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(HANSARD)

Friday, November 21, 2008

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 21, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

•(1000)
[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE WHOLE

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Speaker: Before we proceed with orders of the day I have an important matter to deal with.

[Translation]

After my election as Speaker, I consulted the leaders of the recognized parties about the appointment of the other chair occupants. I am prepared to propose for the ratification of the House a candidate for the position of Deputy Speaker of the House and Chair of Committees of the Whole.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 7, I propose Mr. Andrew Scheer for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole.

This motion is deemed moved and seconded.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

The Speaker: I am now prepared to propose for the ratification of the House a candidate for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 8, I propose Ms. Denise Savoie for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole.

The motion is deemed moved and seconded.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT DEPUTY CHAIR

The Speaker: I am now prepared to propose for the ratification of the House a candidate for the position of Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 8, I propose Mr. Barry Devolin for the position of Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole.

[English]

This motion is deemed moved and seconded. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

•(1005)

The Speaker: I thank all hon. members for their assistance in this matter.

Before debate resumes I see one of my colleagues is here. I congratulate him on his election to the post of Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole and I wish the other two the very best on this happy occasion.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[Translation]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you warmly on your re-election as Speaker in this House, and would like to inform you that I will share my time with my newly elected colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher.

The Address

First of all, I would like to sincerely and warmly thank all of the voters of the riding of Verchères—Les Patriotes for the great honour they have bestowed upon me by allowing me to represent them once again in this chamber. I would also like to thank all of the volunteers from the bottom of my heart. Some of them worked on my re-election—with Lise Lavoie running the team of volunteers and Robert Laurent acting as official agent—but other volunteers stood up for ideas and proposals for each of the political parties that ran in Verchères—Les Patriotes and throughout Quebec.

And now let us turn to the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. We had great expectations for this speech. Analysts, citizens, commentators and journalists all said that the Speech from the Throne would focus on the economy. Our retirees are worried when they see their RRSPs shrinking because of the economic crisis and the financial meltdown in full swing on all of the world's stock markets. Our workers are wondering if they will still have work in a few weeks or months and if the work stoppages, which are currently temporary, will continue much longer. We expected the Speech from the Throne to discuss this. But the Governor General was very vague and very unclear when it came to economic issues. The reality is that anything related to social measures, anything that brings to mind the administration that was ousted on the other side of the border on November 4, and anything that reminds us of the presidency that is coming to an end there, that is all still in the Speech from the Throne. The government is still singing the same tune.

The reality is that the Speech from the Throne mirrors the Conservative Party's election platform, a platform which, I should remind the House, was overwhelmingly rejected in Quebec. Ironically, on page 15 of the throne speech, we read, "Parliament is Canada's most important national institution. It is the only forum in which all Canadians, through their elected representatives, have a voice in the governance of the nation."

Those words are ironic because the throne speech does not contain any proposals put forward by all the political parties represented here in the House, and it certainly does not represent the values and interests that are important to Quebeckers. The Conservatives decided to pursue the same path they did during the last Parliament, remaining fixated on their dogmatic positions and their own guiding principles. In fact, common sense, the common good and shared values do not really have a place in those principles. Basically, the law of numbers—and remember, the Conservatives have a minority—does not count. We saw this in the last Parliament. The House voted to adopt the Kyoto protocol. The Senate voted to adopt it and royal assent was given to ensure it was respected and enforced in Canada. This government ignored that fact, and I have a feeling that what it says on page 15 of the Speech from the Throne is nothing more than empty rhetoric to impress certain people who are not aware of what happened here.

In contrast—and this has always been our way of thinking, since 1993—the Bloc Québécois evaluates policies issue by issue and suggests practical, effective solutions for the government to implement. We hoped they would listen to us.

●(1010)

The Bloc Québécois is a sovereignist party, a party whose mission is to prove unequivocally to Quebeckers that the only way for

Quebec to develop and reach its full potential in a way that honours its values and promotes its national interests is for it to become an independent nation. Nevertheless, the Bloc Québécois respects the institutions and the democratic process established in this House. Out of respect for the majority mandate we received from Quebeckers, we have proposed a sub-amendment to the Speech from the Throne.

Today is Friday, and as the meeting begins, I would like to read it to you. We proposed that the following be added:

that the House recognize that the Speech from the Throne is unanimously decried in Quebec because it reflects a Conservative ideology that was rejected by 78 per cent of the Quebec nation on October 14 and that as a result the House denounce the fact that it does not respond to the consensus in Quebec respecting, for instance, the legislation on young offenders, the repatriation to Quebec of powers over culture and communications, the elimination of the federal spending power and the maintenance of the existing system of securities regulation.

That being said, allow me to now put on my hat as Bloc Québécois health critic to review what the throne speech had to say about health.

