of Canada's top ten trading partners and is our 14th largest export market worldwide. We have a large number of Canadian corporations operating in Taiwan which have had significant success. Of course, the same is true that Taiwanese companies have entered Canada and we have good relationships and transportation links through aircraft companies that link our two areas.

*Private Members' Business*

Our involvement with Taiwan has been successful and our policy has produced win-win outcomes for both Canada and Taiwan, but now we have a bill which indicates, as some members believe, that the best way to preserve this situation is to revise it in a manner which does away with the flexibility that we have benefited from in the past.

Bill C-357, the bill we are discussing at this time, would put us in that very situation by providing Taiwan with the benefits of a state under Canadian law, and therefore de jure recognition of Taiwan as a sovereign entity in Canada. That is clear.

• (1135)

The fact is that there is no country in the world which officially recognizes both Taiwan and China and we, therefore, as a result of this legislation would be forced to choose and reverse the successful policies of the last 35 years. With this bill, we cannot have our cake and eat it. I believe that we, therefore, have a very clear choice before us at the present time.

As had been indicated by indeed the proposer of the legislation when he referred to his conversations with the embassy of China here in Ottawa, support for this legislation would seriously damage our longstanding and growing relationship with China. When we are considering that fact, I think it would be useful to highlight the inadequacy of the legislation because it spells out clearly what Canada is obliged to do for Taiwan and not what Taiwan's obligation to Canada might be.

To give an example to the hon. member, there is the issue of beef exports where the Taiwanese have opened their market to the American beef but not to Canadian beef. They have rejected the science information we have put forward. That is an example of a trade dispute to which the Taiwanese have not responded as we would have liked and where a change, as indicated by this legislation, would make no difference at all.

We know on both sides of the House that there are other issues, other motivations, and other factors which underline this legislation.

We know full well that the issues on which Taipei and Beijing differ are real and important. In fact, they have created the risk of war on many occasions over the last few decades. Those differences between Taipei and Beijing will not be resolved by legislative efforts in other countries such as Canada.

Canadian foreign policy is formulated not in Beijing or in Taipei, but here in Ottawa. It is in the interests of the Canadian people. That is paramount when we are considering such legislation.

There is an old Chinese proverb which says that even the wisest official cannot judge a family dispute. The dispute between Taipei and Beijing is essentially a family dispute. It is not one where we should be intervening with legislation such as this which so clearly takes sides in that family dispute.

Canada has been supporting Taiwan's democracy and should continue to do so. That does not mean that the Canadian government must support unconditionally any particularly policy of any particular political party in Taiwan. This legislation would appear to support those who would favour a permanent separation of

Taiwan from China, which we all know will likely result in instability in east Asia and possibly even war.

It is incumbent upon those who propose this change in our policy to indicate why the warnings from Beijing should be ignored on this particular piece of legislation. It is after all an issue which is of supreme importance to the security of the Asia-Pacific region.

Recently, the leaders of the opposition parties in Taiwan which represent, as in this House, approximately 50% of the population, visited Beijing only in the last few weeks. The leaders had a very different message, which is a message of reconciliation between the two parts of China, mainland China and the province of Taiwan.

It is particularly important to recognize that since 1949, at the end of the outbreak of hostilities, the first meeting of the Kuomintang officials and officials of the Chinese communist party recently took place. This was the first meeting at that level of the top representatives of the two governments. At the time of rapprochement, which we have at the present time, why would any parliamentarian in Canada who values peace and prosperity be seen as supporting anything except that reconciliation process?

The legislation that we have before us today will not aid that reconciliation process. In fact, given Canada's importance in trade with both countries and our importance as an Asia-Pacific power, it would very seriously destabilize the reconciliation process that is taking place.

• (1140)

Let me repeat that only Beijing and Taipei can resolve their complicated and longstanding issues that go right back to the twenties. We will not be playing a helpful role by enacting this bill in the process of reconciliation and rapprochement, which we all hope will continue successfully. Our willingness to facilitate rapprochement is well known by both sides, but involvement in this piece of legislation would be a serious mistake in those efforts.

While we trust the two sides are working together, we should continue, in the meantime, our utmost efforts to develop good relations with both Beijing and Taipei which is in the best interests of Canadians and the Government of Canada.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Clavet (Louis-Hébert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the colleagues who have just spoken on Bill C-357, both the hon. member for Victoria and the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia, the bill's sponsor. This is the first hour of debate at second reading. It is a pleasure for me, as the Bloc's critic for the Asia-Pacific region, to speak on this bill.

Bill C-357 provides an improved framework for economic, trade and cultural initiatives between Canada and Taiwan. Before indicating whether the Bloc Québécois supports the principle of this bill and whether it can be referred to committee, just to keep everyone guessing, I want to provide some context essential to understanding this issue.



In this regard, the Bloc Québécois wants to acknowledge Taiwan's obvious economic and political progress. No one will deny that, not even the People's Republic of China. Undeniably, Taiwan is now a free, democratic and, above all, prosperous country. It is clearly a model for the entire Asia-Pacific region.

It is interesting to note that Quebec maintains close and friendly cultural and economic ties with Taiwan. Between 2001 and 2002 alone, Quebec exports to Taiwan increased by 17%, to a noteworthy \$134 million. Quebecers are happy to have access to Taiwanese products, such as computers and semi-conductors. In exchange, the Taiwanese benefit from imports of reliable Quebec products, such as wood pulp, telecommunications equipment and iron ore, to name just a few.

I would also add that university and cultural exchanges between Quebec and Taiwan have been extremely successful. In the riding of Louis-Hébert, which I have the pleasure of representing in the House, Université Laval has extremely close ties with Taiwan. These exchanges will continue. Even some colleges maintain similar relations, with both Taiwan and China.

I would, moreover, emphasize that Quebec's relationship with Taiwan cannot in any way have a negative impact on the deep friendship and attachment Quebec feels for the People's Republic of China. I had the pleasure of working there for two years. Contacts between Quebec and the People's Republic of China have been constantly increasing for over 30 years now. There have been visits by senior officials, agreements have been signed and major trade exchanges have taken place, all of which are evidence of our ongoing good faith and good will.

As for Quebec's exports to China, these have increased by leaps and bounds in recent years. I have some interesting figures here also. From its level of \$318 million in the year 2000, the value of Quebec's exports to China increased by 117% to some \$700 million in 2002. There is nothing to indicate a decrease. Among the Quebec products of most interest to the People's Republic of China are aircraft and aircraft parts, pulp and paper and inorganic chemicals. I list these as evidence that there can continue to be very good trade relations Quebec and the People's Republic of China, and between Quebec and Taiwan. Quebec's importation of Chinese products in 2002 was not negligible either, at about \$3.4 billion.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that educational exchanges between Quebec and China are also very important. Universities and colleges, Quebec's in particular, have very active relationships with China. Close to a thousand Chinese students come to Quebec every year to study.

Now back to Taiwan, since this bill deals primarily with Quebec's and Canada's relations with Taiwan.

The Bloc Québécois feels the need to support the principle of this bill because of the friendship and ties that exist between Quebec and Taiwan. In particular, we unreservedly support its underlying principles: peace and security in the Asia Pacific region.

• (1150)

We in the Bloc Québécois believe that the resolution of the dispute between China and Taiwan should be peaceful and negotiated by the

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two parties. Nothing in this bill would lead us to think such a resolution might not be possible.

This bill should not be seen as meddling or trying to disturb a situation in sometimes precarious equilibrium—no point in beating around the bush—but rather as a means to strengthening economic, trade and cultural ties between Taiwan and Canada. Who could dispute that?

We in the Bloc have, of course, found a few shortcomings after analyzing the bill. We will thus mention a few reservations we have with respect to the bill in due course, when the bill is being considered in committee. However, at this stage of debate, two things about the bill should be mentioned, which will, in our opinion, help improve bilateral relations between Canada and Taiwan and international relations generally between Canada and other Asian countries.

First, the Bloc Québécois supports Taiwan's participation as an observer at certain international organizations. Currently, it is excluded—and we heard this again this morning— from participation in international organizations such as the World Health Organization. These organizations are technical rather than political in nature, even though their political scope is somewhat limited. We need only consider how the SARS epidemic could have been different had Taiwan had observer status with WHO. Things would have been simpler for everyone, because Taiwan could then have taken part in the organization's deliberations.

We in the Bloc Québécois also note the pacifist tone of Bill C-357. We would point out that the dispute between Taiwan and mainland China will not be resolved with prayers. It will take a disarmament agreement in the case of geographic areas of potential confrontation. No one is fooled and no one forgets the constant threat. We believe that relations between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan can improve only through dialogue and diplomacy.

We in the Bloc Québécois reiterate our affection for and great friendship with both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. We think that a peaceful settlement of the disputes will lead to a valuable solution.

In summary, the Bloc Québécois supports this bill in principle for the following reasons. First, it will strengthen economic, trade and cultural relations between Quebec, Canada and Taiwan. The Bloc also supports Taiwan's participation in certain international organizations. The conditions for its participation can be discussed and decisions made on a case-by-case basis. Regarding the International Civil Aviation Organization for instance, major legal tangles could ensue if Taiwan's participation in that organization were not recognized de facto. Allowing Taiwan to act as an observer in major international forums will facilitate communication.

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I want to refer again to the bill's pacifist tone; it does speak of disarmament and dialogue. We all agree with that. Besides, and this may be the bill's greatest strength, there is hardly any diplomatic risk involved since this bill is modelled after a 1979 U.S. bill maintaining the status quo to preserve friendly relations with both Taiwan and China.

Thus, we want to restate our feelings of friendship not only for the Chinese people, with whom we will continue to do business, of course, but also for the Taiwanese people. We believe that we must continue in this direction.

In conclusion, for all the reasons I just stated, the Bloc Québécois supports referring Bill C-357 to committee for further study, and we support the principle of this bill.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate in the debate on Bill C-357, an act to provide for an improved framework for economic, trade, cultural and other initiatives between the people of Canada and the people of Taiwan, the short title being the Taiwan affairs act, as introduced by the member for Kootenay—Columbia.

At the outset, the NDP supports the bill in principle. We want to see it go to committee where there can be a full and careful discussion and maybe see some possible improvements that we would bring forward at that time. New Democrats believe that greater clarity on these issues needs to be encouraged and that the bill will help us be clearer about our relationships with Taiwan. That would be a good thing.

This past weekend Taiwan held elections for its national assembly. It was again another demonstration of the healthy and vigorous democracy that has grown in Taiwan. I think everyone in Canada celebrates that achievement. I know many people in my riding of Burnaby—Douglas have been assisting in the development of democracy in Taiwan and it is very important to them.

A key principle of Bill C-357 is excellent relations between Canada and the People's Republic of China and Canada and the people of Taiwan. I want to quote from clause 3(a) of the bill which outlines this principle. It states:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of Canada to

(a) preserve and promote extensive, close and friendly commercial, cultural and other relations between the people of Canada and the people of Taiwan, as well as those of the People's Republic of China...

It begins with ensuring that we maintain our relationships with both the People's Republic of China and the people of Taiwan. This principle is crucial to people in my riding originally from Taiwan and from the People's Republic of China. This principle, as well as ensuring peace and security in the region, is crucial to folks in Burnaby—Douglas. They want to ensure that our relations in this area build on these foundations.

I want to discuss a key recommendation of the bill which is found in clause 9. It deals with Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization. Three times now the House or one of its committees has called for Taiwan to have observer status at the World Health Organization. Despite support on those three occasions for that observer status, Canada opposed it last year at the World Health

Assembly, the international body that discusses World Health Organization policy. Unfortunately, Canada did not act on the recommendations of the House or its committees.

The World Health Assembly is currently meeting. Hopefully Canada will support Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization at this year's meeting. We heard the member for Kootenay—Columbia say this morning that it sounds like the whole discussion of Taiwan's participation did not make it on the agenda. We hope the Government of Canada is taking steps to see that makes the agenda at that important meeting.

New Democrats strongly support Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization. Our foreign affairs critic, the member for Halifax, has a motion on the order paper which states:

That...the government should support the granting of observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization (WHO) and should support the establishment of a UN working group to facilitate Taiwan's effective participation in the WHO, reaping benefits for both the international community and the Taiwanese through shared knowledge and equality of access to health care information

That is a pretty straightforward statement of our hope around Taiwan's participation.

As well, my predecessor Svend Robinson last year before the election wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He pointed out some of the important reasons why Taiwan should participate as an observer at the World Health Organization. He pointed out an incident that happened in 1998. In the letter he stated:

—in 1998, an outbreak of the Enterovirus infection in Taiwan took the lives of 78 children. In the midst of the outbreak, as panicked parents turned to their government for help, Taiwan turned to the WHO. The request for information was ignored because Taiwan is not a member of the WHO, and the children continued to die.

● (1155)

That is a pretty dramatic example of why it is important for Taiwan to have a connection to the World Health Organization and why it is important for Canada to advocate for that.

Back on April 30, I was pleased to participate in a press conference with over 20 Taiwanese community organizations on the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, along with some members of Parliament, including my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster. We called for the inclusion of Taiwan at the World Health Organization through observer status. We were very clear at that meeting about the importance of that.

The World Health Organization's mandate is to provide assistance, service and protection in health related matters to all human beings, regardless of their political affiliations. This is very important to all of us, especially given the close connections that now exist across this planet, the easy connections and travel now possible between countries. Certainly there is ease of travel between Taiwan and Canada with many direct airline links.

The world is a much smaller place than it was in years gone by. That seems to change almost day by day. We know diseases such as SARS and the avian flu do not respect international or political boundaries. That is why it is crucial for organizations like the World Health Organization to be representative of all people of the planet.

All neighbours should participate in important decisions. It would be crazy, in any of our neighbourhoods, cities or towns in Canada, to say that certain neighbours do not have something to say about important community decisions. Essentially that is happening with Taiwan being unable to participate in the World Health Organization.

At the press conference I said that because of the importance of health considerations and because of the smallness of our planet, it was really a no-brainer that Taiwan should be an observer at the World Health Organization, and I stand by that comment. It is a no-brainer that on key issues of health, a group of 23 million people on the planet should have access to the discussions and resources of that organization. Other groups do. It would not be an unusual step, given that the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Knights of Malta, the Vatican and the International Committee of the Red Cross already are observers at the World Health Organization.

This is an important component of the bill. We need to ensure that this aspect of it, along with all other issues that it raises, is given a thorough discussion. I know the members of the Taiwanese community in my constituency would like me to highlight as well that the bill calls for the possibility of private visits by the president and other senior officials of Taiwan. This has been very important to the Taiwanese community and merits our serious consideration. We are glad this is part of the bill before us today.

We in the NDP strongly support the discussion of the bill. We support it in principle and want to see it get to the committee. We want to encourage clarity in our relationships in Asia and in our relationship with Taiwan. We think the bill is a good start to getting that on the agenda.

We look forward to participating in the discussion. We want to ensure that the people of Canada and the people of Taiwan enjoy a happy, productive and healthy relationship in the future. That is why we want to see the bill go to committee for discussion.

•(1200)

**Mr. John Duncan (Vancouver Island North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak to Bill C-357 today. I really appreciated the comments of the member for Kootenay—Columbia and those of members of the Bloc and the NDP.

I would like to address the question about Mongolia that was put by the Liberal member to the bill's sponsor. This bill emphasizes Taiwan, which has now become a member of the World Trade Organization. In that capacity Taiwan was closely defined and the definition excluded Mongolia or any place like that. All of the voting for democracy and presidential elections clearly includes people in Taiwan. That is the intent of governance.

The member for Victoria spoke to this legislation. He talked about Canadian foreign policy not being made in Beijing. I will place some doubt in that member's mind with something I want to present today. I think we should be taking sides and the side we should be taking is that of human rights.

Bill C-357 was tabled by my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia. He is taking some flak from status quo interests who are putting trade before principle. I have no doubt there will be members of the House of Commons who will be ducking for cover. I specifically want to offer to the member for Kootenay—Columbia

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my respect and appreciation for his pursuing this bill as private members' business.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of International Trade as well as the last two Prime Ministers have been very cute in their public statements and responses in the House of Commons on Taiwan. While they have expressed appreciation for Taiwan's achievements in human rights, freedom and democracy and respect for the rule of law, they have not stretched their necks one centimetre to reward Taiwan for its great advances. Rather, they have continued to not support World Health Assembly status for Taiwan, despite three express wishes of members of Parliament.

They have refused to sign agreements of mutual assistance between Taiwan and Canada because "they are not allowed under Canadian law". Exactly. That is self-fulfilling. That is what Bill C-357 is all about. They have also refused travel visas for senior government officials from Taiwan, such as the president, the vice-president, the defence minister, and the foreign affairs minister. This is a blanket no.

There are now 150,000 Taiwanese immigrants settled in Canada. We know that in this population of 150,000 there are a few criminal elements who have escaped justice in Taiwan by moving to Canada. By the Canadian government's statements there is no Canadian law to authorize an agreement on mutual legal assistance to apprehend cross-border criminals. Bill C-357 would pre-empt this state of affairs.

Canada's image in the international community has certainly suffered over the last 12 years. Prior to this we punched above our weight in the international arena militarily and on human rights, freedom and democracy issues. This legacy, which was hard earned and too easily spent, is essential to recover once again. It is generally the deep-seated conviction of Canadians that we should operate from principle. Canada's posture toward Taiwan has been atrocious. Bill C-357 would rectify some of the imbalance.

We all know that Canada's treatment of Taiwan can be directly attributed to objections from the People's Republic of China. I will demonstrate how far the Canadian government will go to curry favour with the government of the People's Republic of China.

•(1205)

I have a letter which the government wishes I did not have. I want to read this letter into the record. It was written on June 14, 2002 by Allan Rock, who was the minister of industry at the time, to Esta Resnick, who was the barrister and solicitor for the Department of Justice in Vancouver. It states:

### Government Orders

Dear Ms. Resnick,

In reference to our telephone conversation, May 30, 2002 regarding Lai Cheong-sing et al, I would like to take this opportunity to compliment you on your continued efforts to have these undesirable fugitives removed from Canada.

This case has significant political repercussions and potential effects on all facets of Canada's relationship with The People's Republic of China. In recent conversations with Mr. Joseph Caron, Canada's Ambassador to The People's Republic of China, the Ambassador stressed the importance of a successful deportation and extradition of these undesirables. As well, he noted this case could have direct implications to Canada's future diplomatic and trade relations with the PRC government.

Please keep me apprised of any future developments in this case and I wish you every success in your worthy pursuit.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Rock, P.C., M.P.

This letter implicates the industry minister at the time, our justice department and our ambassador to China as all being primarily concerned with keeping good future diplomatic and trade relations with the PRC government with a blind eye to human rights.

These individuals collectively passed judgment on Mr. Lai in Vancouver at a time when he was under refugee application and who to this day has never been charged with anything by Canada. This letter was requested by the legal counsel for Mr. Lai through ATI but the government could find no record of it.

The Canadian government should be looking at human rights, not economic advantage. When the former minister of industry, now the Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, Allan Rock, who has recently spoken out on human rights abuses in Africa, contrary to his behaviour in this letter, writes to the counsel of the Department of Justice and confirms a conversation with the Canadian Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, then we know that all government departments and cabinet are tilted and that when it comes to catering to China, trade trumps human rights.

As a matter of fact, the minister sounds like a good lapdog for the Chinese government. This letter makes it clear that the overriding issue for the Government of Canada is the appeasing of the Beijing regime for purely economic reasons.

The legal counsel for Citizenship and Immigration Canada was being instructed to ensure deportation despite a preponderance of evidence that the refugee claimant could not possibly get a fair trial in China and would be subject to torture. It is clear that Ms. Resnick did all of this. One has to wonder why the Minister of Industry at the time was even involved since the client for Ms. Resnick was Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

I want to go one step further. I want to talk about the actions of the counsel for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the same Ms. Resnick to whom the June 14, 2002 letter I read into the record was addressed. Ms. Resnick breached her undertaking in a Canadian court before a Canadian Federal Court judge that witnesses in China, specifically in Shanghai, whose testimony was tabled by affidavit would be protected and remain confidential.

I have brought the case of Tao Mi up in the House of Commons on two earlier occasions with no satisfactory response as to why the Government of Canada broke this promise. Tao Mi was sold out by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Contrary to its undertakings in

a Canadian court she was betrayed to the Chinese police in Shanghai and has not been heard of since. There are very likely others who were betrayed in the very same case. We have no way to know for sure.

● (1210)

This is all quite appalling. If Canadians knew the details, they would be shocked. The role the Canadian government has continued to play in this is to try to cover it up. It is a long and sordid story.

The bill will go some way to redress what is an unbalanced situation. We should operate from principle. Canadians should be proud of this bill.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** 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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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO MAKE CERTAIN PAYMENTS

The House resumed from May 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss Bill C-48. At the same time, I am also sad with what has gone on. Through my presentation I will allude to that simply because we are given the opportunity once a week to go home to our ridings and gauge with our constituents, hear their views and comments, given the unusual circumstances that are unfolding here in this honourable chamber, and come back and work with our colleagues to see how we can positively move forward initiatives, efforts that the government brings forward for the betterment of our country, our people, our youth, our seniors and every other generation in between, so we can continue staying at the pinnacle where our country has been for many years.

As I said in the past, it is no coincidence that our country is recognized as one of the best countries in the world in which to live.

Today I will be speaking to Bill C-48 which proposes investments from unplanned surpluses. What this means primarily is that, as the Liberal government traditionally has done in the past, it looks to making the right kind of key investments within our Canadian society basically because Canada as a whole has been recognized and noted as a very different country, a compassionate, caring and giving country, a country that always comes to the calling and always stands up, whether it be domestically or internationally.

In past budgets the government has made significant investments in priority programs such as social programs. At the same time, this bill is simply an extension of what we traditionally have done in the past.

*Government Orders*

I will make two or three brief points of what this bill would do.

This bill, first, invests in, as I have put it in the past, the future of our country, which is our youth. In essence, it supports post-secondary education, post-secondary programs. What better investment can we make? We talk about staying competitive as a nation. We talk about creating a smart society. We talk about creating a society that is productive, peaceful, safe and secure. That is where this investment, I believe, would bear fruit.

Beyond that, what would it also do? It supports areas such as transportation, for which the cities, for example, have continuously asked us for support. We know very well that a strong city makes for a strong province and, as a result, makes for a strong country. We have that obligation.

Housing, which is important, is another element of Bill C-48. What best can families or individuals have, as we have often said, than a roof over their heads, which is the foundation of any safe society. This government, in its wisdom and in consultation with other parties, said that we must move forward on this issue and we are doing so.

Another area is our environment. If we do not look after the environment today, 10, 20, 30 years down the road we will be saying, "God, what mistakes. What did we do?" We hear how our health system is being impeded. We have an aging population. Any initiative toward protecting our environment is a great investment, and that is part of what Bill C-48 would do.

A nation is not only noted for what it does within its borders. A nation also gains respect by what it does outside its borders.

In Canada, historically speaking, Prime Minister Pearson did not receive the Nobel Peace Prize just because he was the prime minister of Canada. He received it because he stood above the rest. His initiatives then make us proud today as a nation.

●(1215)

We cannot just take one step forward and then take ten steps back. As difficult as it is sometimes, if we want to be international players, if I might use that word, we need to participate and there are different ways of participating. We can provide physical presence, which our proud military has done and performed so well over the years, but just being there is one aspect of it. There has to be financial support at the same time.

Bill C-48 in essence would do that as well. Our military has repeatedly said that if they are being asked to do a job and to put their lives at stake they need support and Bill C-48 would do that.

Our foreign aid contribution is toward our military. We have heard that over 300,000 people have lost their lives in Darfur. We cannot sit back and say that we do not care. We do care. Aside from caring, we talk about creating security for our nation. If we have nations that are hurting, rest assured that the hurt will be expressed in different ways, and generally it is not in a good way.

If we help these nations find peace, security, stability and economic development where their people can seek work that will give them the opportunity to provide food and shelter for their

families, they then will have no need to go out and react in adverse ways which does harm to nations such as ours.

If we create a stable and secure environment in Darfur for example, or other hot spots, we would in essence create security for Canada. Those obligations are part of Bill C-48 as well.

As Bill C-48 unfolded we know the New Democratic Party was very supportive, and I believe it still is. Some very good proposals came from the New Democratic Party. It is said that in order to be a good healer one must be a good listener. The Prime Minister and this Liberal government has been listening. Maybe not all the proposals are good but surely some good can come out of listening and in this case a lot of good has come out of it, good that has been applauded by Canadians. I know because I hear about it in my riding.

Once a week, as I have said, we have the opportunity to go back to our ridings to be with our families and talk to our constituents. We receive calls, emails and letters. People in a free and democratic society, like the one we have in Canada, have the right to express their views, whether we agree or disagree is beside the point. Through Bill C-48, the message is very simple. We have listened and we have responded in the way the vast majority of Canadians want.

Another element I omitted, which is very important, is that Bill C-48 would enhance small and medium sized enterprises. When we first assumed government after the election of October 1993, we said that the engine that drives the economy is the small and medium sized enterprises. The bill contains tax reforms with respect to small and medium sized enterprises.

Larger corporations have benefits coming down the road, I believe slotted for 2008. It is not like it has just disappeared and we are only looking at one segment. Let us not forget that the vast majority of jobs have been created through the small and medium sized enterprises, and the government in Bill C-48 does that as well.

Now that I have talked a little bit about Bill C-48, I want to get into what is happening here. We have a moral obligation, if I may put it that way, to bring to this honourable chamber the views, frustrations, call it whatever, from our constituents.

In the past several weeks I have heard comments like, "God, it's like kindergarten all over again in that chamber. They are a bunch of rowdies, a bunch of grown up kids". It makes me so sad and it hurts me to hear these comments. However I have to accept them because that is what is happening here in this honourable chamber.

●(1220)

One example is what happened last week when a motion was put in the House. The Leader of the Opposition, for some odd reason, did not get his way and he just got up and walked out. This reminds me of the bully on the street who comes out to play hockey and when he does not get his way he takes his ball, his net and he leaves.

That is not how we build a nation nor is it how we find compromise. When the going gets tough, the tough get going and they sit in this chamber and debate. Members stand up in the House and express their views if they want their constituents to know exactly what is going on.

*Government Orders*

Over the past several weeks people have said that Parliament is not functioning. People want Bill C-43 and Bill C-48 to move forward. There are great ideas in these bills. Bill C-43, which I will not get into, what a budget. It has been continuously applauded throughout the country. There was not one area that was not covered. Even in a small way tax relief was covered.

The reason tax relief was not covered, if I may remind my hon. colleague, is that in the 2000 budget the largest tax relief in the history of our country was put forward; a five year program of \$100 billion. Today, in 2005, we are into the fifth year of that five year program. I say that it does not make sense to add another tax relief budget when this country is in the fifth year of that five year program.

This government has produced not only balanced budgets and eliminated the deficit way in advance, but we have provided seven consecutive balanced budgets. This is unheard of in the history of our country. This government has provided surpluses never heard of before. These surpluses have given us the opportunity to reinvest in the country. For example, the Romanow report, a very good report, not only did we meet that report and its request, but we exceeded that report and the expectations.

We have the cities agenda, need I say more. Supposedly \$400 million was allocated in the last budget and that amount has been jacked up to \$600 million. Why? It is because more money was there.

What did we do with it? We have no deficit and the debt has been reduced faster than anyone ever expected. I believe in 1993 the debt to GDP ratio was at 71% or 72% and today we are below 50%. It is projected that in the next four or five years it will be at 25% or 26%. No country out there can say that. In the G-7 we are the most advanced country in terms of job growth, surpluses and balanced budgets and we have the fastest growing economy. We have invested wisely in the new economy. We have invested in research chairs as no other country has done before.

We have these so-called clusters of excellence situated throughout the country. Universities have benefited tremendously. We have been able not only to retain the best and the brightest, but we have been able to attract the best and the brightest.

I remember visiting the Hospital for Sick Children a couple of years ago when I was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of industry in relation to an investment that we made in cancer research for youth. A highly regarded specialist from England was there and I asked him why he came to Canada. He said that it was because the best was here. He said that the government had invested, that we were on the right track and that as a professional it was here that he could do better work.

We often do not talk about these stories but the time has come to talk about these stories and really call a spade a spade.

Today we find ourselves in the very unusual situation where we come with great interest in this House to debate. Yes, we will argue with the opposition. Yes, we will debate. Yes, the temperature gets a little bit high. The nature of this environment is that we yell and scream sometimes in frustration.

● (1225)

I apologize for that to Canadians and to my constituents, but we only experience what we do because we are in this chamber. When we have so-called immunity, we are protected in the House and we say what we want to say and get away with it. Who are we really hurting? We are hurting the average Canadian and that is the sad part about it.