Since it was first elected in 2006, this government has been saying that it respects the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. On page 13 of the throne speech, it says that the government will take creative measures to tackle major heart, lung and neurological diseases. That kind of activity falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Do I need to point out that Quebec and the provinces are responsible for health care? I will keep pointing it out in committee and in the House as long as I am here. Quebec and the provinces are perfectly capable of setting up programs that support our citizens' health and wellness. The federal government's job is to enable Quebec and the provinces to discharge that responsibility properly through social transfers.

The throne speech also implies that the government will once again introduce the Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act. I would remind the government that there is still a great deal of work to do on this. Many witnesses were ready to appear before the committee when the government decided, of its own volition—because the Prime Minister felt like it—to call an election. Before the election call, individuals and interest groups were ready to testify before the committee. Of course, we still have some reservations, as I mentioned in my speech in June.

Progressive licensing, the government's proposed registration process and the whole issue of inspectors and inspections will have to be reviewed and clarified.

In the bill he introduced in the last parliament, the minister gave himself a great deal of discretionary power. I believe that there will need to be some clarification as to what he intends to do with that discretionary power.

The Address

The throne speech also addresses the Consumer Product Safety Act. During the holiday season, consumers buy many products with no way of knowing whether they are safe. Just a few days ago, RCMP teddy bears were recalled because of lead in their belts. As long ago as 2006, the Auditor General said there were problems. The government dragged its feet and did not introduce Bill C-52 until April 2008. We were prepared to examine it in committee. Once again, though, the Prime Minister decided to put an end to all that and call an election, leaving consumers in limbo.

• (1015)

Rather than taking up his responsibilities in this chamber and making progress on the issues, he decided to put his ego first.

I would also like to have spoken about the listeriosis crisis but, given that my time is up, we must simply remember that we need inspectors in every plant and we should not rely on self-regulation. I believe that the government wants to cut inspections and that is not the way to go.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to wish you and all my colleagues a good session.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I am on my feet in the House since the election, so I want to thank the good people of Ottawa Centre for having their trust in me and sending me back to the House of Commons to work on their behalf.

We heard from the government in its Speech from the Throne. We heard from a member of the Bloc today about some of the concerns Canadians have about the economy, about their priorities and essentially what government can do. One of the troubling aspects is that on the one hand the government is saying it is going to provide stronger regulation on things like food safety and health products, which is what Canadians want, yet on the other hand it is going to freeze programs. We hear today that there are in fact fewer people working in the public service now than there were a couple of years ago.

What are the member's views on a government that says it wants to provide stronger regulations for Canadians, but has fewer people in the public service to do it?

We have seen in the last five years an explosion in the federal government's hiring of temporary help agencies to do the work that public servants should do, which is more expensive. This cost has risen from \$100 million in the national capital region six years ago to almost \$300 million.

I would like his impression about how the government is going to provide better regulation to Canadians, yet it is going to freeze job hiring and likely cut jobs or not fill jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Malo: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the Ottawa region for his question. It ties in with what I wanted to say about the listeriosis crisis. In the throne speech, the government told us that it wants an independent inquiry to get to the bottom of things.

As the NDP member was saying, we should bear in mind that the government intends to cut staff at the Canadian Food Inspection

Agency. In the listeriosis crisis, self-regulation was a factor at the company in question. Rather than assuming the role of regulator and assessing the quality of what is on the market, the government has decided to make cuts to what is in my mind its most important responsibility—ensuring that products coming onto our markets are of good quality and are safe.

There is a discrepancy between what is said and what is actually done. We have heard it said that the government does not walk the talk. That is often the case with this government, which proposes one thing and does the opposite.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Verchères—Les Patriotes on his appointment as health critic. He will be an excellent critic.

I know that my colleague could have gone on about the flaws in this throne speech, in particular, the fact that it did not provide for the reinstatement of cultural programs. Yesterday, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages even admitted that yes, he had taken money, and cut cultural programs to give money to the Olympic torch relay program, once again, at the expense of Quebec culture.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about this.

• (1020)

Mr. Luc Malo: Mr. Speaker, we agree that passing the Olympic torch across Canada is not the same thing as taking our artists and sending them abroad, in order to make our culture known throughout the world. These are two completely different things.

If the government wants to have the flame passed around and shown to its friends all over its beloved country, that is fine, but the government should not cut funding for people who do not have much money to start off with, and stop them from promoting their and our culture abroad.

The culture of a nation like the Quebec nation must be promoted abroad. We had excellent tools for doing so, and this government, which only says that it recognizes the Quebec nation, wants to completely muzzle us and stop us from expressing who we are throughout the world. The government has shown this once again with this drastic cut, which we feel has no basis, but is completely understandable coming from a government that has decided to muzzle the Quebec nation.