Let me give one example, if I may. The other day I was watching a news program on CBC. The member for Calgary Centre-North was on the tube and he had the audacity again to say that his constituents wanted an election. He was being intellectually dishonest by saying that because he was on the tube a week before that when the House was in recess. He went home, supposedly, to gauge his constituents and to determine if they wanted an election. The first thing that was shown on television was the hon. member unpacking and setting up his campaign office. The reporter asked him what he was doing because he was supposedly there to gauge his constituents and to get a sense of what they wanted him to do.

We have often been told by members of the opposition, the new Conservative Party, that they will represent their constituents, and say and do what their constituents want them to do. The hon. member went home and opened up a campaign office. What did he do then? He went out on the street to canvass his constituents about the election and 9 out of 10 constituents told him, on television, that they did not want an election. They did not want another \$350 million wasted for an election that is not necessary. The 10th constituent did not really care because he or she was probably turned off. The hon. member then came back to the chamber and said that his constituents wanted us to have an election. That is malarkey. I dare the Conservative Party to go back and look at exactly what happened that day.

I have to get back to the bill because there is important stuff here. The transport critic made a comment. He is a good friend of mine who worked very well on committee. Look what we have done on reducing rents at airports. We see that things are different and times have changed. We are trying to accommodate, we are trying to help out, and we are trying to make things work. That is the problem.

We have been trying to get to the bill for a long time. I have been trying to get on my feet to talk about the bill for a long time. What do opposition members do? They interrupt proceedings and shut the House down.

*Government Orders*

This reminds me of a saying that the future is always affected by the past. Let us go back in history for a moment on a bill like this and what happened? We had an unholy alliance before this one. We had Mr. Mulroney, who was in cahoots with the separatists to form government. What happened? We had the birth of the Reform Party to break up the country. We have now gone full cycle and the Reform came together and kicked out the Conservatives. It is now in bed with the Bloc Québécois and all of a sudden, the country simply is not working. We have been asking for weeks to put forth Bill C-48 and we cannot do it.

The bill wants to work. The budget has so many good things in it. I have talked to students who told me they want a good education because they deserve a good education.

I ask the opposition and all members in the House to do the right thing for the good of our youth, the environment, housing, cities, and for the good of the country. These investments make sense, especially when members agreed to support the budget bill, Bill C-43.

• (1230)

If they support Bill C-43, there is no reason why they cannot support Bill C-48, simply because Bill C-48 has what I alluded to a couple of minutes ago. If they come back and say they do not want to support Bill C-48, they are saying they are not supporting our youth, transportation and the environment. That is what they are saying.

Therefore, I move:

That this question be now put.

• (1235)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** The motion is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Medicine Hat.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to address Bill C-48. It pains me to see how bitter and angry my friend across the way is over all of this. I do not think that flatters him. These are important issues, but they should not cause people to be so poisoned that they lash out the way my friend has across the way.

I want to go to the substance of what he has said in his remarks, correct some of the things that he said, and ask if he will acknowledge that perhaps he has erred in telling the House some of the things he has said.

He said a minute ago that there is going to be money in Bill C-48 going to the military. That is not true, of course. That is absolutely incorrect. In fact, Bill C-48 will ensure that money cannot go to the military because it jacks up spending so much. Not only does this bill hurt the military, families, homemakers, small business people, children, it hurts people who care about this country and that is what bothers me. My friend is selling Canadians a bill of goods and I must correct a few of the other things he has said.

He said that this is about democracy. He made a case about why we need to deal with this right away and why we need to pass it. I must point out that the government took away the supply days of the opposition in an attempt to subvert democracy. We have not had a

supply day since April 7 in this place. That is something that democracy in this country hinges upon. If people care about democracy, they cannot accept what my friend has just said.

My friend talked about Darfur and the need to get money to Darfur, but we find out that the government of Sudan has said no to the government's plan to send money and troops to Darfur. In fact, this is one of those cases where the government tried very hard to buy the vote of a single member with this big spending announcement. It was so anxious to do so that it forgot to check with the actual country that this money and these troops were supposed to go to, which I think does not really flatter the government. In fact, it sort of speaks to a hidden agenda—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** The hon. member for Mississauga South on a point of order.

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I think that if you check with the Table, the allegation or the indictment that someone has bought off a member is clearly either a violation of parliamentary rules or at least the Canada Elections Act. This imputation of criminal activity is inappropriate and the member should withdraw that reference.

• (1240)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** My understanding is that the hon. member for Medicine Hat was not pointing at a member in particular, but I would certainly recommend to be very prudent with such remarks.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, let me be more explicit so that people understand. Let us just put it this way. The member from Edmonton wanted money for Darfur. The next day there was an announcement that a whole bunch of money would go to Darfur. It just happens that this is on the eve of a very important vote that could be decided by a single member, so people can draw their own conclusions.

Will the member admit that Bill C-48 actually contradicts everything that the finance minister said up to the point that Bill C-48 was announced?

The finance minister said that he could not change the budget. It could not be cherry-picked. It could not be stripped away piece by piece. He said that we had to have corporate tax cuts because corporate tax cuts were a tax on large employers. They would create 340,000 jobs for Canadians. Will he admit that Bill C-48 completely contradicts and undermines his own finance minister?

**Mr. John Cannis:** Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong. Let me say that name calling is the last resort of fools. We will let Canadians judge who the fools are out there.

The member talked about democracy. Solon was the founder of democracy and I know what democracy is all about. We have been trying to deliver a report on emerging markets in committee and the Conservatives deliberately, in a premeditated way, stymied that activity, therefore hurting the nation.

In answer to his question, he is wrong because this budget continues to complement what Bill C-43 did. For example, it will continue to pay down the debt. It will continue to invest in the right areas. It will continue to do the right things. It simply adds on.

*Government Orders*

It does not take away from any of the commitments that the Minister of Finance has brought forward in Bill C-43. We have simply taken it a step further by saying that we will support post-secondary education, transportation and enhance housing initiatives.

When it comes to the military, he is wrong again because it does not take away from the military. I do not think he was listening when I said that it is one thing to send troops over there and not be able to help them. These moneys have been designated under military. I believe that any individual going over to do an assignment, whether it is policing, education or peacekeeping, is part of our military, unless he wants to start dissecting and saying this military person strictly does administrative work and another military person drives a tank. No, it is all military.

I do not see where he is coming from in saying the military loses money. How can it lose money when money is being put in? That is the Conservatives' math, which Canadians have finally understood.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I listen to the speeches from Liberal members with regard to either the NDP bill or Liberal Bill C-43, it does not matter which one we are talking about.

I have yet to hear one single word about agriculture and the destitute farmers who are standing in front of the parliamentary buildings today in the hundreds, if not thousands. There will be thousands by the weekend. These are destitute people, who have had nothing from this government or any budget except broad announcements and no cheques.

I want the member to listen to this. Just yesterday I received a photocopy of a cheque that was received by a farmer in my riding. He and his wife have been working the farm since 2003, trying to put food on the table to feed their three children, working many hours trying to maintain a farm and live off of it. They applied for the money that was announced in 2003. Yesterday, in a little brown envelope, the cheque arrived from the government. They opened it expecting thousands. It cost them a lot to even prepare this document. The sum of the cheque was \$140.06.

I wonder if the member could explain to me, after all these billions of dollars in announcements, how a destitute family, which is only a small example, and if he does not believe me he can go out in front of the building today and talk to the thousands of people out there who are not—

• (1245)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Marcel Proulx):** The hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

**Mr. John Cannis:** Mr. Speaker, of the members I respect over there, it is that member who always speaks from the heart, but we on this side do care as well.

Let us not forget that in 2004-05, \$1 billion was put into the fiscal framework. That money was put in. I do not know the specific case he has referred to and cannot comment because I am not the administrator. The one thing I know is that the government was called to the floor and responded with \$1 billion.

If the provinces chose not to participate and do their share or carry out their obligations, that is their problem not ours. The government

was called upon and \$1 billion was put in to support farmers. That is a fact.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Acadie—Bathurst.

I rise to speak in favour of Bill C-48, which will provide Canadians with some much needed money for important areas of social spending. It is important to note that when Canadians talked about things that were really important to them and their lives, the New Democratic Party listened and worked hard to get their issues on the government's agenda. This is an example of how we can work closely with groups and our communities to bring important things forward.

We heard from groups across Canada who told us that this is a good deal for Canadians. I would like to quote from a policy paper from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, entitled "Can We Afford It? The Case for the New 2005 Federal Budget". It states:

In a context in which many forms of social spending have been neglected for so many years, the revised budget addresses a number of glaring priorities. Its provisions for affordable housing construction and support to provinces to reduce the costs of post-secondary tuition help to fill significant holes in the February budget.

Additional funds for international development, energy retrofits and public transit are also welcome supplements to the original budget. These funding commitments not only provide important social investments, but also address some of the election commitments made by the Liberals in the 2004 election campaign. And since the Liberal Party did not include corporate tax relief in their election platform, we are pleased to see the removal of these costly tax cuts.

The agreement negotiated with the NDP builds on some of the other positive developments in the original February budget bill. For example, the commitment of \$5 billion over five years is an important step toward establishing a pan-Canadian child care program. The transfer of gas taxes to municipalities will help to renew Canada's deteriorating municipal infrastructure and to create jobs.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is a voice that has done a great deal of good work over the years in analyzing budgets. It has some very credible economists who are able to bring a more balanced blend to the kind of government spending we are talking about.

I would like to focus on the first area: affordable housing. This agreement will provide \$1.6 billion for housing, with a focus on aboriginal housing agreements. In my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan, we have one of the largest concentrations of on reserve first nations in Canada. It is a growing and vital community with many young families needing their own homes.

This agreement sets aside some of that \$1.6 billion specifically for a dedicated fund for aboriginal housing construction to improve the appalling living conditions many aboriginal people face. This money is not contingent upon provincial matching funds, since this requirement has been proven to fail in the delivery of affordable housing construction. This money is not to supplant any money already promised to aboriginal communities.



*Government Orders*

I need to talk specifically about some of the conditions on some of the reserves in Nanaimo—Cowichan. They are shameful. We would expect some of these conditions to be seen in developing countries, not in a very rich country like Canada. Some of the housing on first nations reserves in British Columbia is shocking. In my riding, raw sewage is running through front yards. Water has to be boiled before drinking. Dumps are leaching into the water table. First nations have mould in their homes and face substandard housing construction.

It is outrageous that we have these kinds of conditions in this day and age in Canada. I applaud the fact that the New Democratic Party was able to work toward having funds committed to aboriginal housing.

The February 2001 report by the B.C. Ministry of Social Development, entitled “Homelessness—Causes & Effects”, a lovely title, talked about an insufficient supply of affordable housing. The report stated:

An insufficient supply of affordable housing is the key factor contributing to homelessness in British Columbia. While existing housing policies and programs are exemplary compared to some other provinces, the supply [of housing] remains insufficient. The existing stock of affordable housing is a valuable resource. However, this stock...continues to be vulnerable to demolition and conversion despite some positive provincial and local government actions to preserve it.

BC Housing's waiting list for social housing consists of approximately 10,500 individuals—

Let me repeat: the waiting list consists of 10,500 individuals. The statement continued:

—an increase of 50 per cent since the federal withdrawal from new housing supply. (This does not include those on non-profit and co-op housing waiting lists).

HOMES BC unit allocations, while a step in the right direction, are insufficient to fill the gap left by the federal government. New stock continues to be essential, particularly with a focus on those who are homeless and at risk of homelessness. Rent subsidies do not address the issues of supply.

● (1250)

The most frequently used method of counting and describing the homeless is through the use of emergency shelter records. This approach does not capture the full extent of homelessness. It excludes those who do not use shelters but sleep 'rough' and specific sub-groups such as women, youth and Aboriginal people for whom there are few suitable shelters.

Women and children are said to be the 'invisible homeless.' They avoid living on the street or using emergency shelters by doubling up with other families or living in inadequate accommodation. However, shelter data often tends to be the best information available.

I want to add a couple of other facts. We know that affordable housing has wide-ranging impacts on people's lives. We have an affordable housing unit in Nanaimo that has demonstrated how this can save us health care dollars. This affordable housing unit is for people who are emotionally or mentally disadvantaged. Studies on this housing unit have shown that having adequate quality housing improves people's quality of life. A pre- and post-study was done on this housing shelter. Before people had access to this very high quality housing unit, the number of hospital stays and also the length of time in a hospital were substantially different than they were after they had access.

The study done on people after they had access to the unit showed that both the number of times people were admitted to hospital and the length of time they spent in hospital were substantially decreased. This was directly attributable to having safe, secure,

affordable housing in their neighbourhood, with access to all the services that they needed. We need to see more of this.

This budget agreement also includes \$1.5 billion to reduce the cost of post-secondary education for students and their families. Again I have to talk about my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan. The average amount of student debt among British Columbia university graduates was \$20,100, which exceeds the national average of \$18,900. For college students, the average amount of student debt among British Columbia graduates was \$11,400, which was slightly less than the national average debt of \$12,700, but it is still a very high amount.

Everything we look at points to the need to have quality, affordable, accessible education in order for Canada to remain a competitive economic unit in the world. Our students must be able to attend college and university and come out without crushing debt loads, which means that they cannot actively participate in their communities. Students with high debt loads cannot do things such as get a mortgage for a house or buy an automobile. We must be able to provide quality, affordable, accessible education for our students and we must move on that quickly.

We just need to point to the example in Ireland, where post-secondary education was made broadly available to students. Now people are talking about the economic success of Ireland, of which education was a key factor.

The final point I would like to discuss is the \$900 million for environmental initiatives such as the energy retrofit program, which helps homeowners reduce energy bills and pollution through efficiency, and a 1% increase in the gas tax transfer to municipalities for public transit, recognizing our cities' central role in building a strong economy.

I was previously a municipal councillor. Our community has struggled with providing adequate public transit. Many parts of our community do not have access to public transit. This kind of environmental initiative is absolutely critical in maintaining the efficiency and accessibility of our communities.

In conclusion, I would urge all members of the House to support Bill C-48. This bill is an important step forward in making Canadians' lives more livable. We talk about quality of life and we talk about things such as social determinants of health, but let me say that people need to have access to housing and they need to have access to affordable education. And we certainly want to make sure that our children and our children's children have access to clean air and clean water.

I urge all members of the House to support Bill C-48. Let us demonstrate to Canadians that we can actually work together and get something done.

● (1255)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to ask a question of the member across. I believe that the budget bill, Bill C-48, does not deal with the concerns of Canadians. I think it misses opportunities. It is a lot of misdirected talk but no action.

*Government Orders*

For example, we have heard about the Liberals' desire to focus on clean air and clean water, but it is only the Conservatives who, in action, have been fighting for clean air, clean water and a clean environment. Let me give an example. In the Fraser Valley we have an issue of air pollution. Just 500 metres from our border is the Sumas Energy 2 project, which wants to pump tonnes of pollutants into the air. It was the Conservatives, and not the NDP or the Liberals, who fought against it.

As well, the Liberals and the NDP have had years to stop the dumping of raw sewage into our oceans. Have they done anything? They had the opportunity. They were in government, they have done nothing and now we are talking about them dumping in more money and making more empty promises to Canadians.

I will give another example. I would like to have the hon. member across the way tell me about the compassionate care program to keep loved ones together in the last days of their lives. This is something that we have been fighting for; I have a resident in my riding of Langley that I am fighting for. It is the Conservatives who have been putting pressure on this government to come up with a solution to this problem. Unfortunately, the NDP has been doing nothing and what the government has proposed is to reduce the funding from \$191 million to \$11 million. People are dying. They need loved ones to take care of them. Why are we not seeing that in Bill C-48?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Madam Speaker, there are a couple of things I would like to address.

Although there are some grave problems with the current implementation of the EI bill around compassionate care, it is actually the NDP member for Sackville—Eastern Shore who has worked hard to have that included in the EI legislation right from the beginning.

I would urge all members of this House to look at what is happening with the compassionate care bill and make sure that the rules are changed in order to accommodate the people who are currently left out of that bill. The NDP has worked hard on making sure that the social safety net is there. The member for Acadie—Bathurst has been a tireless champion of reforms to EI. We will continue to work hard to protect those people who have so little voice.

When it comes to talking about Kyoto, let me say that the NDP Kyoto plan has been touted by environmental groups all over the country as having vision and leadership for Kyoto. I could be mistaken, but I believe I have heard many people from across the House talking about the fact that they do not believe we should sign on to the Kyoto protocol.

I would urge all members to get behind the Kyoto protocol and to work hard to make sure that the Kyoto protocol is implemented as of yesterday, not wait for another several years so that we cannot possibly meet our targets. I think the Kyoto protocol is an example of how we can work with business and other organizations in order to make Canada a leader in things like alternative energy sources. We could be leaders in manufacturing this kind of equipment instead of being foot-draggers like we have been and are currently.

I urge us to step forward and demonstrate to the rest of the world that Canada can meet its commitments and can be proactive. It

would include things like making sure students have access to quality education so they can take the environmental and technology programs that will help them become those leaders.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-48, an act to amend Bill C-43, the Budget Implementation Act, 2005.

After two days of negotiation, the leader of the NDP managed to convince this minority government to allocate \$4.6 billion to ordinary citizens. The Conservative Party across the way says this agreement should not have been made. I hope Canadians, social housing organizations and students in Canada will remember that the Conservatives said there should be no changes made to the budget, or Bill C-43.

Do not forget that before the end of the reading of the budget in the House of Commons, the leader of the Conservatives left the House and announced that his party could never vote against this budget because it was good. However, he was singing a different tune when it came time for the leader of the NDP to negotiate with the minority Liberal government to make changes to the budget that would help ordinary citizens.

Since 1992, and even before then, since the days of Brian Mulroney, Parliament has introduced cuts in budgets, which have left Canada in a human deficit. The leader of the Conservatives said he could vote in favour of the Liberal budget, Bill C-43, but he describes Bill C-48 as abysmal. He even said the Prime Minister had made a deal with the devil and that we needed another election to put him out of his misery.

That was in the middle of a week when he was supposed to be finding out whether Canadians wanted an election. He is ignoring what Canadians want since 61% of Canadians have said no to holding a general election at this time.

They want the budget to pass. Most of them want the proposed changes to be made to the budget, especially changes that impact affordable housing. How can anyone say no to affordable housing? This issue involves people in the street who need housing here, in Canada, one of the most beautiful countries in the world. We have reached a point where we have a human deficit.

In the past, when I used to go to Toronto, I never saw anyone sleeping in front of city hall on cardboard boxes or on hotel heating vents in the middle of the street or on the sidewalk. No one ever saw that. Now, this is happening in Montreal, where we see people on the street. We have to provide them with homeless shelters, in the absence of real homes.

*Government Orders*

How can there be opposition to Bill C-48? It might give people the chance to have a home. Some \$1.6 billion would be invested in affordable housing. How can the Conservatives oppose such changes, today? It is disgraceful. They should be ashamed of opposing a \$1.6 billion investment in the construction of affordable housing. They should be ashamed of saying no to \$1.5 billion to reduce the cost of post-secondary education of our dear students, who are our children. They should be ashamed to say that they are unable to support such a budget.

I hope that, today, Canadians understand this and know who the Conservatives will be representing. They will be representing the major corporations. They were angry when they realized that the income tax reduction from 21% to 19% would apply not to major corporations, but solely to ordinary Canadians. I hope that ordinary Canadians will remember this when it comes time to vote. Company presidents are not the only ones voting, individuals are too. I hope that the latter will consider what the Conservative Party has in mind and what the NDP is proposing.

In terms of labour force training, we must remember that, although people may have worked for many years, as a result of new technologies, they will need to take training so as not to lose their jobs.

• (1305)

The NDP leader negotiated amendments to this budget with the minority government. Our desire is not just to complain and have an election. We were after something for ordinary people, money for training in order to remain employable. Our youth also need training, as do others needing jobs the most.

People find it hard to get another job if they are 48 or 50 years old and need to change industries, unless they can get training.

As for the environment, \$900 million is being injected into the program in order to improve energy efficiency. I get a number of calls to my riding office in Acadie—Bathurst about the high cost of electricity. People need to insulate their houses better and replace windows to keep the cold out.

I am certain that this problem is not restricted to Acadie—Bathurst. It is the same all over Canada. Canadians need help on this.

How can the member for Medicine Hat do an about-face and say that the government cannot do this? Since 1986, governments have been making cuts that affect ordinary Canadians. People have ended up in the street. Workers have been affected by the cuts in EI, despite the \$46 billion surplus in the fund. People lose jobs and are not eligible for employment insurance. The Conservatives have always been opposed to any changes to EI.

It is regrettable that the Liberals have laid hands on that money. It is to be hoped that, between now and Thursday evening, the minister will announce the change to best twelve weeks for workers and do away with this dividing factor. It is to be hoped that they will go still further as far as Bill C-48 is concerned, because it would be regrettable if they did nothing for the workers whose contributions have created our employment insurance fund.

As for infrastructure, five cents a litre needs to be transferred to the cities, towns and municipalities. The NDP has negotiated one additional cent to help the municipalities within the next two days.

The City of Toronto is asking that we support the budget because it needs it. As for the mayor of Shippagan, he stated over the weekend that he wanted the budget to be voted on because the cities need money for their streets. The streets are in such bad shape that they have to be repaired. Be it in Bathurst, New Brunswick, or anywhere in the Gaspé I am sure, there are municipalities that need money. The City of Montreal needs money.

This is a budget that was improved in the context of a minority government. It would be interesting to see Parliament vote on this budget. Finally, we have a budget not only for major employers and large corporations, whose CEOs are pulling salaries of \$6 million or \$10 million, but one that also provides for individuals who are really in need: ordinary people, students with debts, young people, our children who are studying and getting out of school \$40,000 in debt.

It is shameful what the Conservative Party did after supporting the Liberals' budget. Before the budget speech was even over, the Conservative leader stepped out of the House of Commons. He announced that he had no choice but to vote in favour of the budget, and that it had to be supported, because it was a good budget. We managed to get \$4.6 billion for students and ordinary people, for the environment and continuous learning, all this to help ordinary people. But when the time comes to vote, the Conservatives will figure they cannot do that and they will not vote in favour of the budget.

Let us hope that the people of Canada are following the proceedings of the House of Commons and hearing the kind of speeches the Conservatives make when there are changes. Their leader declared that the Liberal leader had made a deal with the devil. But he would have liked to have the devil on his side to make the government fall. That is the problem for the Conservative leader.

• (1310)

I support Bill C-48. We need it for ordinary people, for the people of Canada. I would also like the people of Quebec to ask their representatives to support this bill, so that, like us in Acadia, cities like Montreal, Quebec City or municipalities in the Gaspé and across Quebec can finally benefit from the change made to the budget.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my NDP colleague from Acadie—Bathurst. I am disgusted and outraged by his remarks. First, where in Bill C-48 or anywhere else did he get a guarantee from the government that there would really be tax reductions for the major corporations? The Liberal government has made no commitment in this regard.

The Kyoto plan is a bad one. It makes taxpayers pay, while it increases the stock values of Canada's major polluters. A bad plan remains a bad plan even with government support.

*Government Orders*

Third, how could my colleague join with a government that has put families in the street? In 1993, 1.3 million families required social housing following the savage cuts made by the current Prime Minister, who was Minister of Finance and who signed an agreement. The NDP has in fact signed a pact with the devil. Now, 1.7 million families need social housing. Many are currently spending over half their income on housing. A family spending a quarter of household income on housing is close to the poverty line.

How did the hon. member become involved with a party responsible for a widespread increase in student debt? Since 1995, at least \$35 billion has been cut from the transfers to the provinces for post-secondary education, health and social assistance. Now the government is giving back a few hundred million dollars, and he is prepared to shout himself hoarse, work himself into a state and accuse one and all of bad faith because we did not make the same deal with the devil.

I would like to ask him a question. He has fought for employment insurance. At the moment, 60% of people who are unemployed, who should receive benefits, are excluded from getting them, and \$45 billion was stolen from the fund surplus. How is the member for Acadie—Bathurst, who is lashing out at everyone this morning, going to return home and tell the folks there that he signed a pact with the devil on something he has fought for admirably for years? That is selling his soul. We are not having any part of that.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot how he could join forces with the Conservatives, who voted against employment insurance. Where did the Bloc Québécois stand on the vote on the throne speech? It stood with the same group it says we joined forces with. We did not join forces with the Liberals. We voted and we want to vote on the budget.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** It would also be nice if the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot would stop yelling. I was entirely respectful and gave him a chance to speak.

When it comes to employment insurance, the Conservatives have voted against every bill. However, today, the Bloc is prepared to join forces with them to obstruct a budget that would make changes that could help with affordable housing. As the hon. member said, there are people in the street and the NDP will seek \$1.6 billion to help people get affordable housing. In addition, the NDP will seek more money out of the Liberal budget to help students. As the hon. member said, students are in debt.

The Bloc Québécois supported the throne speech, with the devil, as the hon. member said. In addition, the Conservatives, supported the budget itself, when it was read. They even said they would not vote against the budget because it was good. The only time the budget did not receive their support was when the popularity of the Conservatives reached 34% in the polls. That is when they realized they could have an election and win. They do not care one bit about the people who have been reduced to poverty here in Canada.

We did not say we were joining the Liberals. That is not what we did. I do not see any ministers in the NDP ranks. We said we would support the changes to the budget of this minority government. We

listen to Canadians who are saying they do not want an election right now, but want a budget. That is what people are saying in the riding of Acadie—Bathurst.

If the Bloc Québécois had been with us, rather than with the Conservatives, then we might have gotten changes to employment insurance.

• (1315)

**Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to speak today to indicate my support for Bills C-48 and C-43. Before I go on, I want to talk a bit about what was just said. In other words, just like at the beginning of this Parliament, the political parties passed a motion to amend the motion to adopt the throne speech. Why? Because it was the best way for all parties to reach a consensus to ensure the smooth operation of this Parliament. We are currently debating Bill C-48, improving support for the House of Commons, but which makes this Parliament operate in accordance with the demands of Canadians.

I want to talk about the months ahead. Nearly 39 years ago, on October 25, 1966, I came to Parliament Hill. My arrival was far from glorious. I was not a minister's chief of staff or an officer of the table here. I was assigned to a table, but it was as a busboy in the parliamentary restaurant. After many promotions, I learned what parliamentarians did, work I continue to respect. I admired the dedication of those who sat in this House back then and represented their constituents. I told both my amused co-workers—I was laughed at on occasion—and myself that, one day, I too would be a member of this House.

Thanks to the people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, my political career began in 1976, when I was elected to the municipal council. I had run but been defeated in 1974. Thanks to them again, I was re-elected in 1978 and 1980. Again, thanks to my constituents, I was elected as an Ontario MPP and served at Queen's Park in Toronto, starting in 1981. Finally, I was elected to the House of Commons in 1984 and re-elected in 1988, 1993, 1997, 2000 and 2004, thanks yet again to my constituents.

• (1320)

[*English*]

Former prime minister Jean Chrétien appointed me to his cabinet in 1996. Thanks to him I remained in cabinet until 2003. For this I thank him from the bottom of my heart, but it is thanks to the voters of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that I am an MP and therefore eligible to be a minister because, of course, defeated candidates are seldom appointed to cabinet or to anything else.

The good book Ecclesiastes tells us:

To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

*Government Orders*

Today I announce to this House, as I did to my constituents, that I will not be a candidate in the next general election, whenever it is called. I hope that the present Parliament lasts for a long time yet because I am convinced that the people of Canada, to whom we are accountable, do not want an election at this time. They want us to work together in this Parliament, as the hon. member who spoke immediately before me said, to defend their interests and to make Canada an even better place in which to live.

Whenever the election is held, it is important for me as a partisan parliamentarian and as a representative of my people to ensure that we choose the best Liberal candidate worthy of the support of the electors of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

I thought I would announce that ahead of any possible election call in order to ensure that we could have a good nomination convention to choose the right person who eventually, although I hope it is not immediately, will be called upon to go to the people and hopefully to be elected.

*[Translation]*

Last week, my wife Mary Ann was here and came on two occasions in hopes of hearing this speech. I thank her for all she has done, and I also thank my two children, Daniel and Julie, both public servants now and previously ministerial staff. I greet their respective partners, Paule and Richard, and express my gratitude for all their help and support throughout this long career in politics. I thank them for supporting my decision, although I am sure it will take a while to really sink in for them, and even for me. Although they are not yet aware of their contribution, I thank all four of my grandchildren whose presence in my life has helped me remember what is really important.

Democracy exists because of the contribution in time, energy and personal funds by the volunteers who help people get elected to various democratic institutions, this House of Commons in particular. They must be encouraged, celebrated and recognized by all political parties, particularly in these turbulent times, when some of the volunteers who have supported us—and I do not mean this as a partisan remark—are sometimes faulted for having given of their time and energy to causes in which they believe strongly.

We must encourage our young people in particular to get involved, to volunteer for a political party, to study the history of this wonderful and vast country, to do their civic duty, and to run as candidates. By definition, our young people will be around a lot longer than you and I will. I have had an extraordinary opportunity and recommend it highly to others. I know there are those who leave this institution with some bitterness, but not I. This is as great a day for me as my first day in this place. Like Edith Piaf, I must say, “Non, je ne regrette rien”, I have no regrets.

To the executive of the Glengarry—Prescott—Russell federal Liberal Association, under the able direction of René Berthiaume and Arlette Castonguay, I owe a debt of gratitude and I would ask them to continue to serve the process of democracy through a smooth transition. I would encourage them to make a careful choice of a good Liberal candidate who will represent us ably and, I hope, win the election.

I wish to express my loyalty to the Prime Minister of Canada and solicit his support in helping us choose the best candidate for our region.

I have a few words now for my successor, whoever he or she may be. I ask them to continue to support agriculture, specifically supply management, to continue to work to improve our recreational trails for the pleasure of the people of my riding, to continue working on the eastern Ontario economic renewal program to keep our region prosperous, to protect the Alfred bog, a heritage site of ecological significance worldwide. In addition, I would ask my successor to celebrate the linguistic duality and the plurality that make us strong. Our region is what Canada should be: strong, united, diversified, bilingual, tolerant. We must be proud of this heritage and optimistic about the future.

To my campaign directors over the years, Roy Murray, André Tessier, Sergine-Rachel Bouchard and Bill Woods and their team, I offer my thanks for these successes. An election campaign is not an end in itself. It is the start of the job of representing the public, at the risk of saying what former MP Alexandre Cyr once told me: you always have to ask yourself what will happen if you win, because being elected means getting a job done and carrying out responsibilities.

● (1325)

I want to thank everyone who has worked for me over the past three decades and who has enabled me to help my electors and the people of Canada in general.

I want to thank the people working for me now, including Louise Guertin, the dean of my employees for 24 years, Helen Horvath, Luce Payer, Julie Chartrand, Mathieu Dupont, JoAnn Blondeau and Dobrija Milicevic.

*[English]*

Countless interns and volunteers have worked in my office over the years, including Jonathan Manes and Greg Lancop who assist me now. Without them I would not have served my electors nor my country nearly as well.

It has been a long and sometimes winding road altogether but overall a wonderful experience. My constituents and I cried at the closure of the CIP mill in my riding. We laughed and rejoiced at the openings of the Highland Games. We smiled at the opening of new bridges. We mourned in the aftermath of the fire in which we lost the Angus Grey Hall in Maxville. We travelled on buses to Montreal to keep Canada together in 1995. We shivered through the ice storm in 1998. We applauded the visits of prime ministers and led efforts of generosity such as Hay West to help our fellow citizens in western Canada.

*[Translation]*

I have had five party leaders in my long career: Stuart Smith and David Peterson in Ontario and the Right Hon. John Turner, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien and the current Prime Minister. I thank all of them.

*Government Orders*

[English]

I want to tell my colleagues in both houses of Parliament what a privilege it has been to know them all. I ask them to be very tough in holding governments accountable while respecting each other in this great institution. Love this great institution as I have loved it and always will.

Parliament here, and in the United Kingdom where it is 900 years old, is greater than any one of us. I only hope that I can work in the House and its committees and particularly its parliamentary associations for a while yet.

• (1330)

[Translation]

To the members of the media, with whom elected officials have a stormy relationship, I say thank you for putting up with me, especially when I lost patience with them and when parliamentary procedure was involved. I would ask them respectfully to learn the rules of Parliament, so vital in a democracy. They will find it is not a bad thing to learn procedure.

[English]

On November 9, 1984 I gave my first speech in the House, in which I said:

I have the utmost respect for this institution, Sir, and as I said, I worked here previously [as an employee]. I was a member of the Legislative Assembly of our great Province of Ontario, and I was a member on three different occasions of a municipal council. I believe, as my Leader very correctly said only a few days ago, that no greater honour can be paid to a Canadian than to be elected to the forum of this nation. I believe it was our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who said it is a great country when a truck driver can aspire to be Prime Minister. I would like to think that this is not a bad place where a busboy in the Parliamentary Restaurant can some day return [to this place] as a Member of Parliament.

I hope to say something more about this in the future in my book, which maybe to no one's surprise, will be entitled *Busboy: From Kitchen to Cabinet*.

Former prime minister John Diefenbaker once said that there was no greater honour and no greater privilege for a Canadian than to serve in the highest court in the land, the Parliament of Canada. I have been lucky enough to serve in this high court for 21 years, making me now the dean of Liberal MPs in the House of Commons. I am proud for the honour given to me by the voters of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell to whom I will be grateful forever.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be brief since there are many questions and comments. I want to pay tribute to the hon. member who has taught us much about parliamentary procedure. I have known him as a whip and as a House leader. In fact, I was his parliamentary secretary at one time. I have an enormous amount of respect for the member. More important, I think we all realize how much respect he has for this place.

I would just like to give him an opportunity to provide us with a bit more sage advice as to how we can continue to build this institution with the respect that it deserves.

• (1335)

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, may I start by thanking my colleagues who saw fit to come and shake hands and offer tributes. I

appreciate those comments immensely. I am sorry if I am not at my best right now. I apologize to the entire House for that.

I do not think I have sage advice. It would be presumptuous to qualify my advice as being sage or anything else. It may be long because I have been here for a long time. It has been almost 39 years since the day I first entered here.

I salute the hon. member. He and I worked very closely throughout the years, but more particular when he was my parliamentary secretary some years ago. In reply, I hope this Parliament lasts some time yet. I will not be here after the next election, but I want to assure my constituents that I am not leaving now, unless the election is called now. I am staying here until the very end, whenever that occurs.

I am convinced that when we were elected to come here no where on the ballot did it say, "Vote for me. I will come back in 10 months". None of us were elected with that mandate. There was an expectation on the part of Canadians, however the accident of majority and minority identifies itself at a particular time, that we were sent here to do the business of the nation for a substantial amount of time. Everyone recognizes that minority governments do not maybe last a full five years, although I saw the Ontario regime last almost four years, from 1977 to 1981. The 1965 to 1968 government here lasted more than three years. Some of them have lasted for a long time and some of them have lasted for less.

That being said, I really do not think, and the public opinion polls reflect it too, Canadians think Parliament should end now. The average talk I have had in my constituency on the weekend indicates that as well. That is my belief, for what it is worth. I believe it is also the belief of my constituents.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure and honour to ask my hon. colleague a question.

However, before I do, I wish to congratulate the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, the AIMS institution in Nova Scotia, and its President Brian Lee Crowley on their recent award, the Templeton Freedom Award for Institute Excellence. I thank them for bringing prestige to Atlantic Canada.

When I first came here in 1997, it was like watching a master at work. The hon. member was able to dice, slice and do everything he wanted to because he was, as I often said to myself, like a younger Stanley Knowles. He seemed to know the rules of the place very well.

As he knows, we have pages in the House of Commons who are probably the same age as he was when he was a busman in our restaurant. What advice would he have for the pages in this room today or for those who serve the House with distinction who are thinking of a political career in the future?

Again, on behalf of my constituents and our party, we wish him and his family the very best in the future.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, first, I congratulate the constituents of the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore on receiving the award he mentioned.

*Government Orders*

The only advice I can give is the following. This Parliament is the home of everybody. There is no class distinction here. I come from the most humble of beginnings and some of my colleagues on both sides of the House come from the uppermost crust of society. However, once we enter this room, we are all the same. There is no distinction anymore. It changes completely, to the point that if one comes here with a professional title such as a doctor, it is not used in the House. It is a reflection of the equality we all have.

The only distinctions are the ones conferred by this institution and its governments, such as Honourable for those of us who are privy councillors, et cetera. Otherwise, other titles totally disappear. To me that is the proof that we are all equal as MPs as we must be in order to effectively represent the wishes of our constituents, regardless of our individual socio-economic backgrounds.

When I was elected in 1984, I believe I was the only House administration employee in Canadian history ever to have been elected to this place. Twenty-one years later I do not know of any other who has even run, let alone been elected. Not only do the junior employees and other employees work here but this is their home too. They have a right to ask the people of Canada to represent them here. I hope other employees, whether they be busboys, pages or other employees of this great institution, some day run and represent their constituents in what Mr. Diefenbaker said is the highest court in the land, the Parliament of Canada.

• (1340)

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given the interest in questions and comments, I would seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the period of question and comments from 10 minutes to 20 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. member:** Agreed.

**Mr. Dale Johnston (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to add my voice to those who wish our colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell well in his retirement. In all the time I have served here, I have found that whenever he gives his word on something, we can pretty much take that to the bank.

However, I would like to question him a little on his theory that Canadians are not ready for an election 10 or 11 months, or 12 as it may turn out, after the last one. If the tables were turned and if it were a Conservative government on that side of the House that had been charged with one of the largest scandals in Canadian history, of funnelling hundreds of millions of dollars into their private constituency associations, would he find himself more benevolent perhaps than we are or would he go for the jugular vein, kind of like the rat pack that he used to lead?

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, let me first start by thanking the hon. member for his comments about me keeping my word when I was leader of the government in the House. I want to add that through the years in this place we develop friendships, sometimes close and sometimes not as close as what they should be by virtue of the fact that there are two sword lengths between us. Sometimes it cannot be otherwise. It is an occupational hazard that it be that way. However, it does not mean these feelings of friendship are not there.

Because people come and go, I have had an opportunity of having maybe half a dozen opposition critics across the way, although they are not called that when one is the House leader. I have had enormous respect for all of them and I wish them well in the future.

In terms of how a particular Parliament should behave at any one time is difficult to gauge. I reported earlier of how I saw it in my constituency. I still attend events. Even though I am not running in the next election, my duty will finish the day of the next election. Meanwhile, I am working for my constituents. I was at a press conference this morning announcing funding for a group in my constituency. I went earlier this morning to see constituents in a restaurant. I did the same all weekend. I do not find in any significant number, maybe not even at all, people who say that we should have an election now. However, I cannot report whether that is same in the riding of Wetaskiwin or in another one. I cannot pretend that it is the case. I certainly do not have a crystal ball to measure support elsewhere.

I can report what I see, how I see it and what I see as the public appetite at the present time. Will it be different six months from now? I do not know. I will have to wait and gauge that. I think that is what Canadians are waiting to see. To repeat what I said earlier, I have not sensed in my constituency or even in the greater eastern Ontario area, because I travel in other constituencies as well, an appetite to have an election at the present time.

I have had people say to me that we should stop talking about it, that we should get back to work, that we should stop adjourning or other words to that effect but not, “let's have an election now”. That is what I see in my constituency.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I seldom rise in the House for questions and comments, but I would like to do so today to tell the House how much respect and admiration I have for the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell succeeded me as the Minister for International Cooperation and Minister responsible for Francophonie. In these capacities, he has done an impeccable job and demonstrated great competence.

As he prepares to leave, I would like to express to this House and to our colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell all the admiration I have for him. This is a man who, in spite of important parliamentary, governmental and political responsibilities, has always endeavoured to be open to new possibilities. This member is fluent in both official languages of this country, as very few members of this House are. Moreover, he recently took up learning Spanish, which he speaks very well. We have travelled together on business trips to Mexico, where I had the opportunity to see that, with him, we were able to conduct all Canadian government business in Spanish.

*Government Orders*

This ability of our colleague represents precisely what he has always been: a man who has dedicated his life to fulfilling his professional responsibilities, while on his personal time opening to new possibilities, most recently learning a third language, Spanish, which opens new horizons because it is spoken so widely. He took the same approach to his education, which he patiently completed while carrying out his responsibilities. He is a man of great intellectual curiosity and great competence.

I want him to know that he will certainly be greatly missed by our team and this House as a whole. I want to wish him the best for the future and tell him, on a personal note, that I hope we will always be friends, because I greatly value his friendship.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I sincerely thank the hon. minister for his very kind words.

I assure the House that my Spanish is far from as good as his; he speaks it much better than I do. In fact, this has been one of the many challenges in my life. All challenges deserve to be faced, whether it is obtaining a university diploma, which I did while a member of this House and a minister; whether it is learning parliamentary procedure, which I also had the pleasure of doing, or music, which I am more or less good at—for those who have heard me play guitar—or learning another language. The most important thing is not just what I have learned, but the friendships I have made here and that I will cherish forever.

• (1350)

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to pay tribute to the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. It is quite strange: I am arriving and he is leaving. However, in the past 20 years that I have been coming to the Hill to work on national and international sports issues, I have had the opportunity to cross paths with the hon. member and we have had a few quick exchanges.

Quite clearly, we do not share the same political opinion about the future of Canada or Quebec's place within this country. Much of this side of the House believes that Quebec must be a full-fledged nation and the hon. member opposite believes otherwise.

Since he is leaving, I want to ask him this question: without being psychic or using a crystal ball, how does he view Quebec's position in the coming years, since, increasingly, support for Quebec's total independence is approaching 50% plus 1? Can the hon. member tell us how he views this political option?

In closing, I want to pay tribute to him and, on behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I want to thank him for being here in the House.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** I thank my hon. colleague for his kind tribute on behalf of himself and his party. I have had the honour to work with a number of them for a long time.

I still see Quebec, my birthplace, as having a very important place within this country. Born in Quebec to a Franco-Ontarian mother and a Quebecois father, I grew up in Ontario. I believe that Quebec's presence in our country is a considerable advantage to francophone minorities, even I would say to all minorities within this country. Quebec is an important component of this country and lends us a character we would perhaps not have otherwise.

I am not being egotistic with that remark. I feel that this is not only for the good of the rest of Canada, but for the good of Quebec as well. As we all know, this country was born in 1759 or 1760. Then there was the Treaty of Paris, of course, and later the two colonies, then the union of the two Canadas in 1840, followed by Confederation in 1867, and so on.

The great challenge has always been to know how to deal with people with differences and to create from those differences a greater and finer country for both those components as well as the newcomers who have come to these shores since then. A strong and united Canada has always been my wish, and continues to be my wish.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** The time we have allotted has come to an end and there are still many tributes, as indicated by members standing.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if you would find unanimous consent to extend the question and comment period until 2 o'clock.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** Does the House give its unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words to the member on what he indicated to the House would be his swan song or perhaps his final speech in the House of Commons. I am sure he does not take it personally that I actually interrupted an earlier attempt by him to do that.

I am pleased to say a couple of words about him. When I was away from Parliament, after having been here for a little over nine years, I was once asked how I could remember the names of the ridings. I said that there were only a few that I could remember and certainly Glengarry—Prescott—Russell was one of them, in part due to the fact that the member was always on his feet.

When people talk about all the tough questions that come from the Conservative side of the government, I remember some people had some pretty tough questions for nine years of government when I was on the other side of the House. He was no stranger to that. However his is a very remarkable story that I actually do remember. I was glad he mentioned the fact that he had been an employee on the Hill because I remember hearing that story and being impressed with the fact that he had accomplished so much in his life.

I am joining with those members who have had a great experience dealing with him. I was not here when he was House leader but others have commented that his word could be counted upon and that people who dealt with him found it to be a positive experience, as I have myself.



I have enjoyed over the past number of months, when I have had something to say in the House of Commons, watching him scurry through the doors on a couple of occasions to challenge me at the end of my speech. I would not let this out but for the fact that he said that it is his final time to speak. I looked forward to the interaction and something that might enliven the debate. He was pretty crafty and cagey but always to the point and helped make this a great experience. I know it was a great experience for him and also for other members of the House.

I certainly join with everyone, as we can see by the number of people who want to stand and ask questions and comments, to wish him all the best. He has had a wonderful parliamentary career, one that he can be very proud of and his constituents as well.

• (1355)

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words. I guess one would have to be a parliamentarian to consider this a compliment, but I consider it very much a compliment that colleagues have asked for unanimous consent to extend this period of time for which I am equally grateful.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I cannot pass up this chance to salute the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who I knew when I was in the Quebec national assembly in the early 1980s and he was in the Ontario legislature.

We met up again later, here in the House of Commons. I had the opportunity to work with this hon. member when he was the whip for his party. I was the House leader at the time. As you know, the ties between these two roles are quite close. He became the government House leader for a time not so long ago.

I will always remember him as a man of great integrity, incredible honesty and as someone you could always rely on. I can tell those watching us today—and this from an “evil separatist”—when the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell gave his word, you could count on it. I never recall the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell ever going back on his word.

Today I wish him all the best in the next phase of his life. I hate to see politics lose a man of such honesty and calibre. He has had the most remarkable career of anyone in this House. He began as an everyday worker here in the House of Commons and reached the highest ministerial position.

I wish him good luck on behalf of my party, despite our political differences, with all the respect and deep friendship that binds us.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** I would simply like to say thank you, given the time. As an ardent advocate of parliamentary procedure, I think it is time move on to members' statements. To my colleague I just want to say thank you very, very much.

• (1400)

**Hon. Robert Thibault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on such an excellent speech and, above all, on such a wonderful career. Canadians owe him a great deal for the services he has rendered in Canada and abroad. No one owes more to this member than francophones outside Quebec. He has always fought to

ensure respect for the rights of linguistic duality in this country. He led major battles in health care in his part of the country and in education in our part of the country. He was always there to support Canada's francophones, and we thank him for it.

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Once again, thank you for such praise, which I do not deserve, but which I appreciate. Thank you.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### HOSPICE PETERBOROUGH

**Hon. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in some communities the hospice is a place. In Peterborough it is more than that. It is a group of people who work to enhance the comfort, dignity and quality of life of individuals and families living with or affected by a life-threatening illness or grief.

In the 15 years or so of its existence, Hospice Peterborough has trained over 800 people, of whom 300 ended up volunteering with the hospice. In a very real sense, these volunteers are Hospice Peterborough. I would suggest to members that palliative care volunteers are a very special group of volunteers. These are people who work with the dying and the bereaved in their own homes. As someone has said, “They care enough to connect, laugh and cry...to sit up all night, to gently hold a hand, to share their time and their essence”.

Their contributions to health care are tremendous but the humanity they bring to death and dying is worth even more.

I thank Hospice Peterborough.

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### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be going to the polls very soon to pass judgment on the Liberal government.

Leading up to this judgment day, we are witness to the spectacle of the Prime Minister travelling across Canada making deathbed promises at the rate of a billion dollars a day; promises made without the proper programs in place to administer these funds. Now is that not exactly how the ad scam was operated?

Canadians will reject this obvious panic stricken display of Liberals trying to buy votes to cover up the fact they used dirty money to buy votes in the first place. This act of desperation clarifies the fact that the government is corrupt and is ruining the finances of our great country.

The question now becomes: Who is best equipped to clean up the mess made by these Liberals?

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Having Liberals throwing buckets of hard-earned taxpayer dollars on a fire started with stolen taxpayer dollars is not the answer. Arsonists do not make great firefighters.

The clear choice to put this fire out and clean up this mess is the Conservative Party of Canada.

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**DOUG WILSON**

**Mr. Lloyd St. Amand (Brant, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a member of my riding of Brant who recently passed away.

Mr. Doug Wilson died on May 5 shortly after being diagnosed with lung cancer.

Mr. Wilson was the city solicitor for the City of Brantford for many years and guided city council and staff in Brantford through many political and bureaucratic projects.

He has been described as a man who had incredible integrity, was soft spoken and his word was worth gold. He was an avid sportsman and played many sports with a high degree of proficiency. He was a modern day renaissance man and the theatre was a large part of his life with his wife, Colette. He was also fond of jazz and avidly read works of literature.

Doug Wilson was a conscientious professional, a very fine husband and a devoted father. Many individuals had the privilege of calling him a friend. He will be greatly missed.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**RIMOUSKI OCEANIC**

**Ms. Louise Thibault (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, today I want to celebrate the fantastic season our major junior hockey team, the Rimouski Oceanic, has just had.

Having won the regular season championship and the playoffs, the team broke the record of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League and the Canadian Hockey League for the longest string of consecutive victories, with 35.

We must praise the hard work and efforts of the organization as a whole, and the players in particular, as well as the remarkable performance of Sidney Crosby, the leading scorer throughout the regular season and the playoffs, the best junior player in the country and best junior prospect for the NHL draft.

Congratulations to the Oceanic on winning the President's Cup and good luck at the Memorial Cup Tournament.

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● (1405)

[*English*]

**DEEP LAKE WATER COOLING**

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, recently it was announced that up to 10 Ontario government buildings,

including the Ontario legislature, will by 2007 be cooled using deep lake water cooling technology.

I was pleased to be instrumental in promoting deep lake water cooling when I served as a member of Toronto city council.

One of the partners in this project, Dennis Fotinos, noted that this latest announcement will be a “catalyst that has opened up a huge opportunity”.

Indeed, along with fellow deep lake water cooling proponents like Michael Nobrega, another partner in this project, Enwave has demonstrated the enormous advantage in cooling buildings with this technology.

Currently, buildings like the Air Canada Centre, the Toronto-Dominion Centre, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre South and the Steam Whistle Brewery use deep lake water cooling.

It is initiatives like these that we must encourage to meet the Kyoto protocol. I offer my congratulations to all those involved in the deep lake water cooling project.

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**PREMIER OF SASKATCHEWAN**

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, last week we saw the premier of Saskatchewan single-handedly destroy any chance of getting an immediate equalization deal for our province. Throughout the week he gave a seminar on how not to succeed in Ottawa.

Monday he made promises he could not possibly keep when he showed up declaring he was here to get a new deal. He said that he was not going home until he got one. He even brought extra socks.

Tuesday he displayed his political ineptness when he attacked his only allies. The Conservative MPs from Saskatchewan have made equalization an issue in Ottawa. We need to work together.

Wednesday he disappeared, perhaps to wash his socks.

Thursday he panicked. Knowing that he could not get an equalization deal, he started dealing for second best.

Friday he gave up and headed home.

Saturday he demonstrated the results of poor negotiating when he bravely tried to convince our province that pennies are the same as dollars.

Our province has been betrayed. This federal Liberal finance minister has no intention of giving Saskatchewan a fair equalization deal. It is time the premier acknowledged that.

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**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity over the course of the weekend to talk with constituents and to knock on doors. I can say that those constituents were very disappointed in what they saw in Parliament last week, with Parliament being paralyzed.

I can say that I too have been very disappointed with the way things have operated in this House over the last number of months, starting with the accusation leveled against the member for York West. We had over two months of this House being captivated with that, only to find out it was completely false.

For me, last week was a real low when the public accounts committee, which had two days set aside to hear witnesses from across the country talk about national security and a passport action plan, was boycotted. Those witnesses came from across Canada to sit down in a half empty committee room that did not have quorum.

I want this House to return to a place to which we are proud to bring students, in which we are proud to work and a place where we debate ideas and issues, not personalities. It is time for us to get to work.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### THE PRIME MINISTER

**Mr. Odina Desrochers (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is definitely clinging to power. After being crowned leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, 18 months ago, he stated that his government would tackle the democratic deficit.

Six months later, he broke his word. Through partisan tactics, he sabotaged the work of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which had been mandated to shed light on the sponsorship scandal, despite the fact it had been largely exposed by the Auditor General.

One year later, scared by revelations at the Gomery commission, the same individual did everything he could to back out. He even went on television to try and demonstrate that his government was still able to manage the affairs of the state. But in his arrogant way, he refuses to recognize that he has lost the legitimacy to govern.

To save face, he has no choice but to accept the verdict of parliamentarians and call an election immediately.

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[English]

#### UNITED WAY HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

**Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate everyone who was involved in the annual House of Commons hockey tournament for the United Way, an event which took place recently here in Ottawa.

This year's tournament featured 10 teams, comprised mainly of employees of the House of Commons and the Senate. In all, over 100 players took part in the event.

The final game saw the team of Liberal staffers, known as The Herd, take on Rock's Boys, a team made up of House of Commons security constables.

Fans were treated to a see-saw battle from start to finish. The game featured plenty of great scoring chances, including a penalty shot in regulation time. After three periods the teams were tied at three goals apiece. A shootout was then held to determine the

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winner. In the end, thanks to some stellar goaltending, The Herd came out on top by a score of 4 to 3.

Of course, the real winner of this year's tournament was the United Way which will benefit immensely from the nearly \$2,500 that was raised over the course of the event.

I congratulate once again the players, the organizers and the fans for contributing their time and energy to a great cause.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

#### RURAL ONTARIO LANDOWNERS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my fellow Canadians, this is a wake-up call. The united landowners of rural Ontario have arrived on Parliament Hill to demonstrate against the latest attack on Canada's democracy.

The federal Liberals hold Parliament and the people in contempt. They have used deception to bankrupt Canadian farmers and have stolen their hard-earned money to bestow illegal privileges on their friends and cronies.

**The Speaker:** The member knows, and I have said it on occasions before, that referring to government as stealing money is unparliamentary. She will want to refrain from this.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, three parliamentary defeats by a majority of the people's elected representatives in the House of Commons has deprived this administration of its moral and parliamentary authority to govern.

The united rural landowners of Canada demand: the inclusion of property rights in Canada's Constitution; protection from subsidized foreign commodities destroying our farm incomes; a stop to the theft of property through deceptive and false environmental regulations; an open border for our cattle; the protection of quota value from arbitrary government policy; an end to government attacks on the rural economy; the reduction of excessive and intrusive legislation and regulations; the removal of all corrupt federal politicians; and the dissolution of this dictatorial Parliament. Power to the people.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure to see the Bloc-Conservative alliance back in the House after the holiday it gave itself last week at taxpayers' expense.

While Liberal and NDP MPs were at work last week, hearing witnesses in committee or attending to the affairs of the nation, the members of the Bloc-Conservative alliance were not in the House.

On this side of the House, working means acting in the interest of Canadians. This cannot be said of the Bloc or the Conservatives. They came back "to work" in order to destroy the Atlantic accord, to destroy the national child care system, to destroy the agreement on health care, to destroy the new deal for cities and communities, to name only a few.

*S. O. 31*

As regards the Bloc, which claims to be working in the interest of Quebecers, its leader is in such a hurry to advance the cause of separatism that he is prepared to kill every initiative he claims to defend: the Kyoto protocol, equalization, social transfers for health and regional economic development.

Is that what work means to the Bloc?

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week's historic budget vote is being viewed too often as simply a decision on the life or death of the government. It is so much more than that. The budget represents Parliament's best opportunity to help people.

In my hometown of Hamilton, one report found over 14,000 tenant households spending more than half of their income on rent. This budget will help those tenants.

The 28,000 students at McMaster University and 10,000 students at Mohawk College are facing possible tuition increases this fall. The budget will help those students.

Hamiltonians were faced with some of the worst air quality levels in Ontario last year. The budget will help clean our air.

We are not voting on just the life or death of a government, but on the quality of life of our seniors and our students, our sick and our poor. It is about the life or death of our vibrant cities and our green spaces.

I will not vote for the government but I will vote for the NDP improved budget and everything it means for the people of Hamilton Centre.

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**SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again we learn of further evidence from the Gomery inquiry that continues to link senior levels of the Liberal Party to the sponsorship scandal. We hear tales of cash-stuffed envelopes and briefcases and sworn evidence showing that the Liberals have run election campaigns on dirty money.

It has now been revealed by the director general of the party's Quebec wing that in May 2001 his predecessor was linked with the former public works minister and the chief Liberal organizer from Quebec. In addition to this evidence, it has further been alleged that a close friend of the former prime minister acknowledged at the time that he set up a lucrative kickback system that moved money illicitly from the ad agencies to the Liberal Party.

This damning testimony linking Liberal Party officials to illicit cash proves further that the Liberal Party was using taxpayer dollars as if they were their own.

This is much more than a story of rogue Liberals and greedy ad men. It is a story of admissions from senior Liberals that show the party is no longer fit for public office.

• (1415)

[Translation]

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, underlying every democracy is the principle whereby the people elect representatives and give them the power to govern.

This power is not ours. It is lent to us. We must take care of it, never abuse it and never ever use it as our own.

I accuse the Prime Minister and the Liberal Party of Canada of using public money to stay in power in 1997, 2000 and 2004 and of using it still, day after day, to remain in power.

I remind the Liberals that this power is only lent to them by the people. It is not theirs. It is now time for the Prime Minister and all the Liberal MPs to stop hanging on to power and let the people judge for themselves.

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[English]

**GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**

**Ms. Helena Guergis (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently showed his contempt for Parliament and Canadians by addressing the nation in a manner that is usually reserved for national emergencies. When the Liberals confuse party corruption with a national emergency, it is clear they are unfit to govern.

The Prime Minister is desperate and will do everything he can to avoid the consequences of his Liberal corruption and hang on to power. He has misled Canadians: Justice Gomery cannot even bring charges against the Liberals.

The Prime Minister has spent \$4.6 billion buying votes and is now threatening Canadians, telling them to vote for the Liberals or else they will not get their money.

Shame on the Prime Minister. He refused to resign after his government was defeated in the House of Commons. The Liberals can no longer avoid Canadian voters. The Liberals are corrupt and they are ruining the country's finances.

It is time for accountability and it is time to stand up for Canada.

\* \* \*

**CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, how about a little clarity from the Conservative Party?

This weekend the Conservatives stated that they will support the outcome of the budget vote this Thursday, which is a confidence vote, but last Friday, the Leader of the Opposition tabled a non-confidence motion that the Conservatives can use at their convenience. This does not make the Conservative position clear.

*Oral Questions*

Similarly, last September the Leader of the Opposition joined the Bloc and the NDP in calling for a narrow definition of confidence. Then the Leader of the Opposition flip-flopped on the definition by arguing that procedural motions should also constitute confidence bills.

The Leader of the Opposition has vowed to defeat the budget while claiming that our commitments to national child care, the Atlantic accord and cities and communities are worth supporting.

All the more confusing is that he is on record as criticizing Atlantic Canadians as defeatists, opposing the new deal and opposing the national child care program. Where the Conservative Party really stands on these issues, only the Leader of the Opposition knows.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

### PRIME MINISTER

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to re-establish courtesy and respect in the House of Commons. Should he give some thought to re-establishing that courtesy by respecting the will of the House? He lost by seven votes yet the government continues to sit, because he refuses to respect the democratic will of the House of Commons.

What guarantee do the people of Canada have that the Prime Minister will respect votes in the House in future?

[*English*]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Prime Minister made a very important statement this morning in Halifax in relation to the importance of civility returning to the House. I hope, in spite of what I have just heard, that on behalf of Canadians we are all committed to the return of civility and decorum in the House.

Let me, in response to the hon. member's question, make it absolutely clear that the Prime Minister will respect the outcome of the vote held on Thursday.

• (1420)

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Since he would not respect the others, Mr. Speaker.

We have another day and another photo op for the Prime Minister in a day care centre. Meanwhile, a more sinister but realistic picture of the Liberal Party and its leader continues to emerge from the daily testimony at the Gomery inquiry, with daily testimony of envelopes or suitcases of cash paid to Liberal workers and evidence of a parallel secret Liberal fundraising network. Attempts to stem the flow of dirty money were met with threats. Some feared for their lives and went to the RCMP.

During that whole time, the Prime Minister, as finance minister, was actively campaigning to replace his mentor, Jean Chrétien. Does he really think Canadians believe him when he says he saw no evil, heard no evil and did no evil?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, these allegations are disturbing and we take them very seriously, but the fact is that they are allegations. They are not proven facts. We need Justice Gomery to complete his work.

Let us be clear. We want to ensure that anyone who is found guilty of malfeasance, of harnessing the unity crisis to achieve inappropriate financial gain, ought to face the full extent of the law. The fact is, Canadians know that the Prime Minister, our leader, who actually established the Gomery commission and supports Gomery, is exactly the best leader to get to the bottom of this issue.

That member is the last person who should be talking about campaigning for his leader's job.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Central Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Gomery will not get to the bottom of this. Clearly what is happening here is this: which Liberals do we believe?

The forensic accounting firm of Kroll Lindquist Avey investigated the corrupt administrations of Duvalier and Marcos, the corporate rip-off artists at Enron, and the Liberal Party of Canada. They all violated the public trust, they all benefited financially from the public purse, and they denied it and tried to cover it up.

During his time in office, the Liberal Prime Minister's Canada includes kickbacks, money laundering and intimidation. When will it begin to include integrity and respect for democracy? When will that happen?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, need I remind the hon. member that it was this Prime Minister, upon receipt of the Auditor General's report, who in fact asked for Mr. Justice Gomery to begin the work that we now see being carried forward?

It was this Prime Minister who said that we have nothing to hide and we want to get to the bottom of this on behalf of all Canadians. It was this Prime Minister who asked the President of the Treasury Board to introduce whistleblower legislation. It was this Prime Minister who put in place a comptroller general.

It is very clear that this Prime Minister is a Prime Minister of integrity—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam.

**Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, need we remind the Deputy Prime Minister that it was the Prime Minister who called an election before the truth came out? Now that the truth has come out, he is running away from the Canadian people.

Much evidence has come out about the depth of corruption associated with the sponsorship scandal. Lifelong Liberals have confessed to or have been shown to be involved in money laundering, fraud, forgery, breaking election financing laws and a host of other crimes.

*Oral Questions*

Surprisingly though, when the Prime Minister addressed the nation in his televised address, he did not deny any of this criminal activity. If the Prime Minister is so sure that the Liberal Party is innocent of these crimes, why will he not deny any of them?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the *Globe and Mail* editorial said, there is “no persuasive testimony” that the Prime Minister was involved in any way in any “alleged chicanery”. Beyond that, the fact is that this Prime Minister, by establishing Gomery and by supporting Justice Gomery in his work, is absolutely committed to getting to the truth for Canadians.

There are allegations about other political parties, about the separatists and about the Conservatives, but the fact is there is only one leader, this Liberal leader, this Liberal Prime Minister, who is doing the right thing and cleaning up this mess, and that is why Canadians will trust him to finish the job.

**Mr. James Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister enjoys quoting editorials. Here is what is said in today's *Globe and Mail* editorial:

The confirmation of the kickbacks, including the names of those allegedly involved, has not come from people with an axe to grind or those eager to put the best face on their own disgraceful actions in the sponsorship scandal. It has come from credible party insiders...

If the minister likes quoting editorials, why is he so opposed to the truth coming out? Why will he and his own Prime Minister not stand up and deny that the Liberal Party was involved in criminal behaviour?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if he reads further in that same *Globe and Mail* editorial of today, he will read that these allegations can only be substantiated by Justice Gomery completing his work.

Beyond that, it is important to recognize that these allegations are in fact unproven. In that regard they are a lot like the Conservative platform.

\* \* \*

•(1425)

[*Translation*]

**SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the executive directors of the Liberal Party appearing before the Gomery commission agree on one thing: thanks to the sponsorship scandal, a great deal of dirty money went to the Liberal Party.

Since the testimony by Béliveau, Corbeil and Dezainde on the dirty money all points to the Liberal Party coffers, will the Prime Minister create the Liberal dirty money trust fund before the next election campaign? Time is of the essence.

[*English*]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been absolutely clear about this. If in fact the party has received any inappropriate funds, those funds will be reimbursed in full.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the testimony of the three Liberal Party executives is quite clear. Benoît Corbeil acknowledged that Jean Brault of Groupaction gave him dirty money for the Liberal Party. Michel Béliveau admitted taking dirty money from Jacques Corriveau, and this friend of Jean Chrétien acknowledged creating a kickback system benefiting the Liberal Party, according to Daniel Dezainde. The testimony provided by all three points to the Liberal Party coffers.

To prevent the Liberal Party from running another election on dirty money, which could happen as early as this week, will the Prime Minister demand that all this money be put into trust?

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, these are allegations, not facts. If the party has received any inappropriate funds, it will reimburse the taxpayers. This, however, cannot be done until we have all the facts. That is why we need to wait for the Gomery report.

[*English*]

It is also important to recognize what Justice Gomery said last week on May 11. He said that the Liberal Party acts in a lawful manner, that it is not a criminal organization or one that knowingly breaks the law.

Anyone who committed wrong, anyone who used the brand of the Liberal Party to commit malfeasance, ought to face the full extent of the law, and we are committed to doing that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government did not wait for the outcome of the Gomery inquiry to sue the firms involved in the sponsorship scandal. It has already done so, with these suits totalling over \$40 million for work paid for but not performed.

How can the Prime Minister sue these firms and refuse to admit that the money they donated to the Liberal Party is dirty money that has to be put into a trust account?

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member, in identifying some of the positive action the government has taken, is finally giving the government the credit it deserves for actually establishing legal action against 19 firms and individuals to retrieve \$41 million for the Canadian taxpayer. That is the right thing to do. Those suits are before the courts and we are looking forward to a resolution that will be in the interests of the Canadian taxpayer and that will get to the truth.

Frankly, there are also allegations about the separatists in the province of Quebec. I would urge the hon. member, in fairness to the Parti Québécois, his provincial cousins, and to all people involved in politics to wait for the Gomery report to get the truth.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will remind the minister that the Parti Québécois created a trust account, even though the allegations have not been proven. It knew that it had been given the money. So, it created a trust account in Quebec.

Sponsorship money was donated to the Liberal Party by firms that have made very generous contributions to the Liberals during the years they abused the sponsorship program.

How can the Prime Minister feel comfortable with the money from these firms in the coffers of the Liberal Party instead of in a trust account, as requested?

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, there are allegations about the Parti Québécois having received funds inappropriately, that in fact receipt of those inappropriate funds led to specific contractual actions that were inappropriate with external contractors.

I think the hon. member ought to clean up his own separatist house and actually give some respect to Justice Gomery's work. The fact is until we have Gomery's report, we will not have the full truth, and until the Parti Québécois actually has the courage to do its own inquiry, Quebecers will not have the truth about separatist activities there.

\* \* \*

### THE BUDGET

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, now that the concept of pairing has been introduced and accepted and votes can proceed on the basis of fairness, and we are very pleased about that, we can turn our minds to see whether or not it is possible to have the budget adopted in three readings before Thursday. It would be possible with the cooperation of the House.

Would the government members be willing to cooperate in order to accomplish the passage of this budget at all stages prior to Thursday?

• (1430)

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the hon. member's question, we have a vote on Thursday for second reading of this budget. There are a number of members who are speaking to the budget itself. I know that the members opposite are preparing to vote against the budget. I know that the Bloc is also preparing to vote against the budget.

We are certainly looking to see this thing pass because it does speak to the priorities and interests of Canadians, whether it is the Atlantic accord, or the new deal for cities, or the increase in old age security. We certainly want to move this through the House. I look forward to the passage of it on Thursday. Then the committee to begin to do its work.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, our objective is to pass this better balanced budget. After all, we had some input into it at the end of the day and we would like to see it adopted.

Should the House be willing, and this would have to be tested, to give unanimous consent to move the bill forward rapidly through three readings, would the government stand in the way of such a unanimous consent should we be able to secure it and have that budget actually adopted in advance of the Thursday vote?

**Hon. Tony Valeri (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the comments made by my hon. colleague.

We certainly want to see this budget move forward. I do not think the member would get opposition from the government; I think the opposition to passing it with unanimous consent would come from the members opposite, whether they be Bloc members or perhaps the Conservatives.

We want to see this budget approved. We want to see it become law because this budget is in the interests of Canadians.

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### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CTV reports that the immigration minister has taken partisanship to a "darker dimension". The report notes that the minister is "exploiting a family tragedy for political gain". An abusive husband made an accusation to try and punish those who stood by his wife, including her brother-in-law, a Conservative MP.

Even Liberals had the civility not to raise it in the 2004 election, but the minister has now stripped away her privacy and publicly smeared her family.

Why would the Prime Minister allow a member of—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I see that the usual source of information for the member opposite is the public press.

I will not be speaking about a specific issue. However, I did receive information and I called the particular member over, gave the member an indication that I had information that I had to pass on. I did so and I left it at that.

That such information went out into the public has nothing to do with me or my office and I have stayed quiet on that.

**Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary—Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the minister himself has publicly commented on the matter. Not only has he abused his power and harmed an innocent woman, he violated his oath as a minister. Worse, he broke the law. He gave out information about an immigration case, contrary to Canada's privacy laws. In February on TV he also revealed details of the case of Saadia Hetaj, including some that proved to be wrong.

How far over the line will the Prime Minister allow before this law-breaking minister is removed?

**The Speaker:** I must caution the hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill on her use of words. If she is going to suggest that members of the House have broken the law, she is going to have to lay a charge and have the matter dealt with. She cannot use that kind of language in questions.

*Oral Questions*

If the Deputy Prime Minister wishes to respond, we will hear her.

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to respond in this way. Last week we saw the hon. member for York West be fully cleared by the Ethics Commissioner. We also saw that Harjit Singh retracted his outrageous claims in relation to the member for York West.

I think it is important for all of us to learn a lesson from that experience, that this is not a place where people should come and destroy reputations, smear individuals on the basis of allegations and bits and fragments of testimony, or whatever the case may be. I think it is incumbent upon all of us—

• (1435)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first the immigration minister intimidates the Sikh community telling a Toronto temple to keep quiet on immigration corruption. He then makes wild accusations against a member, twisting the facts before finally withdrawing.

Now the immigration minister breaks the law, violates his oath of office, and contravenes the privacy—

**The Speaker:** Order. I just indicated a problem with suggesting that a member had broken the law in posing questions and I thought that that might have corrected it.

If the hon. member is going to keep doing it, I will start ruling questions out of order. The hon. member will go directly to her question.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Mr. Speaker, it contravenes the Privacy Act by commenting on RCMP and Ethics Commissioner investigations—

**The Speaker:** We will go on. The hon. member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government has initiated proceedings against the advertising agencies involved in the sponsorship scandal. The Prime Minister therefore considers them guilty and is suing them. When we mention the contributions these agencies made to the Liberal Party, we are told to wait until the end of the Gomery commission's proceedings.

I would like to understand. How does the Prime Minister explain the fact that these agencies are guilty enough to be taken to court, but that their money is clean enough to remain in Liberal Party coffers?

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning as part of the Prime Minister's response to the Auditor General's report, he established Justice Gomery's inquiry to get to the bottom of the issue. He also established a fund recovery mechanism. In fact that

has resulted in lawsuits against 19 firms and individuals to recover \$41 million.

The fact is that is a positive story. That is the right thing to do. Not only are we doing the right thing for Canadians to get to the truth in this issue, we are doing the right thing for the Canadian taxpayer to get to the bottom of this issue.

Once again, let us be clear that the Liberal Party will repay to the Canadian taxpayer any funds that were received inappropriately.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on the subject of Canadian taxpayers, the Prime Minister has for the past 20 days been trying to buy his next election with their money.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he does not agree he has got off to a very bad start for the next election? Not only is he trying to buy it with the dirty sponsorship money but he is refusing to put into a trust, but he is trying to buy it with taxpayers' money.

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has referred to the budget. That budget has a lot of very important and positive items in it for Canadians, and in fact a lot of very positive items for Quebecers. In fact, Quebecers support day care. Quebecers support investments in communities and in cities. Quebecers support investments in health care and investments in foreign aid.

Quebeckers support what this budget represents. It is about time that those members stood up and did the right thing for Quebecers and not the right thing simply for separatists. They should actually defend a budget that is good for Quebec and good for all of Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the corruption in the system is so broad that it now extends even to the judiciary. The links between the Liberal Party and candidates to the bench are obvious. Cross-referencing the data shows that 60% of appointees since 2000 contributed to the Liberal Party of Canada.

Does this new example not show that it is high time to get rid of this tainted government?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, judicial appointments are based on recommendations by an independent committee of the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs. It is simply a question of merit. In my opinion, political affiliation is not taken into account.

• (1440)

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Quebec bar denounced the words of Justice Robert, saying that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, regardless of their position. The president of the bar added that being a judge intrinsically includes the ability to distinguish between personal opinion and law.



*Oral Questions*

Since Justice Robert obviously does not have the ability to make this distinction, what is the Minister of Justice waiting for to call for his dismissal?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, political affiliation is not taken into account when judges are appointed.

I understand a complaint has been lodged with the Canadian Judicial Council. We will monitor its progress.

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[English]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is up to his nasty tricks. Once again he is going after ethnic minorities in the Conservative Party caucus. In a clear abuse of his ministerial authority, he is using the RCMP to do his dirty work by investigating the member for Calgary East. He then broke his oath as a privy councillor and the Privacy Act by leaking this to the media.

When will the Prime Minister fire the minister?

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite has a specific claim to make, he knows what the usual procedures are to follow that through. He can do it.

I have already given an explanation to the House about what transpired and I will let it rest at that.

**Mr. Rahim Jaffer (Edmonton—Strathcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, someone needs to explain the concept of ministerial responsibility to the minister. He is responsible for the files in his department. He has taken an oath of confidentiality. If any of these files are placed in judgment because of confidentiality, he needs to take responsibility.

If the Prime Minister is serious about civility in the House, then why will he not enforce it in his own cabinet and fire the minister?

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of confidentiality also goes to the understanding of the procedures and process of what has transpired.

I categorically deny having done anything that would break the law one way or the other. Again, if the member opposite has a specific claim he wants to make, he can follow the procedures that are open to him.

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**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is a specific claim. That is the face of Liberal incivility right there.

Liberals threw money at gun violence and we got the firearms debacle. They threw money at the national unity problem and we got the sponsorship scandal. Now they are throwing \$4.6 billion at their NDP deal to try to cover up the sponsorship scandal.

Why should Canadians and the NDP pay to help cover up Liberal corruption?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** As you know, Mr. Speaker, balanced budgets have been the hallmark of this government for the last eight years. The budget projects a further five years of balanced budgets. We are the envy of the G-7 and all industrial nations in terms of the fiscal management of this country. We intend to keep our obligations and agreements out of the fiscal framework.

If the hon. member would care to read the budget over the next five years, he would realize that in those five years there are \$28 billion of projected surplus.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that member and the NDP need to understand that buying votes with the sponsorship program has reinvigorated separatism in Quebec. Now the Liberals think they can paper over this corruption by buying the votes of Canadians.

When will the government see that a vote-buying budget designed to cover corruption will only strengthen Quebec separatism?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious what that member's party is against. Members opposite appear to be against additional moneys for foreign aid and the cities initiative. They appear to be against further moneys for child care initiatives and affordable housing. All of those initiatives are contained in budget Bill C-48. They are natural extensions of the government's priorities within our fiscal framework.

● (1445)

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since the introduction of Bill C-48 the House has heard repeated concerns challenging the fiscal sustainability of the bill, particularly in what is claimed to be new spending for post-secondary education, additional support for cities, affordable housing and immigrant settlement services.

Would the Minister of Finance please clarify for the House whether the majority of this money was contained in the budget and whether this, together with the recent agreement with the province of Ontario, was fiscally prudent and economically consistent with the last seven consecutively balanced budgets?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I replied to a previous question, this is consistent with the fiscal framework of the Government of Canada. The initiatives, as launched by the premier of Ontario, are specific initiatives that we have responded to, that were legitimate complaints that he had with respect to immigration issues and tax collection measures, and all of which were negotiated between the Premier and the Prime Minister. Happily, an agreement was arrived at which projects over five years and that is within the fiscal framework of the Government of Canada.

*Oral Questions***AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for the second time in a week, Canadian farmers have come to Parliament Hill demanding action from the government. Farm debt across Canada is rising. We have a crisis in grain and beef. We have a crisis in dairy from the flood of modified milk imports into Canada and yet the government treats agricultural policy as if it were a game of dodge ball. Stand still, Mr. Minister, and answer the question.

Will he or will he not invoke article XXVIII and protect supply management in Canada?

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to deal with the first part of the hon. member's question, the government has made record investments into the agriculture industry in this country to support producers. Specifically, in terms of dairy, we are negotiating through the WTO to ensure that we have an outcome that will protect supply management in Canada and that Canadian producers can choose the type of method they want for domestic marketing.

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**FISHERIES**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, British Columbians were expecting to hear results of DFO testing of sea lice on wild salmon by mid-April, but the report has been delayed by weeks. Could it be because of the election in B.C.? Many marine scientists believe this report will show that open cage salmon farming is destroying wild salmon stocks.

Will the minister release the sea lice report today and let British Columbians see the results before tomorrow's election?

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the sea lice study is being reviewed and finalized by our scientists. It would not be responsible to release the study before it is ready.

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**SUDAN**

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for over a year the opposition has been urging the Prime Minister to put together a meaningful and coordinated response to the crisis in Darfur. Last Thursday he rushed out with an announcement that we will be sending troops and cash. The whole announcement immediately began to unravel when the head of the regime in Khartoum said nobody had talked to him about foreign troops coming to Sudan.

I would like to know precisely, within the last week, did the Prime Minister talk to the head of the regime in Khartoum? If he did, why is the leader there saying that he did not? Why is there so much confusion over helping people in Darfur?

**Hon. Pierre Pettigrew (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to express to the House again that the government has been committed to the Darfur situation for a long time. We have exerted some leadership over the last few years. Senator Jaffer was appointed in 1999 to look into this issue.

We put together a very sound package last week. We have carried out consultations. The Prime Minister was in touch with President al-

Bashir on May 11 again. We have been in touch with the United Nations, United States and NATO headquarters. We have been working with a number of partners and the catalytic leadership of Canada is well appreciated.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nobody else seems to know that Canada is talking to them. Darfur is one of the most dangerous places on earth.

Thousands of people have been murdered. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced. Women are being raped in a systematic way. We have now found out that the Canadians troops that are going there will be unarmed. The regime has said that they are not allowed to enter with the ability to protect themselves.

Did the Prime Minister know that our troops were going there unarmed when he made this announcement on Thursday? If that is not true, again, why the confusion? Why is the regime saying nobody is entering there with arms?

• (1450)

**Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was at the committee meeting this morning when General Hillier, who is the head of our forces, said clearly he has been in the region. He has been negotiating with the African Union.

We are providing exactly the support that the African Union members have requested. Everybody recognizes that it is their obligation and duty. They are the only ones who can effectively supply the support that is needed for the problem in Darfur. We are giving them the backup they need.

We will not send any troops into Darfur or into any region of any country if they are not properly protected. The chief of our defence staff made that very clear to everyone at the committee meeting.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John's East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday and again today the government has refused to give its consent to a motion splitting the Atlantic accord from the larger budget bill. All of the three opposition parties have agreed to separate the Atlantic accord from the big budget bill.

Why are the Liberals playing politics with the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and refusing to give their approval for a separate bill?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the Prime Minister and the premiers of the two provinces in question entered into negotiations and completed an agreement in the early part of this year. That agreement was reflected in the budget.

*Oral Questions*

The hon. member's party opposite appeared to approve of the budget. Then, when the polls changed, that party appeared to no longer approve of the budget. If in fact the budget does not pass and the Atlantic accord does not see the light of day, opposition members will have to look in the mirror for the reason.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to a question from me some time ago, the Prime Minister said he could not split Bill C-43 because it would be objected to by the Bloc. Every member on this side of the House gave unanimous consent to split the bill, bring forth the bill, and deal with it to give Atlantic Canadians their money right now.

The budget process will take months and the Liberals know it. Why is the government betraying Atlantic Canadians?

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a minor correction to the member opposite, unanimous consent was not obtained and the Bloc opposes any splitting of this bill. I would like to quote the hon. member's premier. He said:

I'd like to see the budget passed. I can't take partisan positions on these issues. I've got to do what's in the best interests of the people of the province.

That is exactly what the premier is doing. Presumably, the member's party will have to pay an electoral price for its intransigence on the budget.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**EDUCATION**

**Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government has cut funding to post-secondary education and it is distressing to see that it has now gone one step further. Now it is investing thousands of dollars in propaganda measures in our kindergartens, and primary and secondary schools, in short a sponsorship program adapted to children and teenagers.

The government needs to understand one thing: it has no jurisdiction over education. My question is therefore this: what is it waiting for before putting an end to this propaganda, which smacks of being an unacceptable extension of the infamous sponsorship program?

**Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely normal for our schools to be provided with discussion tools on our Canadian institutions, Canadian diversity and anti-racism. I am sure my hon. colleague agrees with that, particularly with this weekend's evidence that most Quebeckers are very much attached to Canadian institutions.

**Mr. Maka Kotto (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with its sponsorship program, the federal government tried to buy the heart and soul, as well as the votes, of Quebeckers old enough to vote. Now it is trying the same questionable approach to younger Quebeckers.

Does the federal government intend to put an end to this propaganda which is not intended to educate our children in the least, but rather to shove Canada down their throats?

• (1455)

**Hon. Liza Frulla (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, all children in every province receive material on our country. Quebec is not excluded from that. Second, the material is provided and teachers use it at their discretion. There have been no complaints from any school boards.

Third, as a mother, I would be very pleased for my children to have access to some of the history of Canada, as well. Whether we like it or not, it is not just Quebec history that needs to be taught; the history of the country needs to be taught as well.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**AGRICULTURE**

**Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has no respect for rural Canada. Instead of enshrining property rights, it is eroding them. It is delivering less than 60¢ of each \$1 of farm aid promised and Ontario just cut agricultural funding by 23%.

Why does the government refuse to respect the contribution that rural Canada makes to this country?

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely and totally inaccurate. In fact, it is this party that respects rural Canada. It is this party that understands the importance of developing policy and an approach specifically tailored to rural Canada.

We see that in terms of our regional development agencies which that party rejects. We see that in terms of our infrastructure support which that party rejects. We see that in terms of our community futures program which provides access to capital for rural businesses and that party rejects that. Canadians clearly understand that we are the protectors and promoters of rural Canada.

**Ms. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is not enough to have policies. They have to be put into practice.

Rural Canada accounts for fully 40% of our exports. This is a huge economic contribution to our nation's well-being. Despite drought, frost, border closures and infestations, first the Liberal budget and now the NDP-Liberal budget only have money for more bureaucrats and consultants for these sectors.

Why does the Liberal government, along with its NDP allies, refuse to respect those of us from rural Canada?

**Hon. Andy Mitchell (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, is it bureaucrat money only? A billion dollars of new assistance has been authorized for payment to producers and already three weeks after that announcement was made more than \$700 million was actually paid out to producers. That is in addition to the \$1.3 billion that has been paid out to producers under the CAIS program.

*Oral Questions*

Opposition members criticize and suggest that the money is not flowing to producers. They are wrong. It is. The money is—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for North Vancouver.

\* \* \*

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Don Bell (North Vancouver, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my province of British Columbia has already signed and is ready to have B.C. municipalities benefit from a \$635 million gas tax deal. I understand that the province of Alberta has now joined B.C. with an excellent \$477 million gas deal of its own.

Would the Minister of State for Infrastructure and Communities please tell the House what the consequences would be for the municipalities in B.C. and Alberta if the budget is defeated?

**Hon. John Godfrey (Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are delighted with the two gas tax deals we signed with British Columbia and Alberta, but the funding is at risk unless the budget passes.

If the opposition defeats the budget, all British Columbia and Alberta communities stand to lose funding. For example, greater Vancouver would lose \$292 million; Kamloops would lose \$5.7 million; Edmonton, \$108 million; and Lethbridge, \$11 million.

The municipalities are counting on this money for transit, water systems and infrastructure. If the opposition does not vote for the budget, it all goes down.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has long been known that the Liberal government invited the United States to use CFB Gagetown to experiment with the toxic and deadly agent orange in 1966. Press reports this weekend indicate the Department of Veterans Affairs has recently admitted that agent orange was responsible for the death of veterans who were stationed there.

In light of the government's inaction on this tragedy, can the minister inform the House why many other sick and dying Canadians have been ignored?

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no greater priority than serving those who have served the country.

Pensions are granted by Veterans Affairs for a service related disability with a pension process designed to give applicants every chance to show that their disability is related to military service.

We are investing heavily in ensuring that all veterans are treated fairly by the country for which they fought.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for decades the Canadian military refused to acknowledge the Gagetown horror ever happened.

The government is currently addressing volunteers of chemical warfare testing, but it is silent on its involvement for those who were tested unknowingly. Will the minister now explain the government's

shameful denial in assisting these affected members of our Canadian Forces?

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, applications for disability pension claimed as a result of exposure to agent orange follows the same basic adjudication process as any other claimed condition.

The department has granted pensions in two cases since 2000 where sufficient evidence existed as causal relationship between agent orange and a veteran's condition. The department does consider potential causal relationships between exposure to agent orange and pensionable conditions where proven.

We will always go that extra mile to assist any veteran in need.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, for the past few weeks the government has been announcing a number of child care agreements. Curiously enough, however, the process is dragging on in Quebec and there is nothing tangible to speak of. Yet, the process should be easier with Quebec, since its positions are known and there are no conditions to negotiate.

Since the Prime Minister has already promised that the transfer would be done with no strings attached, how does he explain that there is yet to be an agreement with Quebec on child care?

**Hon. Eleni Bakopanos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development (Social Economy), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that we have signed an agreement with a fifth province. We are in negotiation with Quebec and the remaining provinces. We are quite confident that an agreement will be reached with the current government.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Manitoba is home to some of the most beautiful lakes and rivers in the country, including the Red River. Yet this natural tributary is in danger of contamination if North Dakota implements its Devils Lake project.

This project would redirect water to the Red River, possibly bringing with it foreign species and other contaminants. Further, this redirection project could cause flooding in the communities along the Red River, which have now only recovered from the flood of 1997.

As such, could the minister please tell the House what the government is doing to ensure water quality?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the same time the government intensifies its pressure under the U.S. administration to refer the matter of the Devils Lake outlet to the International Joint Commission, we are also taking steps to detect any harm that might be caused by the outlet operation.

As I speak, monitoring is done every 11 minutes at the station on the Red River, between the United States and Canada. However, as a vow, we will intensify our pressure to be sure that the International Joint Commission will be done.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. David Krutko, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1505)

[English]

**CERTIFICATES OF NOMINATION**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to table, pursuant to Standing Order 110(2), a certificate of nomination with respect to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. This certificate stands referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

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**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 33 petitions.

\* \* \*

**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-50, an act to amend the Criminal Code in respect of cruelty to animals.

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

\* \* \*

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the 11th executive committee meeting on the Interparliamentary Forum of the Americas, held in San Jose, Costa Rica, on February 11 and 12.

**PETITIONS**

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to present six petitions on the subject of marriage. The petitioners call upon the government to define marriage as the union between one man and one woman.

● (1510)

## UGANDA

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am also honoured today to introduce a petition on the subject of civil war in Uganda, which is also an issue of importance to all Canadians and all citizens of the world.

The petition draws the attention of hon. members to the fact that the 18 year old civil war in northern Uganda has caused the deaths of more than 100,000 children and countless numbers of children have been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army.

The petitioners encourage Parliament to take action to provide protection to the children of northern Uganda as per the Winnipeg communiqué of September 17, 2000, from the International Conference on War-Affected Children.

## DIABETES

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to introduce a petition on the subject of juvenile type I diabetes research funding. This is also an issue of importance to all Canadians.

The petitioners encourage Parliament to secure funding for juvenile diabetes research for the next five years. They also point out, and this should be emphasized, that an increase in investment and research will yield immense benefits for future generations.

## AUTISM

**Mr. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to introduce a petition on the subject of autism spectrum disorder, which is also an issue of critical importance to all Canadians.

The petitioners draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that some children can benefit from the provision of intensive behaviour intervention therapy treatment. They encourage Parliament to amend the Canada Health Act and require all provinces to provide funding for treatment for children with autism.

## HOLIDAYS ACT

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions today.

The first one is signed by 3,664 legionnaires from across the country. As members know, this year we are celebrating the end of World War II and we are indebted to our men and women who served us during that period of time.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners call upon Parliament to enact Bill C-295, an act to amend the Holidays Act to recognize Remembrance Day as a legal holiday that honours the men and women who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts.

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Inky Mark (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my second petition calls upon Parliament to affirm legislation to recognize the institution of marriage in federal law as being a union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Randy White (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to submit to the House today from people in my riding. The petitioners ask government assembled in Parliament to vote in favour of Bill C-275, an act to amend the Criminal Code, failure to stop at the scene of an accident, to make sentencing for hit and run offenders more severe.

The petitioners are concerned about hit and run. Carley's law will make a better change.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today pursuant to Standing Order 36 to present two petitions.

The first petition is signed by many deeply concerned producers and citizens in my riding of Palliser. This petition, which was circulated last fall and earlier this year in RM offices in Palliser by private businesses and individuals, calls upon the government to eliminate the onerous CAIS deposit. The petitioners call upon the government to do what it acknowledged in the budget was the right thing to do.

As the government has promised in the budget to work with the provinces to eliminate the CAIS deposit, the petition today serves as a reminder to the government that this burden needs to be eliminated as soon as possible, not postponed.

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Dave Batters (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition that I am presenting today is on behalf of a large number of citizens from my riding of Palliser, predominantly from Moose Jaw, Caronport and Caron.

The petitioners wish to call to the attention of Parliament that they recognize the importance of the special role of traditional marriage and family in our society. The petitioners call upon the justice minister and Parliament to do everything within their power to preserve the definition of marriage as being the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

## FISHERIES

**Mr. John Cummins (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from British Columbians who are concerned about the management of the Fraser River fishery.

There is a line up of tractors outside Parliament Hill today with people concerned about the government's ability to manage the

agricultural resource. Our folks are a bit further way and it is not too easy for them to conduct such a visible demonstration, but their concerns are just as great.

As they note in this petition, the preliminary reports indicated last summer that there were fewer fish on the spawning grounds in 2004 than after the 1914 rock slide on the Fraser River at Hells Gate.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to initiate a judicial inquiry into the fishery to examine the management of the fishery so as to prevent another tragedy.

• (1515)

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition on behalf of fellow Albertans who believe that on important issues of social policy, it should be elected members of Parliament making the law and not the courts.

The petitioners urge Parliament to use every means it has, whether legislative or administrative, including invoking the notwithstanding clause of the charter if necessary, to ensure that marriage is the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition on the subject of marriage to present to the House today. The petition has been presented by many members in this place, signed by hundreds of thousands of signatures.

The petitioners would like to draw to the attention of the House that the majority of Canadians believe fundamental matters of social policy should be decided by elected members of Parliament and not by the unelected judiciary and that the majority of Canadians do support the current definition of marriage.

The petitioners call upon Parliament to use all administrative and legislative measures possible, including the invocation of section 33 of the charter commonly known as the notwithstanding clause, to preserve and protect the current definition of marriage as being the legal union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present to the House today on the subject of marriage and the traditional definition of marriage. I have presented over 20 of these petitions now.

The petitioners say that whereas the traditional definition of marriage is the best basis for raising families and children and whereas the majority of Canadians are in favour of the traditional definition of marriage, they would like to see the traditional definition of marriage continued. They point out that it ought to be Parliament rather than the courts that rule on this.

These petitions like the others have come from across my riding from Barry's Bay, from Smith's Falls and from beautiful Ardoch.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have another petition to present today, and it is almost a novelty to be presenting one that is not on same sex marriage. This petition is on the subject of the right to save seeds.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

The petitioners want Parliament to recognize the inherent right of farmers, developed from thousands of years of custom and tradition, to save, re-use, exchange and select seeds. They point out that newly proposed restrictions on farmers' traditional practices criminalize these ancient practices and could harm farmers, citizens and society in general.

## MARRIAGE

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my duty today to present two petitions on Bill C-38. It is interesting to note that one is pro and one is con. It demonstrates that this is a very divisive issue across the country and, unfortunately, rather than uniting Canadians it is dividing them.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to present a petition on behalf of constituents in my riding, the constituents of College Avenue United Church.

The petitioners pray that Parliament define marriage in federal law as being a lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to present a petition containing a number of signatures from the St. John's region, many of them seniors from Saint Luke's Homes and Cottages.

The petition is asking that Parliament pass legislation to recognize the institution of marriage in federal law as being the lifelong union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 119 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 119—**Mr. Loyola Hearn:**

Does the government intend to hold a ceremony at the National War Memorial on July 1, 2006 to mark the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel?

**Hon. Albina Guarnieri (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Commemorative ceremonies will be held on July 1, 2006 in St. John's, Newfoundland at the War Memorial and in France at the Newfoundland Beaumont-Hamel Memorial to mark the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme involving Newfoundlanders in the first world war. These are the two locations that hold official ceremonies to commemorate Beaumont-Hamel each year.

For July 1, 2005, Veterans Affairs Canada Atlantic region is currently working with Department of National Defence Newfoundland region in planning the Beaumont-Hamel commemoration in St. John's within the context of the Year of the Veteran.

[Translation]

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1520)

[English]

**AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO MAKE CERTAIN PAYMENTS**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

**Ms. Bev Oda (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-48 today.

When I spoke to Bill C-43 in this House, I pointed out how the budget presented in February by the government would only see 3% of the announcements flow in this budget year.

Bill C-48, which is being debated today, is weaker than that. This bill has its origin in a deal made in a hotel room in Toronto. This is not how government legislation should be undertaken. This is not how budgets should be developed. This is not how Canada's economy should be planned. This is not responsible nor accountable governing.

This is deal making; a desperate deal to maintain power. It is a deal to spend \$4.6 billion, maybe, of taxpayer dollars. Will these dollars flow to deliver what the NDP has been promised? There should be substantial real doubt.

Bill C-48 stipulates that payments may only be made in either 2005-06 and 2006-07 if there is a \$2 billion surplus and, in fact, in this budget year there is no requirement to spend \$1.00.

Before I proceed, Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton—Sherwood Park.

The only stipulation in this budget is that no more than \$4.6 million be spent over two years or before the end of the 2007 fiscal year. In other words, Bill C-48 gives the government the power to spend billions but does not actually require it to spend the money.

My experience in business is that surpluses are not determined until the end of any fiscal year. This means that none of the moneys in Bill C-48 would even have a chance of flowing until the 2006-07 budget begins. Is there a real deal here or not? More important, will the deal deliver and improve the lives of Canadians?

Canadians want more than words, whether just spoken or written on paper.

*Government Orders*

The citizens of my riding and all Canadians are hard-working and they are now questioning the intent of the government. If people in my riding ask what is in the NDP-Liberal deal I cannot answer that in all honesty. I have to say that this bill, a one and a half page document, has no plans and no specifics on how \$4.6 billion would be spent.

My constituents are telling me that they are fed up with waste and mismanagement. They want their representatives to ensure that their tax dollars will work for Canadians, not for advertising firms and party followers.

Yes, I, along with my constituents, care about the environment. We care about infrastructure. We care about post-secondary education. We care about housing. They care about, as all Canadians, the same things as every other Canadian. They are also willing to pay their taxes so needed services can be delivered by every level of government to meet their legitimate responsibilities.

The citizens in my riding have watched the environment, our roads and infrastructure deteriorate. They have seen how our youth are struggling to find a future in Canadian society. However for the past 12 years they have seen only higher taxes and little improvement in the delivery of government services. The level of frustration is peaking. What has peaked now is the lack of trust, faith and respect for the government.

Therefore, can I say with any level of certainty that any of the matters in Bill C-48 will be delivered? The answer is no.

I believe Canadians deserve greater certainty. They should have a level of confidence that the budget presented in February which was the best budget the government could responsibly deliver. How solid was that budget when only weeks later another \$4.6 billion was tacked on?

• (1525)

Why were the matters in Bill C-48 for housing, tuition and the environment not in the February budget? The budget making in Bill C-48 is compounded by the flurry of announcements made by the government more recently. Why were these announcements not in the February budget?

There is no plan. The only plan behind these announcements is to continue in power. Canadians want sound fiscal management. They want real programs, not just speeches and announcements. They want accountability and responsible program spending. They also want a fair deal and a balanced fiscal policy to meet the needs of both urban and rural communities.

The February budget and Bill C-48 do nothing for the farmers in my riding. Bill C-48 is spending without a plan. I cannot support the bill. It would be irresponsible to support a bill that takes \$4.6 billion of taxpayer dollars without any accountability, particularly from a government and a party whose track record has created a sentiment in Canadians of mistrust and cynicism.

Canadians need to have faith that Canada will flourish and that they will have their needs met, first by themselves with the resources they have worked hard to earn and keep, then by the community as friends, families and neighbours because we are a caring people, and by a government, every level of government, which will fulfill the

responsibilities given in a responsible, accountable way with full disclosure of not only how much is going to be spent but how and in what programs.

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**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 66(2)(b), debate on Motion No. 10 shall be taken up on May 17.

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**AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO MAKE CERTAIN PAYMENTS**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was interesting just before question period to hear the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell give an impassioned speech about his years in the House. I have not been here as long as he has, and unfortunately I was not recognized by the Chair in order to also give a short intervention during that time when really we did not talk about the bill before us at all. We talked about the member's service.

When he was talking it reminded me of my own parliamentary career, which I am happy to announce will not be ending at this election as opposed to that of the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I remember that when I was first elected we had a government at the time which, still fending off the Liberal debt it inherited in 1984, was still engaging in debt and borrowing. In the 1993 election campaign, when computers were just barely invented, I had a little computer running that showed the rate at which the debt was increasing. It was increasing at around a thousand and some dollars per second, which made for an interesting display on the screen.

Of course I pointed out to the people who I thought would vote for me that we were not doing our duty in terms of preserving the well-being, financial and otherwise, of our children and grandchildren in allowing that kind of debt to grow. It is very interesting that at that time our youngest son was younger than these young people here who serve as our pages. Now he is almost an old man. He is not really, he is a only little over 30, but that is certainly old compared to the young people we have serving us here as pages, about 50% older.

My wife and I had only one grandson at that time. Now we have five grandchildren. I think that this particular bill we are talking about today, Bill C-48, is a colossal failure and takes us right back to the passion that I felt in 1993 to manage properly the finances of our country on behalf of our children, grandchildren and all subsequent generations.



*Government Orders*

It occurs to me that the reason for this budget bill, Bill C-48, is totally ill informed. I would like to use a few minutes of my time to give some free advice to the NDP members. I would bet I will not get an ounce of protest from them today when I say anything here. I am going to give them some advice and just inform them how ill advised they are to make a deal with the Prime Minister.

They are hoping that they are going to get all this expenditure and here we have Bill C-48, which basically is the NDP side of this budget. They have cut a deal with the Prime Minister in order to try to get this deal. I am amazed that they would do that.

Now I have a little sidebar, as have nowadays in our lexicon. There was a private member's bill before the House under the auspices of John Bryden, who was a previous Liberal member, on access to information and the revision of that law. It was a good bill and we would have supported it, but unfortunately it died on the order paper.

It was then brought in by an NDP member from Winnipeg in pretty well identical form to what the previous Parliament saw. The member from Winnipeg made a deal with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister said to him that the government was going to bring in legislation that would pretty well reflect the member's bill and asked that the member withdraw his bill, saying that the government would go ahead with its own.

In good faith, that NDP member said okay. He withdrew his private member's bill on access to information. What happened? About six months or eight months later, the Minister of Justice showed up at our committee. We were all anticipating that he was going to show us at least some draft legislation on what the bill would look like.

• (1530)

Instead, what we got was a great big long report on a new discussion paper, which means that we are going to start talking about it again. Needless to say, the member from Winnipeg was somewhat miffed.

**An hon. member:** He was double-crossed.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** He was double-crossed. He was betrayed. I could use all sorts of words, but I do not want to get into that area, Mr. Speaker, where you are going to have to stand instead of me.

The member was really upset. Why would the government, having made the commitment to bring in a bill, then renege on it after getting the NDP to do its part?

Right now we have this deal where the NDP has said, "We will vote and support this corrupt Liberal government in return for some promises in the budget". But it is common knowledge that we cannot trust these guys. This Liberal government will never deliver to the NDP even if this budget passes. These are all just empty promises.

In fact, Bill C-48 starts with these words: "An Act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments". That is the heading of the bill. It just "authorizes" him, which is a whole other topic that I could talk about in terms of the wide open spending that this bill permits.

It is really a very short bill, but basically what it says is that the Minister of Finance "may"—it does not say that he "shall"—in respect of this year "make payments out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund". It is basically everything over \$2 billion in excess of government spending. If the government had a \$2 billion surplus only, then there would be zero there. Also, even if there were a \$4 billion surplus and it looked as if that would commit \$2 billion in the next two years each for this particular budget program, it still says the minister "may". It does not say he "shall" and these NDP members have fallen for it. I should not laugh. I should not do that—

**An hon. member:** Don't hold yourself back.

**Hon. John McKay:** All bills say that.

**Mr. Ken Epp:** It is a real concern.

At any rate, we have here another problem, which is huge, that is, this is a government which, having listened to the NDP arguments, has written down on a piece of paper "we are willing to throw some money at it". This is so typical of this government. It always measures what it is doing in terms of how many dollars it has thrown at the problem. The Liberals never measure the actual outcome of these effects. It is absolutely incredible that they are doing this.

Mr. Speaker, you would not do this. I would not do it. Let us say I decide that I want to build a house. I have never done that in my life, but if I were to build a house I would not first of all say "this is how much money I am going to spend" and then go and figure out how I can spend all the money. I would probably sit down with my wife and my children and ask, "What kind of a house do we need?" Then, having identified the need and what kind of house we want, how large it is, where it is going to be, et cetera, we would determine how much money we would need.

Instead, these guys start out by just naming a sum. The Liberals do this over and over again; whether it is international affairs or whatever, they talk like that. I think of the gun registry as the best example of them saying, "Let us just throw some money at it". Once they started throwing it, it went more and more. I like math, so I do a little ratio and proportion and things such as that at an elementary level. I did a small computation. The gun registry was first promised to cost \$2 million net. It has landed up now approaching \$2 billion. That is 1,000 times as much.

I did a couple of comparisons. Here are two of them. Not long ago, about three years ago, I went and bought myself a new car, a mini-car, a small Honda Civic. It came to around \$18,000.

Let us imagine, though, if this would have happened. I say okay to the dealer and tell him I am going to buy this car for \$18,000. "It is a lot of money, but I am going to spend it", I say. I go to pick up that car and he says, "Sorry, we made a little miscalculation. There is an administration fee on doing the book work and it is now going to cost \$18 million because that is the proportion of the difference". On an \$18,000 car going up to \$18 million, I would say, "Sorry, I decline. Let me out of this".

But over there is a Liberal government that says it does not matter. The Liberals say they will just keep throwing more money at it and hope that eventually it is all going to work out.

*Government Orders*

•(1535)

My time is up so I hope that some of the members here have some questions for me and I will be able to enlarge on some other points as well.

**Hon. John McKay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just as a point of clarification, I want to point out to the hon. member that every budget initiative always starts with the word “may”. It is discretionary spending on the part of the finance minister and the Government of Canada.

If the member reviews Bill C-43, he will find that “may” is in the legislation. That is true of pretty well any budgetary bill that appears before the House; it is not “an obligation on the part of”. I want to assure my friends in the NDP that there is no differentiation between the phrasing in Bill C-43 and the phrasing in Bill C-48.

I want to address the hon. member's issue. Bill C-48 has a number of initiatives, all of which are coincidental to the initiatives of the Government of Canada. I know the hon. member is concerned about fiscal propriety; I want him to understand and realize that the moneys to fund these initiatives are only to come out of unplanned surplus moneys.

Does the hon. member realize that the only commitment in terms of the financial impact is that the contingency money is taken down from \$3 billion in 2005-06 and \$3 billion in 2006-07? That is a commitment to reduce the contingency money from \$3 billion to \$2 billion, but beyond that, any other moneys to fund these initiatives are to come out of unplanned surpluses. Did the hon. member realize that when he was making his speech?

**Mr. Ken Epp:** The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is a three letter word. The answer is yes. I understood that fully well; I think I even mentioned in my speech that we are talking about keeping only \$2 billion and everything above that is going to be spent on these initiatives.

I think it is absurd, because if we have a program it is going to cost some money. For the government to just say that it will put only as much money as it has left over to the program, that would be another absurd way of building a house, would it not?

For example, I could say, “We are going to build a new house, family, and next year I am going to make so much in my wages and whatever we have left over we will apply to the house”. As members know, I may land up just barely starting the foundation and not getting anywhere.

It is just another boondoggle in the making, where there is an uncertain amount of money being targeted and thrown at an uncertain number of projects. I think that is very clear.

I am surprised that the NDP members would buy into this, because it so fraught with uncertainty that it obviously will go nowhere and all of their victory and all of their rejoicing over this deal is going to come to naught, totally.

•(1540)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, as the Conservative colleague made quite clear, the bill before us was thrown together at the last minute.

In fact, this bill lists a series of figures that mean absolutely nothing. No formal commitments, specific programs or minimums set out in any area of this bill are associated with any of these figures. I fail to comprehend or imagine how the NDP could have been naive enough to form an alliance with such a corrupt government.

My question to the member is as follows. Is my assessment right or wrong? Ultimately, all this government needs to do next year is to prepare a budget with a substantial increase in the number of expenditures. This will allow it to say that it did not achieve the expected \$2 billion surplus. As a result, Bill C-48 will go nowhere.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ken Epp:** Mr. Speaker, I will just take a millisecond to once again thank those wonderful people behind those glass cages who do our instant interpretation. Being a unilingual Canadian, I could not communicate with my hon. colleague across the way without their services.

In answer to the question, yes, I am indeed totally surprised that the NDP have bought into this. It is in fact a bill of nothing. In the worst possible case, if we do have a substantial surplus and based on the way the Liberals have failed to actively project the surpluses, there probably will be a surplus quite a bit in excess of what they are saying—that has always happened before—but we do not know how much it will be. Instead of applying it to reduce the debt and to manage the tax reductions in such a way as to build the economy and help poor people get more jobs and so on, there would be these make peace, throw money at some project by the government. It is totally ill advised.

When the Speaker puts the question on this bill, even if it were not on the question of whether or not we should have an election, I would still quite happily vote against the budget. It is a failure.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we continue our debate on the budget introduced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance. As members review the contents of the budget, it is tempting to deal only in numbers. However, it is important for all to remember that budgets are much more than just numbers. They are about people. They are about a vision for our country and what we envision our future to be.

In this budget we find a clear and tangible commitment in all of these areas and more. If we were to ask Canadians to choose one thing they value most about their country in terms of public policy, I believe the vast majority would identify health care as one of the major priorities. Liberal government after Liberal government has demonstrated their commitment to a national health care system that cares more about the patient than it does about their wallets.

This government has presented a budget that reflects the very core of our nation's values. This budget speaks to the needs of Canadians and to their deeply held beliefs about their country. This government shares the priorities of Canadians, such as secure social foundations, environmental protection and promotion, health care, sustainable communities, and fiscal responsibility.

*Government Orders*

To this end, in September 2004 the Prime Minister concluded negotiations with the premiers of this country on a national health care accord. This government committed \$41.3 billion over 10 years to improve our health care system. In budget 2005 we see a commitment that builds on this agreement with \$805 million in new direct federal health care investments. These funds will be directed toward human resources, healthy living and chronic disease treatment, and drug safety, to name but a few.

Once again it is a Liberal government that has demonstrated continued leadership in the area of health care. This is a government that sees more value in action with regard to our health care system than it does in rhetoric.

I would also like to point out that as a government we are profoundly committed to protecting our environment and honouring the terms of the Kyoto accord to which this country is a signatory.

We have a profound and abiding obligation to ensure that we hand down to our children and to generations to come the kind of country they deserve. It is our covenant with young Canadians and indeed for those yet to be born. To this end, the Liberal budget is committing \$5 billion over five years to support a sustainable environment, and an additional \$5 billion for cities and communities to enhance green initiatives.

Once again, our government followed its commitments with action. My colleague, the Minister of the Environment, recently announced "Project Green", which clearly demonstrates the government's plans to implement the provisions of the Kyoto accord. The plan follows measures announced in budget 2005, including the climate fund and the partnership fund, and ensures that emissions targets will be met.

The announcement of "Project Green: Moving Forward on Climate Change" is a fair and balanced plan to help honour our Kyoto commitment. It is the right plan for our economy and environment. Our climate change plan is a key component of the government's broader environmental vision aimed at supporting a sustainable environment and a more competitive economy. It will deliver cleaner air, cleaner water and a healthier environment for all Canadians for generations to come. It will also help position Canada at the forefront of global environmental technologies with a significant investment in research and development.

Among other measures "Project Green" includes: investments in the order of \$10 billion between now and 2012; significant greenhouse gas reductions; and annual assessments of climate change programs to ensure results and that Canadians receive value for money. This will ensure fairness and accountability.

This government is committed to engaging the provinces and territories, industry, environmental groups and other stakeholders to work out the details of implementation and ensure its success.

Canadians want a more energy efficient and sustainable economy that will afford a better quality of life. They also want assurances that our programs and issues are delivering measurable and accountable results. Our climate change plan does this.

Climate change is real. Levels of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, are now rising faster than ever.

This has led to a record increase in temperatures over the 20th century.

The 1990s was the warmest decade since records have been kept. Some people say we should renege on our international commitments, but the Government of Canada and Canadians agree that we have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren, and the time to act is now.

• (1545)

Canadians also believe that we should not shirk on our commitments to the international community, particularly those commitments we help to forge on the world stage. The Kyoto protocol is not simply one way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada; it is the only internationally binding agreement that exists on climate change. Canada proudly ratified Kyoto and this plan will help see to its global objectives.

Canadians are already feeling the effects related to climate change: drought conditions in the continent's heartland and extreme weather conditions on both coasts. We also know climate change is already having dramatic effects in Canada's north. Climate change is inevitable, but the worst effects can be avoided if greenhouse gas emissions are stabilized. That is the goal of the Kyoto protocol.

As of February 2005 Kyoto is now international law. It has been ratified by 140 countries representing 62% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada's competitiveness and quality of life in the 21st century must be built on a healthy and sustainable environment. These are initiatives that demonstrate that this is a government of action and conviction dedicated to protecting our environment and in so doing ensuring that generations to come will inherit a nation that is livable, healthy and beautiful.

The one way we can measure the greatness of the nation is the manner in which it cares for its children. We are charged with their care, with ensuring that they have the kinds of skills and tools they need to grow into healthy and productive citizens. This begins at a very young age.

In budget 2005 the government has committed \$5 billion over five years to help build an early learning and child care initiative. Indeed our government has begun to announce agreements with various provincial governments to implement this commitment.

In the first week of May, the Prime Minister visited the great city of Hamilton, Ontario to sign a \$1.8 billion five year agreement to help my home province create thousands more child care spaces. This will mean \$271.9 million in this year alone for child care in Ontario. These funds will go a long way toward helping to alleviate the pressure parents experience in terms of securing safe and affordable child care. We owe this to families in this country and we owe it to our children.

*Government Orders*

I have long held that housing is a right for all Canadians. The basic need of shelter is not something that should ever be beyond the affordable for people living in this country. It is imperative that as a matter of public policy governments recognize the pressing need for affordable housing right across the country.

I am proud that the Liberal government has demonstrated leadership in this regard. At the end of last month, for example, the Liberal government announced in conjunction with the Government of Ontario that it would be committing \$301 million to implement an affordable housing strategy. These funds will be matched equally by the province and the municipalities for a total commitment of \$734 million in Ontario.

By committing these funds the federal government is undertaking the most significant investment in affordable housing in generations. In Ontario alone we will see the creation of more than 15,000 units of affordable housing, which means 15,000 families with a place to live that is affordable. If this is not a role for government to pursue, then I cannot imagine what is.

Also, at the beginning of May I was pleased to join with my colleagues, the Minister of State for Families and Caregivers and the Minister of Labour and Housing to announce that changes to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's programs would be made to make it easier for seniors to remain in their homes and closer to their families and communities. These changes will also make access to mortgage loan insurance easier for new homeowners who purchase a home with a rental unit.

These are tangible benefits that will make a significant difference in the lives of Canadians. It is about recognizing the challenges Canadians face every day and about using public policy to assist them to better their lives.

Seniors can be sure that the Liberal government is looking out for them and delivering on a promise to them. In budget 2005 we will see a \$2.7 billion increase over five years in the guaranteed income supplement. Similarly, the amount that Canadians can earn before paying taxes will increase to \$10,000. This will remove 240,000 seniors from the tax rolls, for a total of 860,000 Canadians being exempt from paying federal taxes.

● (1550)

In implementing these measures, this government is ensuring that the lives of Canadians on fixed incomes are made easier. It is about fairness and equity. It is about ensuring that those who are less advantaged are given a hand up and surely there is no one who would disagree with this kind of help.

This budget is good news for all Canadians and for my home province of Ontario about which I would like to speak for a moment. Ontario will receive \$1.9 billion over the next five years as a result of this government's decision to transfer a portion of the gas tax to municipalities. As we all know, just this past weekend the Prime Minister and the Ontario premier agreed to a \$5.75 billion financial commitment from the federal government. These funds will, along with other things, go to assist Ontario with newcomer settlement costs, a new labour market agreement and an increase in post-secondary funding for students and institutions.

This government cares about the pressures facing provincial governments and I am confident that the people of Ontario will recognize this is a major step forward in financial support for this province from the government in Ottawa, a step forward delivered by a Liberal government.

I am also pleased to report that the budget is good news for the people of Toronto. As well as the gas tax revenues noted above that will help build better roads, improve transit systems and provide more sustainable infrastructure, there are other measures to assist Toronto and all cities and communities across the country.

Indeed, the mayor of the great city of Toronto, David Miller, described the budget as the "greatest news for the people of Toronto". Furthermore, it was Mayor Miller and his counterpart from the city of Vancouver who recently announced to my colleagues across the floor to vote in favour of this budget.

As well as being citizens of Canada, we are also citizens of the world and we have an obligation there too.

Budget 2005 recognizes this with measures including debt relief for the world's poorest countries. The budget also includes a \$3.4 billion boost to Canada's international assistance programs. Canada is respected around the world for its compassion and dedication to those nations that face the greatest challenges in terms of development and with regard to caring for their disadvantaged citizens.

We as a government remain committed to being a world leader in supporting those most in need and budget 2005 lives up to that legacy which we inherited from generations of Canadians who came before us.

That is why the Prime Minister has announced Canada is significantly increasing its contribution in Darfur to support international efforts toward peace and stability in Sudan. The government is pledging \$198 million in new humanitarian aid and support for the African Union mission in Sudan. Of this, nearly \$170 million in military and technical assistance to the African Union and another \$28 million of the \$90 million announced at the April 2005 Oslo Donors' Conference will go to support internally displaced persons and refugees in Darfur and Chad. The government is also enhancing diplomatic support for the African Union-led mediation to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict in Darfur.

Canada will continue to make a significant contribution to stabilization efforts in Darfur by increasing our helicopter support for AMIS and providing fixed wing airlift, as well as much needed equipment and materiel.

Canada will also continue to support African Union's leadership as the best way to resolve this crisis.

There is also funding for the arts and, as noted by Karen Kain of the Canada Council:

This is wonderful news, not only for the Canada Council, but also for the thousands of artists and arts organizations who receive Council funding

*Government Orders*

Clearly, the budget as I have noted here demonstrates this government's commitment to the very core of Canadian values: families, seniors, child care, health care and the list goes on.

We recognize that this is a progressive budget that delivers for Canadians and moves our country forward in a direction that Canadians want us to go. I cannot imagine anyone finding any reason to oppose this budget and I invite all my colleagues to join me in supporting this great agenda for progress in Canada.

Budgets are more than about people. Budgets are about delivering for Canada.

Finally, we need to have this budget approved for the sake of our cities, our provinces and our country. We need to approve this budget for our health care system, for the environment, for the arts and for our world commitment and the people of Darfur.

• (1555)

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments but I have to challenge him on something he just said. He said that he could not imagine anyone opposing some of the things in this budget.

It was his own finance minister who opposed many of the things in Bill C-48. If the member will think back he will remember the finance minister responding to NDP questions a little over a month ago asking for some of the things that are in Bill C-48. The finance minister said that the budget could not be "cherry-picked". He said, "it cannot be stripped away, piece by piece by piece". He said that we could not do the things that are in Bill C-48. He said that we could not take out the corporate tax relief because corporate tax relief would create thousands and thousands of jobs. One study says that it would create 340,000 jobs.

Does my friend across the way understand that by accepting the NDP demands, not only is he being irresponsible with the fiscal framework of the government, but he is also undermining his own finance minister?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Finance has clearly stated in this House how he feels about this amendment and has stated that he is 100% in support of this.

We all realize that this is a minority situation but it is very important to get the budget approved. The budget is a commitment to the people of this country, to our cities, to our agenda of the environment, to health care, to the arts and to the world.

This is the choice that was given to us by the fact of his own party not supporting the budget. We have to move forward on this important agenda for the people of this country. That is the way we are fulfilling this commitment.

I believe that once the hon. member looks at all the details of the budget he will realize that it is a budget that most Canadians support. We are very proud to have a budget and the amendments that are widely supported by the vast majority of Canadians. I ask my hon. colleague to move forward and support this budget.

• (1600)

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member across the way for some clarification.

We are discussing Bill C-48 today which is not the Liberal budget. The Liberal budget is Bill C-43, the budget I thought the government believed in and which contained its plan for the country for the next year.

The Liberals, essentially, have gone to the NDP in a move to hang on to power. Although they think that Bill C-48 is the life preserver they have been looking for, I actually think it is a noose.

Some of the things in this budget were definitely not included in the finance minister's initial budget because they were not deemed important enough back in February when he tabled the budget. What they are doing here is bringing forth a very hastily put together bill that, in their own opinion, would not accomplish the things that the NDP hopes they will.

Does the member honestly believe that the policy announcements being made in Bill C-48 will ever come to fruition? I also want to know if they will accomplish anything. I really think that what is laid out in Bill C-48 is something that will cost our children and grandchildren a pile of money without any real plan. It opens up the possibility of hastily put together programs that will not be administered properly and could lead us to more government mismanagement and corruption.

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, this amendment, which will be supported by the Liberals and the NDP, is one we strongly support because it meets our core principles and deals with the priorities of Canadians, that being health care, the environment, city agendas and the arts, and it meets our commitment to the international community.

Beyond that, this government has for the past eight years delivered eight consecutive balanced budgets and we will continue to do that.

In no way, shape or form do these amendments take away from our fiscal responsibility. We are a government that strongly believes in fiscal responsibility. We have done that in a prudent way with all the measures we have taken forward in the last many years and we will continue to do that.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite curious when I hear the member and several other members in the House consistently suggest that they know the priorities of Canadians. I am curious because obviously they represent less than 50% of the population. I believe that particular member is from Toronto.

I have two questions. Where in the world does the member think he has the mandate of Canadians and knows the priorities of Canadians? Is there some secret poll out there? Did the government do a poll when it cut \$22 billion in health care or when it spent \$2 billion on a gun registry system that does not work? First, I am wondering where this member gets this idea that they speak for all Canadians.

*Government Orders*

Second, I would appreciate hearing the member's comments specifically in relation to the plan the government had but which changed dramatically when it found out it could buy the NDP votes. I wonder how the member feels about throwing money out without having any kind of plan, any agenda and any security that it actually will get to the places where it is allocated.

• (1605)

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's view is that Canadians' priorities are health care, the environment, the arts, housing and cities. These are initiatives that we, under the Prime Minister, have been moving forward for the last year.

I would be hesitant to comment on what he feels his priorities are but I would think all of us should share in those priorities. If my colleague feels that those are not the priorities for Canadians then he should say so.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not so long ago, the Minister of Finance rose in this House to praise his fantastic budget which, as far as he was concerned, was perfect, the eighth wonder of the world. Today, because of Bill C-43, the Minister of Finance got the slap on the hand he deserved from his Prime Minister who, not so long ago, tried to buy the conscience of Quebecers with dirty money, and is now trying to buy an election with taxpayers' money.

Bill C-43 is an empty shell. I heard the member opposite say that he knows the priorities of Canadians and Quebecers. I believe that in Quebec, like in the rest of Canada, people are asking for something more specific than a bunch of figures that mean absolutely nothing.

The member had a lot to say about post-secondary education, which is currently funded by the federal government to the tune of approximately 11%. The few extra bucks provided do not make a big difference. The member also had a lot to say about lowering tuition fees. I have news for him: tuition fees in Quebec are the lowest in Canada. Is that what he calls knowing the priorities?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times already in the House, the priorities of the government are quite clear. This budget delivers on the government's priorities and commitment to the people of this great country. We as Canadians have to look after one another. The budget talks about everything from child care to seniors and our priorities for health care and for our universities. All of those are priorities for the government. I believe very strongly that this budget delivers on those priorities and we should move forward with the budget.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to address Bill C-48. I want to start by underlining that the Conservative Party believes strongly that Bill C-48 will hurt Canadian farmers, seniors, people who are trying to create jobs in this country and families with children.

We believe strongly that Bill C-48 is taking Canada off track financially. We also believe that it is a pretty obvious attempt to cover up the allegations of corruption being levelled at the Liberal Party and the government. We believe that is a pretty important

reason to oppose Bill C-48. I will expand on some of those things in just a moment.

I want to go back to a point I was making earlier about how fundamentally Bill C-48 completely contradicts the government's own finance minister. Going back to last February, I was in this place when the finance minister spoke about how important it was to follow the principles laid out in Bill C-43. One of those principles was that there had to be tax relief for large employers in Canada.

If we go to the budget documents, we can still find the page where it talks about how important that is for attracting investment to this country and accumulating capital, so that businesses can take that and invest it in training for their employees, buy new equipment and expand their operations. These are things that would put people to work.

Since that time a study came out from the C.D. Howe Institute saying that if the government followed through on those tax breaks for large employers, it would generate 340,000 jobs. I believe that. I believe what the finance minister was saying about that. I think those things are so important.

Canada is in competition with other countries around the world. When we do things that create jobs, do hon. members know what that does? It is not just creating 340,000 jobs. Those are jobs for real people, people who live in my community and the communities of all the members in this place, people who, today, do not have jobs and want nothing more in the world than to have some meaningful employment and the ability to earn a decent wage, so they can look after their families. That is a pretty reasonable thing.

That is what the finance minister argued very persuasively, persuasively enough that, although we did not support the budget, we did not bring down the government on the budget. We basically abstained from voting on that.

Later on we found out that the government added some things into the budget, like some of the Kyoto provisions that we did not agree with, but after that point, I heard the finance minister on many occasions defend his budget against the NDP. He said that we cannot cherry-pick the budget. We cannot just pick and choose what we want in the budget. He said it when he was standing right there. He said, "You can't go on stripping away piece by piece by piece of the budget". That is what he said. It is in *Hansard*. If we check the record, we will find it right there, and he defended that.

When it became apparent that the government could lose a vote on the issue of the budget on a confidence motion, the Prime Minister struck a backroom deal with the NDP while the finance minister was back in Regina. The finance minister obviously knew nothing about it. All of a sudden a deal was struck where the tax relief for large employers was cut out of the budget, so that the government could increase spending dramatically on other programs.

We should remember that we have already had the largest increase in spending back in the February budget that we have seen in 30 years. We have seen spending go up by about 50% since 1997-98 in this country. That is 50%.

*Government Orders*

•(1610)

We have seen the cost of bureaucracy go up by 77%. However, that was not enough. The government added more in the February budget. Now it has added even more spending again in Bill C-48. That troubles me because the reason we are doing all this spending is to allow the government to cover its tracks on this corruption scandal. It knows it is up to its ears in trouble because of that scandal, so it is trying very hard to get people's attention away from that.

However, what worries me is that by rushing to do this and by just throwing money at things, we are going to replicate exactly the same situation that led to the firearms registry. Where the government was faced with the problem of gun violence, it threw a bunch of money at it, hoped that would fix it, and created a firearms registry. It said it would cost \$2 million, as my friend from Edmonton pointed out a while ago. It ended up costing \$2 billion. We saw the same thing—

**An hon. member:** It did not cost \$2 billion.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** My friend across the way is sounding a little bitter and angry. However, I want members to know that RDI, which is a media outlet, an arm of the CBC, reported it would cost around \$2 billion. If my friend takes issue with those figures, he should take that up with RDI.

I will also point to another situation where the government saw a problem and just threw money at it. I remember very well those shocking images on TV of young children who were stoned on gasoline at Davis Inlet. It was an awful thing. Prime Minister Chrétien, at the time, was shocked by it. We were all shocked. However, the government did not have a plan. It just took a lot of money and threw money at it. It said, "That is terrible. We have to deal with it", and just threw money at it.

What happened? The government moved some 900 people from the community of Davis Inlet to another community a few miles away and gave them new housing. It cost \$400,000 a person. Guess what? All of the problems went with them, not surprisingly. Again, that is what happens when we react without a plan and just throw money at things. All we do is create more problems. We do not get results.

What we have now is the government trying to hide from one vote-buying scandal in Quebec, the sponsorship scandal, and spending \$4.6 billion to acquire the votes of NDP members in this place in the hope that it could hang on in a confidence motion.

I am worried that this same problem is being replicated all over again. There is real evidence for that. When we look at the bill itself, Bill C-48, what does it say? It does not say that money would go into specific programs, programs that are established today that we can scrutinize. It says that money shall be spent via order in council. It would be up to the cabinet to decide how to spend it. I worry about that. I guess as the opposition finance critic I should worry about it. It is my job.

However, Canadians should worry about that because this looks like another blatant attempt, initially, to get over a vote-buying scandal in Quebec and, second, to buy votes from the NDP. Now it

looks like the government is going to use this to buy the votes of Canadians in order to support it in possibly an upcoming election.

I would urge Canadians to say no. This is our money. We know that there are other ways to spend this money. If we do not have good plans in place to spend it, then we should not spend it at all. Leave it in the pockets of homemakers, farmers, fishermen and the business people who create jobs in this country. They could use that money, very often, far more effectively than a bureaucrat or a politician. That is certainly my experience.

When I think about what we could do if we left some of this money in the pockets of taxpayers, I think of a family I know, who are good friends of my wife and I, who have four kids and a modest income. Of course they want their children to go to university. Would it not be a great thing if they were allowed to keep, say, \$1,000 extra every year because their taxes were a little bit lower and they were able to save that money to put into a fund for higher education for their children?

•(1615)

Maybe they have other priorities. Maybe they have children who have to go to the dentist. Maybe they have children who have extra needs medically. They could use the money for those things. My point is that parents know better than anybody else what is important to them and how to use that money. Believe it or not, they know more than bureaucrats and politicians about what is good for their family.

Simple decency requires that if the Liberals have no plan and if they are swimming in cash, then this money should be allowed to stay in the pockets of the people who earned it in the first place. That is just being decent.

The government has not skimped on spending. Spending has gone through the roof in the last number of years. Since 1997 and 1998 spending has gone up 50%, not including the February budget, and not including the \$4.6 billion that is in Bill C-48.

I would argue that the government has spent more than enough money in the last number of years and now it is time for a substantial break for Canadians. Many friends across the way may say they are going to lower taxes in the budget for everyday Canadians. The tax break in the next tax year for Canadians amounts to \$16. That is unbelievable.

There was no shortage of money for Liberal friends when it came to the sponsorship scandal. There were envelopes and suitcases of money for Liberal friends, for Liberal ad executives, and ultimately for the Liberal Party. What do the regular working people get? They get a \$16 tax cut. That is shameful. That is ridiculous. That speaks volumes about the government's real priorities.

I want to speak about some of the myths that the government across the way has been perpetuating. I have heard members in this place say that if the budget does not pass then the offshore accord will not go through. Atlantic Canada in particular, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, will not get the money due to them as a result of the signing of the offshore accord. I want the House to know that a Conservative government would deliver that money as soon as humanly possible.

*Government Orders*

The member for St. John's East and the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl have worked relentlessly to push the government to allow that piece of the budget, the offshore accord, to be split off, so it could pass through the House quickly and be delivered to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador right now. The government opposes it every time. Does the government really care about Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador? If it did, it would split that part of the bill off right now and get that money delivered to those people.

It bothers me as someone from Alberta, someone who comes from a province where at one point we received equalization at the same time as we were getting revenues from oil and gas. We on this side of the House had to fight hard to get the government to accept that point of view, and now it is playing politics with it. The government is now holding Newfoundland members of Parliament hostage on this issue, knowing that it could push this through right now if it wanted and get the money to Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, but it will not.

On the issue of the gas tax, some of my Liberal colleagues across the way, and frankly some of the big city mayors who basically may as well be a part of that caucus over there, are playing the same kinds of games. We have made it very clear many times that we would deliver gas tax revenues to the municipalities via the provinces to ensure that they could look after their infrastructure.

We made that case way before the government ever conceived of the idea. In fact, we moved a motion in this place some time ago calling for the government to do that. The government voted against the idea. Government members thought it was a crazy idea. Imagine taking the excise tax on fuel and giving it back to municipalities. That is basically what the government argued.

• (1620)

A few months later the then finance minister, now the Prime Minister, went to the FCM in British Columbia and argued that should be done. It is going ahead and doing it. Now Liberals are telling Canadians falsely that we would not deliver that. We would move heaven and earth to get that money to municipalities so they can look after their infrastructure. We know how important that is. It is very unfortunate that the government is telling people things that are not true about what our plan is. We absolutely would deliver that money.

I want to say a couple of words about some of the games the government is playing today with the fiscal framework. It was not very long ago that the finance minister argued how important it was to maintain a contingency reserve and prudence factor of \$4 billion a year. He wanted to increase it by \$1 billion a year going out over the next number of years because he was worried about uncertainty in the world. He was worried about the impact of things like terrorist attacks and what it would mean to our economy if those kinds of things occurred. We could go into a tailspin and it could mean that we could end up in a deficit again.

He was worried about the high cost of oil and what it would do to the world economy or the U.S. housing bubble. There were all kinds of uncertainties that the finance minister pointed to and said that it was essential the government have a big contingency and prudence factor. No sooner had those words quit echoing in this place, the

Prime Minister was undermining his own finance minister saying that it really did not need \$4 billion. It only really need \$2 billion. He wanted so badly to strike the deal with the NDP that he was prepared to possibly sacrifice the financial well-being of 31 million Canadians. That is unforgivable and it is simply wrong.

It comes on top of sacrificing the well-being of all the people who would have had jobs if the government were serious about following through on its commitment to lower taxes for the large employers. However, it cast that out as well.

I am arguing that it is very cynical for the government to do this in the face of the sponsorship scandal. It was so desperate to hold on to a few more votes from the NDP that it completely caved in and threw all its principles out the window simply to cling to power. That is not acceptable.

I argue that if there is a party in Canada today that is standing up for families, seniors, small business people and people in businesses of all sizes who create jobs, it is the Conservative Party of Canada. Conservatives are opposing Bill C-48 because we think it imperils the ability of Canadians to have a bright future.

I will conclude with this. The most dangerous thing of all about Bill C-48 is how the government is trying to cover its tracks on sponsorship by buying votes in a way that I am afraid will drive federalists in Quebec into the arms of the separatists. Instead of dealing with the corruption problem head on, what the Liberals are continuing to do is allow federalism in Quebec to be tainted. By refusing to deal with this issue head on, they are breathing new life into the separatist movement in Quebec.

If this is allowed to go forward without dealing with the separatism issue and the corruption, it will be on the heads of the members of the Liberal Party of Canada if this causes the breakup of our country.

• (1625)

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it strangely ironic. If the Conservative Party forces an election, it will be itself that will be causing the separatists to gain more political strength in the province of Quebec, and he knows that full well. The separatists have the ear of the Conservative Party because they would like to have an election.

I am amazed at the way the member for Medicine Hat and the members opposite talk about the deal we have made with the NDP. The Conservative Party reneged on its support of the budget. Given the fact that Canadians want to see this Parliament work, the government had to look around for some other allies, and the ally was the NDP.

There have been some numbers bandied about regarding the cost of the agreement. The reality is that the net cost is about \$9 billion and that will be funded out of budgetary surpluses over the next few years and will be fairly readily accomplished.



*Government Orders*

The member for Medicine Hat and his colleagues try to paint a picture of a government on this side that is not fiscally responsible. I guess he forgets the fact that the government is the darling of the OECD countries in terms of the performance of our economy. We have had a steady growth at 3% per year. We have paid down our debt to below 40% of GDP from a high of 67% to 68%. We have low unemployment, below 7% which is setting new records. We have low interest rates and low inflation. Canadians are able to buy homes when they could not before. The reason the government is able to make a deal with the NDP is because we have this strong economic performance, with eight consecutive budgetary surpluses. It is unsurpassed in the OECD and the G-8 nations.

I would like to come back also to the notion of the gun registry. I have heard the figure of \$2 billion before and it is a total fabrication, not unlike the \$1 billion boondoggle of HRDC that was captioned in that way by the Reform Party and the Alliance. Of the \$1 billion boondoggle, probably \$35,000 is unaccounted for.

With an expenditure of \$55 million a year for the gun registry, if it is saving lives, does the member not think it is worth that kind of expenditure?

• (1630)

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, what would save lives is if that \$2 billion went into front line policing. Police chiefs everywhere are asking for that today. We have seen an explosion in the illegal use of hand guns in Toronto, for instance. We have Police Chief Julian Fantino, who was initially a supporter of the firearms registry, say that it should be scrapped and that money should go to front line policing. I agree with him. I wish the member across the way, who happens to be from Toronto, would agree with his police chief.

However, I want to take on a couple of things the member said. He has said that the government is doing wonderfully and all the surpluses are great. The government and the bureaucracy are doing wonderfully because all those revenues have gone to expand government. What is the net benefit for Canadians? Are people seeing a 50% increase in the value of the services being delivered to them today? Has anyone here tried to work with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration lately? It takes years to deal with it.

In terms of the government's record, back in January Don Drummond, a former deputy finance minister in the Department of Finance, brought down a report. He pointed out that take-home pay in Canada had grown by only 3.6% since 1989. That works out to \$84 a year. A report came out last week from Statistics Canada which pointed out that take-home pay last year went down.

It is time for a new approach. It is time to lower taxes for Canadians, create economic activity and leave that money in the pockets of families. They are the people who know what is best for their own families. They know how to spend that money in a way that benefits them. It is not going to be my friend across the way or a bunch of bureaucrats who know that.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have been listening with great interest to the Conservative spokesperson trying to rationalize his way through one of the most cynical and sinister marriages of convenience in history. For a party opposed to same sex marriage, it is amazing that the party leader is so quick to

crawl into bed with the leader of separatists while they demonize separatists at the same time.

Could the member explain something that is totally puzzling to Canadians? We hear on the one hand that very capable communicator, and I do not doubt that for a minute, absolutely seething with rage and condemning the government for its reckless spending spree, ensuring that his party sideswipes the NDP every step of the way. At the same time he, his leader and every other Conservative whose partisan interests are served by it are going around the country with a pail and a shovel saying, "By the way", following the Prime Minister's various commitments, "you can count on us to honour every one of these spending commitments".

How does a sensible person, who knows and understands finances, rationalize that kind of fundamental contradiction, to say that it is reckless to make these commitments, that it is reckless spending, that it will break the bank, that it is fiscally irresponsible, but "vote for us" in an election that Canadians neither need nor want? They will get their pound of flesh for the scandal in due course, but vote for them and they will honour all of those reckless, irresponsible excessive spending commitments.

How does the member explain that kind of contradiction?

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, I would argue that I am not seething with rage right now. I want my friend across the way to know that we oppose the budget because we think it is dangerous for families, for farmers and small business people.

In response to her question about enjoying the support of the Bloc Québécois, I have to point out to the member that in the last election campaign it was her leader who said that he would support a unilateral declaration of independence. It sounds like it is the NDP that is the biggest supporter of separatism of all.

In response to her question about the issue of supporting deals that the government has struck, we have said that we oppose the NDP-Liberal budget, Bill C-48. We will not support the expenditure of \$4.6 billion. In fact, even the finance minister of the government does not seem to support it.

Setting that aside, we do support a number of the deals that have been struck under Bill C-43.

As the member knows, we said, at the time Bill C-43 came down, that there were a number of things that we supported in it. Therefore, we are being completely consistent with that. We believe that some of these things need to be done. What pains me is the government has now taken some of the things out of there that were the best parts of that budget, including the tax relief on large employers that would have created 340,000 jobs.

I am disappointed that my friend, who is supposedly a friend of labour, does not support that aspect of Bill C-43.

• (1635)

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP budget, Bill C-48, proposes \$4.6 billion in spending left out of the Liberal budget, Bill C-43.

*Government Orders*

The member for Davenport earlier said that this was money for Liberal priorities. If these are priorities, why have they been left out of the Liberal budget? Did the finance minister not get his priorities right the first time and needed a napkin passed to him to remind him of what Liberal priorities were?

We know the NDP priorities are fiscal ruin and a return to deficits. Could the member for Medicine Hat tell us what real Liberal priorities are?

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, I think people in Ontario still have nightmares about the old NDP government in Ontario. However, my friend makes a very good point.

The finance minister said, when he brought down Bill C-43, that those were his priorities. These were the things that were right for the country. After that time, when the NDP was questioning him about some of the other things it wanted to do, he said that the government could not do them, that they were wrong for Canada and that his budget could not be cherry-picked and stripped away piece by piece.

Clearly, those were not the priorities of the Liberals but they became the priorities of convenience to simply grab the 19 votes of the NDP and avoid being defeated. It should make Canadians pretty cynical about how the Liberal government operates.

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to enter the debate on Bill C-48.

[*Translation*]

In December 2003, the Prime Minister announced the creation of a new Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. The creation of this new department and portfolio integrates, under one minister, the core activities of the previous Department of the Solicitor General, the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness and the National Crime Prevention Centre and the new Canada Border Services Agency.

The Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness serves as the central nervous system for a security portfolio that includes the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canada Firearms Centre, the Correctional Service of Canada, the National Parole Board and the Canada Border Services Agency.

[*English*]

In the face of the complex times in which we live, Canada requires, and the public expects, a comprehensive and integrated approach to public safety. Through the public safety and emergency preparedness portfolio, the Government of Canada has demonstrated its belief in protecting the safety and security of its citizens.

Since 9/11 the government has invested more than \$9.5 billion in initiatives to strengthen domestic security, improve our emergency preparedness and response and contribute to international security efforts.

We must, however, continue to invest in stronger and smarter borders to protect both our security and our economic interests; to ensure safe communities by supporting crime prevention, gun control and Canada's corrections and parole systems; and finally, to

maintain anti-terrorism measures, policing and preparedness for all types of emergencies.

This is just what the government did in budget 2005. By allocating the necessary funding to maintain the forward momentum of this important work, it reaffirmed a commitment to both public safety in Canada and meeting our global responsibilities.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

Specifically, budget 2005 allocated more than \$1 billion to support key elements of the national security policy. Hon. Anne McLellan, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, tabled this policy in this House just over a year ago and this week tabled a report on the progress of this important policy.

[*English*]

Under the national security policy, we are investing in emergency management, including \$56 million over five years for emergency management initiatives and \$34 million over five years in pandemic influenza preparedness.

We are also strengthening transportation security, by allocating \$225 million over five years to further enhance the security of the country's marine transportation system and \$88 million over five years for Canada to work with the U.S. to increase targeting and sharing information on high risk cargo.

As well, we are creating a more secure border through additional funding of \$433 million to enhance the government's capacity to manage the flow of people and goods to and from Canada.

We are also investing \$117 million over the next five years in the integrated proceeds of crime initiative, to seize profits and assets from criminal organizations in an effort to combat organized crime.

Finally, we are working to tackle crime before it happens by investing an additional \$30 million a year over the next three years to support community based crime prevention initiatives as part of the national crime prevention strategy.

I have seen the benefits of that crime prevention program working in my riding of Etobicoke North, where we have had a record of some gun related and drug related crime. These programs are working.

This whole suite of issues and elements of the budget that I have described is comprised of these important initiatives. That is why we need to support the budget before the House.

There is no question that we are making progress. In fact, just this week, former U.S. homeland security secretary Tom Ridge praised Canada's cooperative efforts to guard our border and defend against terrorism. He said in Toronto on Wednesday:

I don't accept the thesis that Canada is lenient or hasn't done what it needs to do to...advance their interest and do their share to combat terrorism.

*Government Orders*

He said further:

The law enforcement and intelligence community collaboration is excellent.

Doing our share is also demonstrated by several other actions that have taken place within the public safety and emergency preparedness portfolio.

The government operations centre and the Canadian cyber incident response centre have been established and are operational on a 24/7 basis.

The Government of Canada is implementing the national emergency response system, which ensures that Canada is prepared for any type of national emergency by adopting an "all hazards" approach.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments have established a permanent, high level forum on emergencies. It held its first meeting in more than a decade in January 2005.

Finally, 18 federal departments participated in Triple Play, a joint Canada-U.S.-U.K. counterterrorism exercise from April 4 to 8, 2005.

That said, we clearly have a full agenda ahead of us. We will continue to strengthen cooperation with the provinces, territories and first line responders and look for new ways to leverage our capabilities. We also will aim to develop an integrated approach to emergency management and national security across government so that we are ready to adapt to changing circumstances.

Let me close by saying that we can be proud of what we have accomplished in a relatively short period of time. The public safety and emergency preparedness portfolio is becoming much more efficient and effective at delivering a truly fundamental public service: helping to protect the safety and security of Canadians. That effort now has a solid foundation on which to build, a foundation enhanced by the allocations in budget 2005.

[*Translation*]

The Government of Canada must play a fundamental role in securing the health and safety of Canadians, while ensuring that all Canadians continue to enjoy the benefits of an open society. That is why it is committed to ensuring that Canada's public safety and security systems remain effective, fair, progressive and uniquely Canadian, building on a culture of cooperation and engagement from neighbourhoods to nations.

• (1645)

[*English*]

The investments of budget 2005, rather than being just a reactive response to threats facing our country, represent investments that Canada needs and that Canadians want and expect to ensure their collective safety and security.

Such expectations by our citizens are their fundamental right, which is why we as a government must honour such a right and why we in this House need to keep this Parliament working, keep this legislation moving and pass this budget: so that Canadians can benefit both from these measures that affect our public safety and national security and from the many other excellent measures contained in budget 2005.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to put a question to the parliamentary secretary which I think raises real questions about the gap between commitments made on the eve of elections and the actual delivery.

I speak specifically with respect to my own riding about the virtual Liberal rally held on the eve of the last election, announcing with great fanfare a commitment of \$115 million to assist ports and port facilities with security enhancements.

The issue of security in our ports is a very serious one. Halifax is the third largest port in the country. In good faith, the port authority submitted a proposal for I think \$1.2 million in expenditures from that \$115 million. It ended up with a tiny portion of that, about one-fifth of what was needed, about \$220,000.

It was not just the port authority that was very distressed, but the two terminal operators, Halterm and Ceres, and Scotia Terminals, and other stakeholders who have ended up saying, "What happened to the commitment that we needed to move urgently to make our ports more secure, and specifically, what happened to the rest of that \$115 million?"

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary can indicate if that is going to be announced again on the eve of another election, or can we expect it to finally come through to actually deal with the real security threats to our ports that need to be addressed?

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the specifics of the particular request from the port of Halifax, but I am happy to investigate.

That is why it is so important for the budget to pass and for Parliament to keep working: so that we can keep advancing this agenda. I should say at the outset that there is a demand for funding to provide additional security in ports, not only in Halifax but in British Columbia and other ports. There is a lot of interest there and not all requests and demands can be met.

As an example, the port of Prince Rupert is looking to expand its capabilities. Given the amount of trade that we have with the Far East, with China and other countries, and the congestion that is occurring at the Vancouver port authority, it makes some sense for us to invest and help the port of Prince Rupert expand its capacity and at the same time help ports like the Vancouver port authority and the port of Halifax to meet their responsibilities.

Finally, I should add that one of the elements of the spending on shipping and container initiatives is to interdict ships as they are being loaded in ports outside of North America.

We are cooperating with the United States on this because we do not want a vessel arriving in Halifax or Vancouver that has already had some dangerous materials on it that could cause some harm. We are working with the United States and other countries around the world to inspect vessels strategically while they are loaded, before they enter North American waters.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the theme of the first question, which is that the government keeps saying over and over again that if the budget is not passed all these spending commitments are in trouble, something that was actually refuted by the mayor of Edmonton right after the signing this weekend.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary about one specific thing. In November of 2003, the then minister of human resources said that the government would actually put at least \$6 million toward library materials for the blind across this country. The government committed to it in the next budget.

The Liberals have now put it in budget 2005 and again it is the same refrain: that if the budget is not passed and if somehow this Parliament does not keep going, that will endanger the spending. The fact is that so many of these spending commitments were made years ago and they should have been acted upon years ago.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to answer why that commitment of November 2003 was not acted upon way back when. It has not even been up for discussion.

Why does the government keep saying that all these spending commitments will be endangered? It has had years to implement them and failed to do so. The fact is that it is more the government's responsibility than Parliament's to keep it going, with the Liberals making promises on commitments they made years ago.

• (1650)

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment specifically on the commitment that apparently was made in 2003, by the then minister of human resources, for library materials. Clearly, that is a very sound initiative. I know the government has exerted a lot of effort on literacy and education. This is really the key to our future.

The problem I suspect the finance minister has is that there are so many competing demands that the resources to do everything simply cannot be made available each and every year. That is why the government is proud to stand on its record of eight consecutive surpluses. It is because of the surpluses that we are able to invest more today. We had to take the action earlier to allow that to happen.

Canadians I talk to want this Parliament to work. They think we are making good progress and want this Parliament to work. They do not want an election. I would like to see this budget pass, so that these initiatives can be funded.

**Mr. Gary Goodyear (Cambridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to stand in this House on behalf of the constituents of Cambridge, and North Dumfries in my riding, to speak to the government's various budgets.

I will speak to Bill C-48, but I will also make reference to the other budget, the NDP-Liberal alliance, which I feel must be stopped in order to save Canada from the economic perils of overspending and job loss.

The Liberals have introduced an institutional type of child care legislation that they say will cost \$5 billion over five years. That is \$1 billion a year, but yet unbiased experts say that will never happen. The Canadian Council on Social Development says that the program will need at least \$12 billion per year. That is an \$11 billion shortfall.

Where do we expect that extra money to come from? It will come from taxpayers, on the backs of taxpayers.

The offer that the Liberals have made is only for some children, not all children. What about all the other children who will be left out of the program? I am gravely concerned that too many parents in my riding will have to drive over an hour to partake or use one of these publicly funded centres. I am also concerned that there will be huge waiting lists, as there are in the Quebec system, and the extreme budget overruns into the tens of billions of dollars will occur at the expense of taxpayers.

Who chooses which children get to participate in this program? If we cannot afford health care today, how can we afford such a ridiculous over-funded endorsement. The Conservative Party has a much better plan that will work to address the needs of all parents without bankrupting all taxpayers. The Liberal system discriminates against stay at home parents, shift workers, and those living outside larger centres and ethnic traditions.

We now live in a country so overburdened with tax that one parent must work just to pay the family's taxes. We will put money directly into the hands of parents, so they can make their own child care choices. We believe that Canadian parents want and deserve child care options. It should not be up to the government to dictate the only option for parents nor how children must be raised. The only option that I have is to vote against something that removes choice, is completely without proper funding, and as such will either immediately or eventually let parents down.

I also have serious and grave concerns about our firefighters, police, border security personnel and corrections officers. Rather than redirect wasteful spending to shore up and protect those who are required to protect us, the government still refuses to cancel the failed and completely useless gun registry. Despite grand Liberal promises to reduce costs for a registry that was only supposed to cost \$2 million in the first place, Canadians continue to see their hard earned tax dollars poured into this black hole.

We think that money should be put into the hands of our police, so that they can get criminals off the street. The government promised to put in place a national sex offender registry, but where is it? My riding of Cambridge, and North Dumfries, has over 200 offenders. Recently, one reoffended and the police had no idea that he had been returned to Canada.

The Deputy Prime Minister's office officials said that the police should have been told. The Canada border security said something completely different. The fact is that the registry, if there is one, appears to be a typical Liberal program that is voluntary. Heaven forbid we offend the offenders.

*Government Orders*

●(1655)

I am concerned about our border officers. Liberals believe our security is okay and that we have smart borders. The fact is that we have approximately 225 unguarded roads between Canada and the United States. I stood here in the House while members opposite defended what must be one of the most ridiculous statements I have ever heard. It was something to the effect that less border security is more safe.

That is not smart borders; that is dumb borders. What next? Are we going to nail pictures of guards into the booths of the rest of these border crossings? These crossings have hundreds of cars cross them, unseen, undetected and unsearched. Well, I guess that is voluntary, too. Maybe a few bucks spent here would catch all these illegal drugs and firearms this government thinks we need to register.

However, I cannot figure it out and that, too, is why Canadians will be pleased that we cannot support this budget. People are growing sick and tired of policies that put criminals ahead of victims, lawbreakers ahead of law abiders.

It is businesses that create jobs and the hardworking Canadians who drive our economy. It is these very people who have had the door slammed in their faces by the new NDP-Liberal alliance. This deal shows just how out of touch these parties are with real Canadians. This is simply a massive spending exercise by the Liberal government in an attempt to cling to the perks of power.

The NDP and Liberals think that businesses somehow take these tax cuts and stuff them into mattresses, and that they have billions of dollars in surpluses stuffed away in trust funds and trust accounts inaccessible to Parliament. However, the fact is these businesses reinvest. They build another wing to their factories. They buy more equipment. They spend money to become competitive, and guess what? They hire people to fill those new wings and to operate that equipment.

This budget proposes that we buy what looks like \$10 billion in clean air credits from other countries. That will not give us one molecule of clean air for my constituents in Cambridge. The asthma rate in southern Ontario is at a life threatening increase. It is a life threatening danger to our children and a preventable burden to our health care system. I cannot support a budget that pretends to emphasize clean air and provide environmental protection.

I cannot support a budget, or this budget in particular, or the new NDP one frankly because it would kill jobs at Budd Automotive and other vital industries all across Ontario and Canada. It would not guarantee one molecule of clean air for Cambridge, Kitchener or Waterloo, which is very important to me. It would not provide one more doctor, save one life or help anyone secure a job.

I support the Conservative Party plan that would give parents choices, allowing them to make decisions on how their children would be raised. That is the way I believe it should be done. I support the Conservative Party plan to fight crime and criminals, and to protect our borders, not just talk about it. I support the Conservative Party plan to reduce taxes and put more of these huge surpluses back into the pockets of the very people who earned them and know best how to spend them.

Canadians need truthful fiscality. They deserve transparent accounting and accountability. Neither of these budgets, frankly, is good enough for Canadians. I understand the members opposite cannot do better than this, but Canadians deserve better just the same. I cannot support this budget or the other budget.

\* \* \*

●(1700)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

STANDING COMMITTEES ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES, FINANCE, AND PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions have taken place between all parties concerning debates that are scheduled to take place later today on three motions to concur in committee reports. The three motions are from the member for Vegreville—Wainwright concerning the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates; the member for Prince George—Peace River concerning the third report of the Standing Committee on Finance, with an amendment from the member for Calgary Southwest; and the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell concerning the 21st report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I believe that you would find unanimous consent to deem these debates to have taken place, the questions deemed to have been put, and the votes requested and deferred to the end of government orders on Wednesday, May 18.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the unanimous consent of the House to proceed in such a fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MINISTER OF FINANCE TO MAKE CERTAIN PAYMENTS**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-48, an act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

**Hon. Peter Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague is well informed about these things and I know he will have followed the 18th century and 19th century debates in legislatures across the country about public schools and universal education, and how important it was in those days, as the industrial revolution was moving along, to have an educated population that at least attended elementary school.

I am sure he is also familiar with the debates later on about whether high school should be universal. Now he is talking about early childhood development. In more than two out of three families in this country both parents work. Not just the care but the education which families in the past did is now a matter of public debate. Before elementary school existed it was assumed that families did this for their own children.

*Government Orders*

I hear him saying there should be choices for parents. I am not exactly sure what he means by that. In the elementary schools there are private options. In high schools there are private options. However we first put in place the public systems and we gave the parents choice through those public systems, through school boards and involvement in school boards, in the process of raising the taxes and actually spending the taxes.

Now he is talking about these children being denied full public early childhood education. It is not a matter of something in the future. It is already late that we as a society are doing this. I would like his comments on that. Would he in the 18th and 19th centuries have been arguing against public education, high school and elementary school, the way he is arguing now?

He talked about the gun registry and gun control. The total cost, as he knows, of all gun control, gun control at the borders and gun control on our streets over 10 years, is at \$1 billion. The gun registry is one-twentieth of that. Does he think that that one-two thousandth of the federal budget was too much to give us the control over guns that we have at the present time?

• (1705)

**Mr. Gary Goodyear:** Mr. Speaker, if the member would prefer I will answer the second part of his question first so I do not forget.

The fact is we do not have control over our guns in this country. The fact is that we have had a handgun registry since 1995 and it has not stopped the handgun shootings in Toronto or around the country. It is a failed program and I would challenge the members opposite to prove that it is doing anything. Clearly, if it saves one life it would be worth it, but it is not doing that. It is really making criminals out of duck hunters and farmers.

As to the early childhood education, I will not go into the scientific evidence that in some cases there is a debate as to how young children should enter the educational program. In the 1890s the hon. member should know that as much information was given to someone in one year that we are now presented in one day. Clearly, the times have changed.

What the Conservative Party is talking about is giving choice to parents. If parents want to send their children to childhood education, if parents want to send their children into a child care arena, they would be quite capable of doing that under the Conservative Party plan. However what about those parents who choose to take on a part time job so they can stay home with their children or parents who choose to hire a neighbour or their mother to look after the children?

More important than all of that in some cases are the ethnic traditions that are not being respected and are being discriminated against by a public program that all taxpayers will have to pay but only very few will be able to use.

**Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to speak to an important document, Bill C-48.

It is becoming increasingly clear from what we have heard today that Bill C-48 is not as disgraceful as the leader of the official opposition has said. In fact, I would like to take a moment to congratulate my colleagues on this side of the floor for highlighting

just how important the measures contained in Bill C-48 are to Canadians and how out of step the official opposition is with the Canadian public in terms of its priorities. After all, we are talking about a bill that strengthens the social foundation of a budget that the official opposition once endorsed.

When people talk about a hidden agenda, I cannot blame them. From what we have seen in recent weeks, it has become evident that the official opposition will say just about anything to score political points. Take for example the case my colleague made earlier about federal gas tax sharing with cities and communities. The official opposition voted against this at its policy convention.

Then, after realizing how popular this budget initiative was with Canadians, it reversed its course and said it supported it. It sometimes seems like it wants to adopt the entire budget as its next election policy platform even though those members say that they will be voting against it. I know that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery but this is getting ridiculous. It clearly illustrates where the official opposition is looking for leadership. It is rather sad and somewhat telling that it is not within its own ranks.

Why is the official opposition dithering? In short, because the official opposition knows full well that both the budget and today's bill reflect the highest priorities of Canadians and it is beginning to appreciate the consequences of delaying and compromising Canadians' aspirations for a wealthier and more secure society.

Today marks a defining moment. Canadians will remember how each and every one of us vote because it is their future at stake. Bill C-48 and the budget that it complements are the litmus test for where we all stand on these matters. It will separate those who care about Canada from those who care about scoring political points.

What is in Bill C-48 that the official opposition finds so disgraceful? Is it the \$900 million more in federal transfers for municipalities so they can make crucial investments in public transit, cut pollution and reduce gridlocks?

For the riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, which is located in Mississauga, the sixth largest city in Canada, to connect Mississauga to Toronto is a great priority. It would be environmentally friendly. It would help families spend more time in their homes and with their children. It would improve the quality of life for Canadians who live in our communities and cities.

Perhaps the official opposition does not like the \$1.5 billion more to make post-secondary education more accessible or the \$500 million more in foreign aid. Maybe it is the low income housing energy retrofit program that the official opposition finds so distasteful.

For Canadians, the merits of these initiatives speak for themselves. Given that some hon. members are so out of line with the priorities of Canadians it may be appropriate to explain in greater detail why these programs are so important to Canadians.

*Government Orders*

Support for affordable housing for low income Canadians is money that will reinforce the Government of Canada's commitment to help alleviate problems associated with the affordability and stock of adequate low income housing.

As some hon. members are no doubt aware, the Government of Canada invests \$1.9 billion each and every year in order to support 640,000 families living in existing social housing units across the country. Funding for these social housing units has been in place for many years and represents the cornerstone of federal support in this area.

● (1710)

That is not all the government has done. Let us look at the 2001 budget's affordable housing initiative. This program invested \$680 million over five years to help increase the supply of affordable rental housing. It did so by providing capital grants to builders to encourage the construction of new affordable rental housing. The success of this program led to an additional investment of \$320 million over five years in the 2003 budget.

Again, that is not all the government has done. Budget 2003 extended the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's housing renovation programs for an additional three years at an annual cost of \$128 million. This will preserve the existing stock of affordable housing through renovation and renewal and help low income persons with critical housing repair needs.

In short, the Government of Canada has made new funding commitments for almost \$3 billion since 2000 to help ease the housing affordability challenges faced by low income Canadians. Bill C-48 strengthens these efforts because that is what Canadians want.

I think it is very telling indeed that the official opposition considers these types of measures disgraceful. It points to its overall disdain for investment to help those who are least able to help themselves. Fortunately, most Canadians would disagree very strongly with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Most Canadians understand that Bill C-48 reflects the principles of social justice that inspire this government and defines us as a nation.

Canadians understand that it will create cleaner, safer and more productive communities. It will help ensure that more of us are able to share in the promise of our society. It will lower heating costs for those who need them lowered the most. It will help thousands of low income Canadians put a roof over their heads. It will not compromise the gains that Canadians have realized from the elimination of the deficit and the ongoing reduction of the debt.

I myself just do not understand what is so disgraceful about this but I am not the one who ultimately will be judging. Canadians will be the ultimate judge of that. It is simply my hope that hon. members will bear this in mind when they vote on this bill.

This bill affects the very lives of people. Canadians expect us to do what is good by them. Canadians expect their government to invest in the programs that are the envy of the world and affect their very lives.

I urge my colleagues in the House and members of the Conservative Party to please support this bill and the budget, and

do not let the Bloc divide us. Let us make Canada strong and let us look after Canadians as they expect us to do.

● (1715)

**Mr. Ken Epp (Edmonton—Sherwood Park, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am curious about one thing. The member is urging us to support this budget but this stuff was not in the budget. If we look at the original budget that the Minister of Finance read to the House, these things were not there. I wonder whether he has any concern at all about the fact that the protocol on the budget and budget speeches is being destroyed by the Liberal government.

It used to be that if there was a leak from a budget, the Minister of Finance resigned because it was considered so sacrosanct. Under the Liberals, leaks have become sort of the play of the day. It also used to be that once the finance minister delivered the budget in the House the things that he announced were pretty well written in stone so that businesses and individuals could plan because they knew the new rules.

We now have things in Bill C-48, which were not in the budget, that are massive changes in the spending patterns and the reduction of the amount that is attributed to the reduction of our debt and he is saying that we ought to support the bill. In a sense, he is supporting a totally ad hoc procedure in terms of government budgeting, which I do not think is worthy in our country.

**Mr. Wajid Khan:** Madam Speaker, I would like to point out that when this budget was brought out, that party sat out. When this budget was brought out it was the Leader of the Opposition who said that he did not find anything in the budget which he could not support. Of course, they changed their mind.

The hon. member who spoke before said that the lack of tax cuts cost Canadians 340,000 jobs. We did not lose those jobs. It was that party which did not support the budget and that cost Canadians jobs. Minority parliaments are about negotiation. They did not, we had to and we did.

These add on funds have some conditions. First, we must not go into a deficit. Second, we must reduce the debt. Third, they must be spent in the priorities which are basically Liberal priorities.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, today a lot was said about the budget speech. We hear a lot about the big bad separatists from Quebec and the big bad Bloc members in Ottawa, as though we alone are carrying the weight of the country on our shoulders.

I will remind our colleagues opposite that since 1982, when the Constitution was patriated, unilaterally—I can say for sure—this government did everything it could to force Quebec to leave the federation. The Conservatives do not have to make much of an effort right now. When they vote the same way we do, we manage to defeat this government on bills that make no sense, and the budget is no different. It offers nothing to Quebec.

*Government Orders*

It is too bad the Conservatives did not vote against the budget at first reading. The Bloc Québécois would have because there was nothing in it for Quebec—not one cent. Today, to please the NDP and buy its vote, the government is granting minimal amounts, but we do not know any of the terms such as the period of time or the exact amount. It is all very uncertain.

I was listening to our NDP colleague from Halifax talking about the Bloc Québécois-Conservative Party alliance. At least we did not form an alliance with a party as the NDP did.

In that vein, this is my question: what does this party truly have to offer to Quebec, in terms of its jurisdictions?

[*English*]

**Mr. Wajid Khan:** Madam Speaker, I can assure members that after the next election, I will still be here and they will be very familiar with my riding.

However, what is unacceptable by any standards, regardless of the consequences, is the idea of breaking up a country, which has taken over 100 years to build, and destroying a nation and the basic fabric of it. There is no reason and no justification for anyone to do that. Therefore, I would suggest to my hon. colleague that Canada is a country which was built together. It is a country which should be kept together, and they should appreciate the value of that. There is no reason why we cannot work things out within this Parliament and within the country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Côté (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Madam Speaker, first, I want to quote the start of the budget speech by the Minister of Finance:

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to all those who have helped in the preparation of this 2005 federal budget—from the many organizations and professional groups that presented expert briefs, to Canadians from every corner of the country who submitted individual letters and ideas.

Their contributions, their counsel and their concerns have helped shape the budget I am tabling today.

The minister was telling tales. Bill C-48 makes this clear. At the first sign of significant pressure, he introduced a bill devoid of logic that negates all the consultations that occurred in the months preceding the tabling of the budget, including those held by the Standing Committee on Finance.

The Bloc Québécois voted against this budget when it was tabled. I simply want to briefly remind the House why. First, this budget did not propose any solution to the fiscal imbalance. Also, it made no attempt to respond to the needs of Quebecers, with regard to EI, for example. There was no specific plan to implement the Kyoto protocol. Things have even gotten worse, since a bad plan for implementing the protocol was tabled. Today, farmers protested in front of the House of Commons. This budget did not meet their needs whatsoever. The same is true of international aid. This budget, like Bill C-43, has no respect whatsoever for Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

We voted against the budget and we will vote against the budget implementation bills, meaning Bills C-48 and C-43.

What is even more disturbing about Bill C-48 is that it is nothing but an empty shell. I may not have as many years in this House as

some, but I do not believe I have ever seen such a senseless bill. It contains no minimums, only maximums, and no specific time lines. The amounts are contingent on whatever surplus there will be at the end of a fiscal year.

Mind you, I am not worried about the existence of a surplus. I am, in fact, sure that the actual surplus at the end of the fiscal year will be far more than set out in the budget. This is an old trick, one used by the previous government, and still being used by this one.

This bill does not reflect a number of realities, including the realities of Quebec. Once again, it encroaches on Quebec's jurisdiction, over education in particular.

This is, without a doubt, a hollow bill, and I find it hard to understand why the NDP got involved in this with no guarantee that its requirements would be respected. That was made clear when the NDP leader had to remind the Prime Minister that the corporate income tax reductions, which he required in exchange, were not in the bill. The Prime Minister then had to suddenly pull a rabbit out of a hat and say that this bill was going to apply only to fiscal years 2006-07 and 2007-08, and that the reductions would come the year after, anyway, so he did not need to cancel them.

● (1725)

This is a fine example of a fool's deal. I am sure they meant well. I have to say, however, in this House, that the NDP has been had. These are last minute add ons, the desperate efforts of a Prime Minister to try to buy another election. This time, perhaps, with dirty money—we will see—but certainly with taxpayers' money.

If Bill C-48 at least resolved the problems in the budget or in Bill C-43. But no, not even. To some extent, it is worsening things.

Once again, Bill C-48 ignores the fiscal imbalance completely. They will invest money in Kyoto, but the plan remains a bad one. I note that there is neither a minimum nor a timetable. They continue to invest in areas of jurisdiction, without a specific plan. They talk a lot about lowered tuition fees. In Quebec, we were not consulted a whole lot. Had we been, they would know that tuition fees are already very low, the lowest in Canada.

In terms of social housing, we immediately supported the requests of various groups in this regard. The latest budget made no provision at all. At the last minute, they aligned figures, but no string is attached. Nothing in this bill will require the government to spend these amounts.



*Government Orders*

After years of draconian cuts in transfer payments to the provinces, they claim to be reinvesting in postsecondary education. That represents only 11.5% of the money the federal government is investing. Is there a little money in this bill? Perhaps. Once again, no minimum amount, no timetable for the conditions attached to the payment of these amounts and no guarantee it will be done.

It is a last minute announcement. The worst of it is that this government has no qualms telling people, voters, that, if it is not re-elected, the money will never be invested. It is trying once again to frighten voters by saying the money will disappear if the government is defeated. This is the government that ignored education when it presented its 2005 budget.

In the case of the environment, as I mentioned earlier, the Kyoto plan is a bad one. I am far from convinced that an injection of money will improve the situation. In fact, it could even worsen it. The Kyoto protocol is badly suited to the situation in Quebec, specifically.

In terms of international aid, the February 23, 2005, federal budget does not provide any new money, as you will recall. The Bloc Québécois demands that the government draft a serious, long-term plan to achieve the UN target of 0.7% of GDP by 2015.

Bill C-48 authorizes the government to reach agreements with municipalities, agencies and individuals. In the case of municipalities, again, it is a clear encroachment on the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

Worse yet are the foundations. This has come up quite often in this House. The government, with no real plan and not knowing what to do with its surplus, gives money to the foundations. For the most part, this money has not yet been used. I have even raised certain cases of foundations that have more money in the bank now than when they received the payments. It is important to say that Bill C-48 seems to authorize payments to foundations.

In closing, we will vote against the budget because it is bad for Quebec. Implementation bills, including Bill C-43, just keep repeating the same mistakes. Bill C-48 is an empty shell designed to buy votes with taxpayer dollars.

• (1730)

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a few questions of the Bloc Québécois member who has just spoken.

[English]

I listened very carefully to the member's speech. I was with him when he condemned the government for the introduction of a budget that failed to deliver what was needed for affordable housing and energy retrofitting. I was with him absolutely all the way when he condemned the budget because it did not put money, as promised, into post-secondary education and training. I was with him all the way when he talked about how disgraceful it was that the original Liberal budget introduced in the House did not commit in any meaningful way to overseas development assistance. It did not even come close to putting in place timetables and targets to deliver on our longstanding commitment, actually a standard set by Canada in the first instance, of moving to commit 0.7% of our GDP to overseas development assistance.

Then he lost me, because he then said that his party could not support Bill C-48, which actually brings in concrete remedies for every one of those things that the Bloc members say was wrong with the original budget.

Let me make it absolutely clear that the budget does not deal with all of the shortcomings. It does not deal with everything we would like to see remedied. However, it is absolutely not accurate to characterize the budget as failing to address any of these things which the member himself outlined as priorities, because it precisely commits to deliver \$4.5 billion. I get excited at the thought of that money being directed to the very priorities the member talked about.

I wonder if he could explain how it is that the very priorities he mentioned now are addressed in Bill C-48, yet he is rationalizing his way to a partnership with a party that he absolutely knows would not stand behind any of those priorities. It never has and never will. The damage and destruction caused by that party, by the ultra cons, the no longer progressive Conservatives, is exactly why we are in desperate shape trying to rebuild commitments to affordable housing, post-secondary education, energy retrofitting, public transit, all of the things that have been torn down because of the responsiveness of the Liberal government to those pressures not to do those things. Now the member wants to enter into an alliance with that party and call it progress. How does he explain that?

• (1735)

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Côté:** Madam Speaker, I know my colleague has her heart in the right place, and wants to do the right thing, but the problem is that she has been taken in by a fool's bargain. She has agreed to trust this government. The past is an indicator of the future, we must admit.

A year ago, this same government was telling us that people knew enough about the sponsorship scandal, and that the election did not need to be put off until the end of the Gomery inquiry. This year it is telling us the opposite.

Since 1998, this government has been telling us that it was not very certain that there would be a surplus, that caution was needed, that we needed to take care. Year after year, huge surpluses have been kept outside the public debate. When this bill is passed, there will be nothing to force the government to spend that money. It is a simple as that.

I know the hon. member has her heart in the right place but, I regret to say, she has been taken in.

[English]

**Mr. Gary Carr (Halton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there are five areas in the budget which I would like to talk about.

There are five commitments that I made in the last election. Members will remember during that period, which was not that long ago, the number one issue facing Canadians. Right across the country, in Atlantic Canada, including the riding of my hon. friend from the Edmundston area, Quebec and every other province, health care was the single most important issue in the last election.

*Government Orders*

The Prime Minister made a commitment in that election campaign to deal with the health care issue. I was very proud to stand with him in Oakville at a meeting with people from Cancer Care Ontario when he said he was going to tackle the issue. It was a very moving dialogue. We talked about the problems with cancer. The Prime Minister gave them a commitment that he was going to put money into health care.

There is a lot of cynicism about the political process and politicians keeping their promises. The Prime Minister when he was the finance minister cleaned up the finances left by the previous Conservative government. He brought us back to being able to invest in the social programs. He made a commitment to people that he was going to put money into health care, some \$41.3 billion. He had an agreement with all political parties. All provincial leaders representing every political party signed it, as did the territorial leaders. There were premiers from NDP governments, Liberal governments, Conservative governments.

The Prime Minister got the deal in the single most important issue facing Canadians. He did it not two years down the road, not three years down the road, not four years down the road. He did it after the election, which was on June 28, 2004, and by September he had a deal signed by every premier and every territorial leader of every political stripe.

That was the single largest reinvestment in health care since the introduction of medicare. On that particular issue the Prime Minister came through and did what he said he was going to do.

There are four other areas I want to talk about and explain how they relate to building on the priorities in Bill C-48.

On cities and communities, in the last budget we had already put in \$7 billion in the GST rebate. We then promised we were going to increase it by \$5 billion more and we came up with that commitment. Agreements were signed with Alberta and B.C. recently.

Child care is a very important issue as well. We have put \$5 billion over five years into child care. We are very proud to have an agreement with the Ontario government to virtually double the number of child care spaces in the province of Ontario. That is a phenomenal record for a government that has been in less than a year, in making a commitment to the people on the child care issue and doubling it in the province of Ontario to \$5 billion.

On health care we met our commitment. On cities and communities we met our commitment. I have met with mayors and the regional chair in my riding. They all want us to pass the budget, along with Bill C-48. On child care we have met our commitment as well.

I want to talk about the balanced budget provision. There was a lot of talk on the other side that we have to be fiscally responsible. It is a little rich coming from the Conservatives. At the end of their mandate when they left government after eight years there was a deficit of \$40 billion. In the year that they were booted out and left with only two seats in the House, the deficit was actually heading toward \$50 billion. A deficit of close to \$50 billion was left for the Prime Minister when he was minister of finance to clean up. He had to clean up the mess left by Brian Mulroney. The Conservative

government destroyed this country economically, politically and socially for many years to come.

When I look across I see some of the members who were part of that Brian Mulroney government. They are now back again. I say to them that the people of this country are never going to let them ever have control of the finances after what they did to this country and bankrupted us to the tune of \$40 billion.

● (1740)

This Prime Minister when he was the minister of finance made a commitment to the people of this country to balance the budget. My hon. friend the parliamentary secretary will know that we have had eight straight balanced budgets. That is the first time since Confederation that we have had balanced budgets.

The people on the other side whose party gave us the largest deficit in the history of the country are trying to say that we do not know how to run the finances of the country. I look across the way and obviously there are some very young members who may not have been around in 1990 in terms of political careers, but there are some members over there who actually sat in the cabinet of the government that created a \$40 billion deficit after eight years in government. And they are trying to tell us that we do not know how to have fiscally responsible budgets, when for eight straight balanced budgets we have done it.

It is not only a commentary to the current Minister of Finance and his parliamentary secretary, for whom I have a deep respect, but also to the Prime Minister who as the former minister of finance set that in place and cleaned up the mess. He did what he said he was going to do and balanced the budgets. Every other major country in the G-7, Japan, Italy, Germany, France, Britain and the United States, are all running deficits.

All the members opposite, the right wing group that came out of that reform ideology, who like George W. Bush and the tax cuts in the U.S., I will remind them that President George W. Bush is running a \$1.4 trillion deficit over the next five years. I did not say billion; I said trillion. The U.S. cut taxes too much and ended up with huge deficits, to the point where in U.S. magazines some people are saying that is a bigger impediment to the security of the United States than some of the security measures in the rest of the world dealing with terrorism. That is how fundamentally difficult it is for Americans.

Members opposite have come out of that right wing reform ideology, including their leader who came through all that process. Those members have changed their party's name so many times it is as though they are in the witness protection program. They do not want anyone to know who they are. We all remember they were the reform party. Then they were the conservative-reform-alliance party, and I do not mean to be impolite, but it was known as CRAP in those days. Then they changed the name to the alliance party. Those members have changed their party's name so many times it is as though they are in the witness protection program. They want to hide their past.

*Government Orders*

The Conservatives look to George W. Bush and the Americans as the be-all and end-all. I say to those on the other side, look at the deficit he is running. It is an absolute disgrace with a trillion dollar deficit which will affect us. It is affecting the dollar and interest rates. The men and women on the other side who worship George W. Bush and his fiscal policies should be embarrassed for advocating the same thing that is literally bankrupting the U.S.

I will not even get into social security. We have a pension system that is well funded and will be there when I retire. When Emily, my hon. friend's baby daughter retires, the money will be there. In the U.S. the social security is not even secure. People say there will not be money there.

When I hear members on the other side say that Bill C-48 is not fiscally responsible, I say to them that they have absolutely no credibility whatsoever.

**An hon. member:** The member does not know what he is talking about.

**Mr. Gary Carr:** No credibility whatsoever.

I saw what the member did, but I will ignore it. The hon. member should not be doing things like that with his fingers to other members in the House. The member knows he did it. I will ignore it, but members should not be doing that. We need to have a level debate. I will fight honourably. I will say that we should not be giving fingers to members on the other side of the House.

My final topic is the Ford Motor Company. On the local level, I made a commitment to invest in the Ford Motor Company. I was proud to stand with the minister who was involved at the time and who is now the minister of immigration, to commit that money to the Ford Motor Company. We stood out there that day along with all the Ford workers and the Ford management. The premier of Ontario and our colleagues, including my colleague from Oakville, were there as well.

•(1745)

That day Buzz Hargrove said he was glad we did not have a Conservative government because if that happened these jobs would have been lost, 5,000 jobs and 25,000 spin-off jobs as a direct result. He was very clear in saying that if the Conservative government was in, we would have lost them.

We made commitments and we followed through on those commitments. We are balancing the budget. We are putting money back into social programs. I am proud to stand with the Prime Minister because he is the best leader in the country today. We are going to continue to make this country prosperous based on the policies of this—

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton—Leduc.

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to inform my colleague that in the last election the Conservative Party was on record, and he can check with the Ford Motor Company, as supporting that. I think he knows that and he should be clear about that.

In relation to the auto sector, through its excellent CAPC report, it has put forward many suggestions of what the government could do

from a public policy point of view to improve and enhance the auto sector in Canada. It has talked about eliminating the capital tax which has been delayed because of this deal with the NDP. It has talked about changing the depreciation rates, something that the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters has talked about and is sorely disappointed that they are not in the budget. It has talked about action on the border, something that the government has talked about since 1993, but has not yet delivered on.

Probably the number one impediment to locating new auto assembly plants in Canada is action on the border, so we have security of trade between Canada and the United States. I would like the member to address that.

Why has the government failed to act on these major public policy initiatives that have been called for not only by the Conservative Party but by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters and in the CAPC report, agreed to by all those who work in the auto sector, whether it is auto companies like Ford, GM or DaimlerChrysler, or the Japanese or people such as Buzz Hargrove and the CAW. They all agreed with this report. Why has the government not acted upon it?

•(1750)

**Mr. Gary Carr:** Madam Speaker, I want to clarify what happened with the Ford Motor Company announcement. The government announced it was going to put in money. I immediately said that I was going to support it. Both of the Conservative candidates in Oakville and in Halton said they were opposed to it at the time, as did the NDP.

**Mr. James Rajotte:** That's not what you said.

**Mr. Gary Carr:** No, I am going to follow this up and say what they did.

They were opposed to it in the beginning and when the Conservatives found out we were investing \$100 million, they changed their opinion and said that now they were in favour of it.

I said to my Conservative candidate that I supported it. I did not say what the Prime Minister was going to do. I immediately said it was good because it would create 5,000 jobs and 25,000 spin-off jobs. I did not need to check with anyone. I said I would support it.

I know what happened with the two Conservative governments because I was there. My candidate in Halton said he was opposed to it as did the NDP candidate. At the next all candidates meeting he said, "Oh no, my leader is now in favour of it because the money has been given and you signed it". I asked him why we needed him if he has to run back to his leader to see what he is saying. Let us just cut out the middle man. We do not even need MPs. Let us just go to the leaders of the parties and say, "You're in charge, what do you say?" There are going to be occasions when I am going to agree with the leader of the party and some days when I disagree, but I am going to make that decision.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member seems to be confused that there is an Oakville member and a Halton member. My Halton member did not support it and then reversed himself and said he did. That is not acceptable to the people of this province. We cannot flip-flop on these issues like the Conservative Party is doing and expect to have any credibility. There must be consistency. That party must be consistent. That is why we are going to be rewarded with another mandate.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to examine the position adopted by the Conservative opposition, not only in the past few days but the past few weeks as well. The Conservatives are saying that the budget does nothing, absolutely nothing for Canadians. At the same time, however, they are saying that they will respect the good initiatives implemented by the Liberals, if there is an election.

This leads me to say that, in fact, our initiatives have been excellent. I want to ask my colleague the following question. I was a municipal councillor for the city of Edmundston for six years. So I know that refunding the gas tax is a top priority for communities—cities, towns and local service districts—throughout Canada. This remains extremely important.

I want my hon. colleague to tell me if he has ever heard negative comments about this extremely important initiative for our communities?

[*English*]

**Mr. Gary Carr:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is right. I have heard nothing but good things from all of the municipal leaders right across this country. In my area, the municipal leaders have supported it with letters. The hon. member will know too that right across this country municipal leaders, including the mayors of the big cities of Toronto and Vancouver, have said we have to continue with this. The Liberals said in the last election that they would do it. Now we have the opposition parties giving the “me too” politics. They know how popular it is and are now saying they will do it, “Me too, me too”.

The people who can be trusted are the people who put this in place and negotiated the agreements. People who change their position halfway through the game cannot be trusted because they have absolutely no credibility.

**Mr. Jim Prentice (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise on behalf of the citizens of Calgary Centre-North to address Bill C-48, legislation which carries a rather euphemistic title “An act to authorize the Minister of Finance to make certain payments”.

The “certain payments” which the legislation refers to total \$4.6 billion and the net effect of this legislation is to create a fund of surplus taxes from which the Liberals can purchase 19 NDP votes in the House of Commons. Never before has a government spent so much to acquire so little. In fairness, the NDP has not been purchased, it has just been rented.

This is surely no way for the Government of Canada to go about its business. My objection to this legislation starts from the fact that the Liberal government has become completely confused about the difference between taxpayer money and its own.

Let me cut to the chase. This bill purports to create a \$4.6 billion political slush fund which would be financed from surpluses that the government expects to record in the 2005-06 and the 2006-07 years. The Liberals have promised the NDP, with all the sincerity of a daylight burglar, to spend that money on NDP priorities.

This is one of a number of very curious things which the Liberals are attempting to do in their efforts to cling to power at all costs. However, nothing which they have proposed is more curious than this. They are proposing to tax everyday Canadians at tax levels which would generate surpluses of \$4.6 billion, so that they can have a blank cheque to spend those surpluses on purposes which suit their narrow political agenda. Only a government which has completely lost its fiscal and moral compass would propose such a thing.

As nearly as I can tell, the taxpayers of Canada have never consented to be governed in this way. Certainly the taxpayers in Calgary Centre-North have never agreed to that.

Where I come from, the taxpayers play by the rules. We pay our taxes and we expect that we are being taxed to pay our fair share of the cost of running this country. No one in my riding has ever consented to pay taxes at artificially high levels which would cover the cost of administering the Government of Canada plus the cost of accumulating a \$4.6 billion slush fund to allow the Liberals to engage in partisan vote buying to mask their own corruption.

This is a vision of fiscal responsibility stood on its head. It is a legislative commitment to \$4.6 billion in overtaxation coupled with a written commitment to squander it.

I object to this proposal on many grounds but also on constitutional grounds. This approach to taxation is unprecedented. In my view, it is entirely inconsistent with 817 years of parliamentary history, since something called the Saladin Tithe of 1188, in the reign of Henry II, in a far off place quite distant from here.

I would not want to lose my Liberal friends on a journey through parliamentary history, but it is noteworthy that since that time governments, parliaments and taxpayers have had a fairly uneasy but successful truce according to which Parliament approves the government's spending plans and Parliament consents to taxation to support those expenditures. No more, no less.

This approach has actually worked reasonably well throughout parliamentary history. In fact, the Saladin Tithe of 1188, which I spoke of, financed the third crusade which was, like the Liberal government, pretty much a complete disaster. On the third crusade, Frederick I of Germany drowned before he reached the Holy Land and Philip II of France retired, returning home, shortly after leaving. It all has a ring of familiarity to it.

However, after 817 years, the Liberals have a better crusade, that of overtaxation without representation. They will now ask Parliament for a blank cheque.

*Government Orders*

•(1755)

The government proposes to overtax all Canadians to the tune of \$4.5 billion, and in return it offers to spend those surplus moneys on an assortment of promises which one would generously call ideas. Clause 3(c) of the statute would allow the government to make payments to anybody. Clause 3(b) would allow it to enter into an agreement with anyone.

It is all very perverse and it is all very irresponsible. Frankly, if there is no precedent to call it unconstitutional, it is only because it is so perverse that no one else has tried to do it in modern parliamentary history.

The chief economist of the TD Bank, who understands what is happening here, noted in a May 7 *National Post* editorial as follows:

—for years government has wanted an instrument that would allow it to allocate spending without having to say what it's for. This act will do it.

The residents of Calgary Centre-North want no part of this. The constituents of my riding will never submit to overtaxation, especially institutionalized overtaxation administered by a corrupt Liberal government.

The legislation undermines our nation's finances. What we need in the country is less government, not more, more efficiency in government expenditures, not less and more responsible and accountable taxation, not less. What we really need in the country is a responsible government with a strong new prime minister, aided by a group of decent men and women who would provide some stability and restore some common sense to our fiscal path. The hon. Leader of the Opposition will bring all of that to Canadians in the days ahead.

We need smart fiscal policies, not I would submit, Liberal fiscal policies. We need to reduce marginal tax rates. We need to reduce average tax rates. We need to constrain government spending and ensure that the men and women, for example, in my riding of Calgary Centre-North are able to keep more of their own money so they can make their own child care choices, their own choices for taking care of senior citizens and their own spending choices.

We need to eliminate taxes that penalize investment, that penalize savings and are punitive toward job generation. We need to free up the genius and the financial flexibility of the private sector, especially the small business sector which creates many of our jobs.

We need less regulation, less red tape and less punitive and confusing tax legislation. Instead the government brings forward a bizarre proposal of institutionalized overtaxation.

Who supports the government? It is not the people in my riding. The people of Calgary Centre-North pay their taxes and they do not support an artificially inflated tax regime that accumulates \$4.5 billion of vote-buying money. Where are these citizens who want to be overtaxed so the Liberals can accumulate a \$4.5 billion budgetary surplus, which I describe as a slush fund? They do not live in my riding.

I hear from parents who are struggling to raise their children. They do not want to be overtaxed. I hear from elderly Canadians, senior citizens in my riding. They do not want to be overtaxed. I hear from new Canadians, especially Asian Canadians in my riding struggling

to make their way in this new country that they have chosen as their home. They do not want to be overtaxed either. I hear from single parents, students, white collar workers, blue collar workers, working mothers and stay at home moms. None of them have told me they want to pay taxes at a level that leads to surplus overtaxation.

Perhaps I am wrong in understanding my constituents. I can make a mistake just like anyone else I suppose. My staff and I checked through all the emails, letters, notes, cards and petitions that we have received. It turns out there is not a single person in my riding who has ever contacted me and asked that they submit to overtaxation.

•(1800)

I do not support the bill, which I regard as a perverse use of Parliament. It is overreaching and overtaxing. It undermines our nation's finances. It purports to be a finance measure when in truth it is nothing more than a naked attempt to impose surplus taxation, to write a corrupt government a blank \$4.5 billion cheque so it can criss-cross the nation buying votes, attempting to distract itself and voters from its own corruption, scandal and criminality. I want no part of it and neither do the good citizens of Calgary Centre-North.

•(1805)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing with us his perspective on Bill C-48. He brought up very good points. Canadians are overtaxed, they want to have some relief and the Conservative Party will offer that.

Bill C-48 is not what was originally presented to the House. It has been modified. We have \$4.5 billion that was used by the government to crack a deal with the NDP. I would like to ask the member this. Why has the government has done that. Why would it take \$4.5 billion of taxpayer dollars, not government dollars, to crack a deal with the NDP?

**Mr. Jim Prentice:** Madam Speaker, clearly this is a scheme by which the Liberals and the NDP are working together to overtax Canadians, to engage in vote buying on a massive scale, \$4.5 billion, in a way that is not in keeping with parliamentary history and our constitutional traditions.

What about everyone else who has been left out of the budget in the first place? What about the municipalities, fishermen, farmers, seniors and aboriginal Canadians? Why are we not pursuing at this time cuts in taxes?

*Government Orders*

My friend from Langley has raised that question. If we were to give everyday Canadians a tax cut of \$1,000 per year, they could invest that in a RRSP instead of having that money gobbled up by increased government expenditures, which is what we have seen over the last five years to six years in the country. If we gave Canadians an extra \$1,000 to keep in their pockets, they could spend it on their child care choices, or on senior citizens or on helping their parents. They could spend it on a wide variety of things.

If we as Canadians received that kind of a tax cut, \$1,000 per year invested at 5% over 20 years would amount to \$35,000 that Canadians could save. It would be \$70,000 if we looked at it over 30 years. Those are the priorities of Canadians, saving money, being conscious of the needs of one's children, choice in parental care, choice in day care, choice in taking care of one's parents and working with them through their retirement. Those are the choices that Canadians would make. Many people would save that money and create jobs. Those should be the priorities of Canadians today.

Those are the priorities of the Conservative Party and that is how we would administer the finances of the Government of Canada, not in a way that we see in Bill C-48, which is such a flagrant abuse of the nation's finances.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I know we have heard again and again, it is like a right wing mantra from the no longer progressive Conservatives, that the priority should have been to pass on more tax cuts to big corporations because that is what strengthens the economy and generates the jobs. However, I cannot believe for a moment that the hon. member and his colleagues are not aware of the considerable research on the most cost effective forms of job generation and the most effective ways to strengthen the economy.

It is literally true that detailed economic analysis would show that tax cuts are not the most cost effective way to generate jobs. It is direct public investment in things that not only have the job generation pay off but also the benefits of direct delivery, predictable, targeted, intended delivery, for high priority things that Canadians want.

On that alone, Bill C-48 should be supportable by anybody who makes the pretense that jobs need to be a more important part of this budget. It is absolutely well established and well documented that affordable housing, that housing construction and energy retrofitting are some of the most job-intensive forms of investment that can be made.

Regarding post-secondary education, not only is there considerable job generation in post-secondary education funding investment, but in the other parts of that agreement for better training. What better way to strengthen our economy than to make that kind of investment? Let us not pretend there are not a lot of jobs directly in post-secondary education.

I could go on with more examples. If we take the four priorities contained within Bill C-48, the evidence is overwhelming that if we are only concerned about jobs, it is still clear that a more cost effective investment with lasting benefits to Canadians is to invest not in tax cuts for big corporations but direct services.

• (1810)

**Mr. Jim Prentice:** Madam Speaker, I do not have time to have a full debate on Keynesian economics or Reagan economics, but I would ask the hon. member this. The member is an experienced member. I have referred in my comments to the NDP-Liberal deal and the possibility of a purchase of the NDP votes or perhaps just a renting of them for a period of time.

If one examines Bill C-48, there is no obligation on the part of the government whatsoever to honour any of the expenditure commitments which the NDP has agreed to with the government. Is the NDP not concerned that it has been had? There is absolutely no obligation on the part of the government to spend any money in pursuit of the NDP priorities. This is a rental agreement that is unlike any I have ever seen. I caution my friends to be careful.

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to lend my voice to the support of Bill C-48. This bill reflects not only my personal philosophies but those of this government and I believe those of Canadians.

We as Canadians sometimes forget how fortunate we are to live in this country. We hear a lot of bickering and complaining in the media and indeed in the House, more so recently, about this government policy or that government proposal.

When it comes right down to it, though, Canadians are proud of who they are and where their country is going. I believe Bill C-48 builds on that feeling of pride Canadians have, that diversity and compassion, and that belief that we are stronger when we help those who are weak and we are better together than we are apart.

Let us look at the areas to which this bill targets funding. One is \$1.6 billion for affordable housing. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to be in my riding when we announced cooperation with the province of Nova Scotia on some very important initiatives. One in particular in the riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour was with Affirmative Industries, a project that will help mental health consumers and not only give them a place to live but allow them to build up a bit of equity and increase their dignity.

In my own province of Nova Scotia, a lot of money from the federal government has not been used; it has not been matched by the province. We are taking steps right now to make this more flexible so that the province can in fact build those houses.

There is \$900 million for the environment and \$1.5 billion for post-secondary education following the massive investment of the federal government on research in universities, Madam Speaker, which I know you are familiar with. We are now the highest public investor in research in the G-8.

There is also a \$500 million increase in foreign aid.

*Government Orders*

How can one argue with those initiatives, initiatives that build on the priorities that are already in the budget?

I do want to address one issue, though. People say the budget is no longer our budget. The enhancement of certain measures as a result of the agreement with my colleagues in the New Democratic Party was the right thing to do in this Parliament, because Canadians want to see this Parliament work for all Canadians.

Let me be clear. The minister's budget as introduced in February was an excellent budget by any measure, a budget that is widely supported by Canadians and by the many stakeholder groups. In fact, the budget was immediately supported by the Leader of the Opposition, who said there was nothing in this budget that would necessitate a second election within a year. Shortly after that, the member for Central Nova said that "Canadians want to see Parliament work", an interesting comment.

One of the key items in this bill calls for an increase in foreign aid, a particularly important issue for Canada. We are respected around the world and well known for our generosity when it comes to helping the less fortunate. It is to this portion of the bill that I would like to direct my comments this evening.

In recent years, the Government of Canada has significantly increased the amount of assistance that we provide to developing countries. Budget 2005 builds upon previous increases in aid by providing an additional \$3.4 billion in international assistance over the next five years.

With these commitments, Canada is well on its way to meeting its goal of doubling its international assistance budget by 2010-11 and supporting the ambitious poverty reduction agenda of the United Nations millennium development goals. Clearly we are moving in the right direction.

There is no question that there is more we can do. On a personal level, I think we need to reach the Pearson goal of 0.7% as soon as we possibly can. It is our duty to the citizens of the world who need our help. I have spoken to that issue in the House before and I suspect I may again, but we are making great strides.

Canada's efforts are very much centred on helping the poorest countries, particularly those in Africa. This budget, in addition to increasing international assistance over the next five years, provides an additional \$342 million for African health issues. This funding is helping to eradicate polio worldwide and to reduce AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Furthermore, the budget commits Canada to double our assistance to Africa by 2008-09 from our 2003-04 levels.

International assistance also involves helping countries and regions affected by conflict and humanitarian crises. Afghanistan and Haiti are examples. Stability and the absence of conflict are necessary for effective development cooperation. Accordingly, budget 2005 announced \$500 million over the next five years to focus on promoting global peace and security.

• (1815)

Let us not forget the countries affected by the tsunami just after Christmas. Canadians were deeply affected by this tragedy and, in true Canadian style, responded generously with personal donations

of approximately \$200 million to help the victims begin to rebuild their shattered lives.

Immigrant communities in Canada were also galvanized into action. I had an opportunity to meet with the Sri Lankan community in Dartmouth a few weeks ago and talked to people whose relatives had been washed away in the tsunami. This money has been remitted to relatives and friends in the region and has played an important role in early efforts to build new homes, schools and businesses.

For its part, the Government of Canada recognized that these recovery efforts required both immediate and long term commitment of resources and responded with disaster relief and rehabilitation assistance. I am proud to say that Canada was also the first country to offer an immediate moratorium on debt payments owed by these countries.

Speaking of debt relief, Canada will continue to provide leadership on this issue. Our Prime Minister has a long record of international acclaim for his role as finance minister.

Most recently, on February 2, 2005, Canada announced a debt relief proposal that aims for donors to provide 100% debt service relief on all payments owed by up to 56 low income countries to the International Development Association of the World Bank and the African Development Fund until 2015.

Canada has committed to provide \$172 million over the next five years to implement our share of this proposal. Our new proposal builds on a legacy of Canadian action on debt, such as the Canadian debt initiative. Under this initiative, Canada has gone beyond the international consensus and has put in place a debt moratorium on all payments owed to Canada by eligible poor countries.

In total, 13 countries have received over \$600 million in bilateral debt relief and a further \$600 million will be forgiven once the initiative is fully implemented. This past April, for example, the Minister of Finance announced the cancellation of all debt owed to Canada by Zambia, Honduras and Rwanda.

If I may, I will say a few words about the Minister of International Cooperation. She has led her department with but one overarching purpose: to help people in the developing world. I can think of few others as committed to the cause of justice as this minister.

The proposal in Bill C-48 authorizes the government to spend an additional \$500 million on foreign aid. Canada is making its contribution as part of the global community. Passage of this bill will allow us to do even more.

The Minister of Finance has said that too many resources in developing nations are being soaked up to pay for yesterday's debts. That is true. Would it not be better for these countries to be able to invest in social and economic initiatives today so they can have a better quality of life tomorrow? The government has shown its commitment to help developing countries overcome the terrible burden of debt so they can reinvest in their own growth. Bill C-48 is a great step in that direction.

*Government Orders*

The bill is about making Parliament work and about making Canada better. It is the fiscal dividend of an economy that has been solidly managed over the past 12 years. The bill builds on a budget that reinvests in Canadian priorities, because we are now strong enough to do so and because it is the right thing to do.

This morning I was present when the Prime Minister and the premier of my province, Dr. Hamm, signed the Nova Scotia child care deal, part of our national child care strategy. The woman who acted as MC for this event is a long time child care champion from Dartmouth, with over 20 years of providing care to children, who runs a centre for those who are most in need. She spoke to the federal budget and said it is the most significant advancement that she has seen. She is not a partisan person by any means, but she said that this budget must be passed and she was right.

The federal budget is the most important investment in Canadian social and international priorities in recent times. Bill C-48 builds on that success and reflects the values and the beliefs of Canadians.

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, with respect to the opening remarks of our colleague opposite, the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, I can understand to some extent his mixed feelings when he said he “would like to” support this budget.

When we look at what was granted to the NDP in the supplementary budget, the revised budget, even if this was supposed to be a good budget, we see that there is \$1.6 billion for social housing. If this budget was as good as it was said to be, why did it take pressure from the NDP and a vote in the House of Commons to get a supplementary budget providing funding assistance for social housing, when representations were made to the Minister of Finance before this budget was even tabled?

There is also \$900 million for the environment. One billion was already earmarked for assistance to oil companies in western Canada. When \$900 million is added, again the money goes in part to Ontario and to western Canada. Members of Parliament should drive hybrid cars. That would help our economy and minimize atmospheric emissions. Did the government ever consider helping consumers buy hybrid cars in Canada? It prefers to help the oil companies. I am not speaking for my own personal gain. I am talking about the credibility of the NDP, which claims that this is a good budget.

Can the Prime Minister give the NDP the assurance that the additional promises made and the proposed amendments will apply as of the first year of the budget?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Madam Speaker, the member raised a lot of questions. I will try to go from memory and pick them off one by one.

The member spoke about affordable housing. He asked why we needed to have the NDP to bring that money into the budget. We in this government have done a lot in affordable housing in Canada in the last few years; last year we campaigned on it. One of the problems we have had is that some provinces, including my own

province of Nova Scotia, would not match the money. There was \$13 million put aside for Nova Scotia that was not matched by the provincial government.

The federal government identified this as a priority. We said we would actually make it easier for the provinces to match those moneys. We said we would increase the flexibility; so perhaps rent supplements are a way to go. We are going in that direction. I mentioned the announcement we made in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for people who cannot not afford housing, who do not have access to decent housing, and who are mental health consumers. We have now reached a deal with the province of Nova Scotia to address that.

In terms of the environment, this was already called the greenest budget in Canadian history, with huge investments in the environment: retrofitting, energy efficiency and a whole slate of initiatives. I think anyone on this side of the House would be pleased to debate the environment with anyone else in the House.

If we do go into an election soon I will certainly take the budget with me. I will be going with the environment, with affordable housing and with international development, and I will be saying that we have a record: we have made promises, we have kept them, and Bill C-48 only makes it that much better.

• (1825)

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I genuinely thank the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for his enthusiastic support of Bill C-48. He was pretty straightforward in saying that this bill, in terms of his budget priorities, reflects both his personal philosophy and that of Canadians.

I have to say, without any disrespect, that the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, who enthusiastically supports Bill C-48, must have been profoundly disappointed in the budget that was brought in by his own party. Even though Canadians saw that these were the priorities that made sense and that he personally felt that, his party clearly did not. It was not until there was incredible political pressure brought to bear that these priorities emerged.

I want to speak to the question raised by the member from Abitibi. He is not the only one who has asked this question today or on previous occasions. He wants to know why the NDP would be so trusting or naive to think that the government would actually deliver on the priorities that are now contained within the NDP enhanced budget.

I would raise the following question and ask the member to address it. Should Canadians not think about the fact that it took 19 New Democrats to work with the government to say that we are responsible to make this work and we got these kinds of changes? However the combined forces of the 153 members sitting on the opposition benches from the no longer progressive conservative party and the Bloc were not sufficient to actually make a difference in shifting the priorities of this budget.

How will the member explain why he is asking people to vote for him in the next election, instead of Anne-Marie Foote or Peter Mancini, whose party also supports these priorities, in addition to Canadians personally supporting these priorities?



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Madam Speaker, what the member is suggesting is that these initiatives are brand new and were never touched upon by the Liberals until the NDP suddenly came along and said that the government had better do something in affordable house or post-secondary education.

One of the four key initiatives was affordable housing. We have put \$2 billion a year into affordable housing that we want the provinces to match.

We put in \$9 billion for the environment, in what was already the greenest budget in the history of this country. The \$1.5 billion for

post-secondary education after we had put \$11 billion into research and post-secondary institutions in Canada.

I will go to the people in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour against whomever I may be up against and I will say very proudly that this is a Liberal budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Hon. Jean Augustine):** It being 6:30 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.)

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