The Address

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I first want to congratulate you on your re-election as the head of this House. Also, I would like to thank the voters in Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher who elected me for the first time. Thank you in particular to the volunteers who helped with my campaign. To both the voters and the volunteers, I would like to say that I will put all of my energy into proving myself worthy of their trust. I am committed to defending their interests with as much vigour and rigour as my predecessor, the outgoing member, Caroline St-Hilaire. I am aware that I have big shoes to fill because our constituents really liked Caroline, so I am coming into Parliament determined to do my best.

Today, as many of my Bloc Québécois colleagues have done, I am denouncing the Speech from the Throne, which I find to be uninspired and unacceptable.

First of all, the proposed measures go against Quebec's traditional demands, particularly when it comes to federal spending power, which the Conservative government would limit, at least for new federal programs.

Quebeckers agree that federal spending power must be eliminated. All the Quebec governments, without exception, have expressed the desire to defend the integrity of Quebec's legislative authority, notably in areas such as education, health and social services.

The Séguin report, which received the support of all the parties in the National Assembly, recommended that:

Québec vigorously reiterate its traditional stance concerning the absence of a constitutional basis for “federal spending power” since this “power” does not respect the division of powers stipulated in the Constitution.

And the report also recommended that:

Québec maintain its demand to exercise an unconditional right to opt out with full financial compensation in respect of any program implemented by the federal government in a field falling under provincial jurisdiction.

In 2006, the current Conservative Prime Minister of Canada stated:

I have said many times, even since the election of this new government, that I am opposed and our party is opposed to federal spending power in provincial jurisdictions.

And he continued on, saying:

In my opinion, such spending power in the provinces' exclusive jurisdictions goes against the very spirit of federalism. Our government is clear that we do not intend to act in that way.

How ironic. That is what he said at the time, and yet, on pages 15 and 16 of this week's Speech from the Throne, the same Prime Minister said:

The federal spending power will be constrained so that any new shared-cost program in an area of exclusive provincial responsibility will require the consent of the majority of the provinces to proceed, and that non-participating provinces can opt out with compensation, provided that they implement compatible programs or initiatives

I repeat, “provided that they implement compatible programs or initiatives”. By placing such a condition on Quebec's withdrawal from federal programs that infringe on Quebec's fields of exclusive jurisdiction, the Conservative government shows that it does not understand Quebec's unanimous position.

The Bloc is calling on Ottawa to agree to simply stop spending in areas under Quebec's jurisdiction, either by eliminating the federal spending power outright, because Quebec has always disputed the legitimacy of that power, or by giving Quebec the right to opt out, with full compensation and with no strings attached, of any federal program in areas that fall under provincial jurisdiction.

There is nothing of the sort in the throne speech.

It is as if Jean Chrétien wrote this throne speech, considering that the Speech from the Throne delivered February 28, 1996, states:

The Government will not use its spending power to create new shared-cost programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction without the consent of a majority of the provinces. Any new program will be designed so that non-participating provinces will be compensated, provided they establish equivalent or comparable initiatives.

Quebeckers will remember what became of those empty promises.

• (1025)

They are not stupid: they know what that kind of limit on federal spending power means, especially since the government was only talking about “new programs” and therefore left intact the result of 100 years of federal meddling in areas that are supposed to be under Quebec's control.

During fiscal year 2005-06, the federal government spent no less than \$55 billion in areas outside of its jurisdiction. The Conservative government seems to think that this is okay and should go on indefinitely.

The Canadian government's so-called open federalism is a fraud.

I would also like to point out that the government is offering only “compensation” for any new cost-shared interference. How can we be sure that this compensation will be full compensation?

Basically, Ottawa wants the right to punish provinces that refuse to participate in its new programs. Once again, the government is trying to impose Canada-wide standards, even in areas not under its jurisdiction, by giving provinces the right to opt out of new programs only if they offer programs that are, as it says, “compatible”. If the Quebec nation chooses to do something other than what Canada is doing, it will not have the right to opt out.

I will repeat that there is consensus in Quebec concerning the complete respect for our constitutional jurisdictions such as health, among others.

Not only is the Conservative government not acting in the best interests of Quebec, but it is also proving that it has no understanding of Quebec's values and legitimate aspirations. And as if that were not enough, the Prime Minister is going even further by proposing to reduce Quebec's weight in the House of Commons, which will only facilitate future federal incursions.

In fact, in the Speech from the Throne, the government confirms its desire to increase the number of seats for Ontario and certain western provinces, which at the same time implies a reduction in the relative political clout of Quebec in the House of Commons.

Once again that is proof that the Prime Minister still refuses to give concrete recognition to the Quebec nation and that Canada has no other future to offer Quebec than that of a dwindling minority.

The Address

The Bloc Québécois will oppose any institutional reform that is counter to the interests of Quebec just as it will continue to oppose any interference in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

This throne speech was to deal with the economic slowdown but instead ignores the real interests of Quebec. It does nothing for the most disadvantaged and ignores outright those citizens who have lost their jobs or who are seeing their pensions evaporate before their eyes.

Even though the snow has not yet started to fall, the Conservative government's vision leaves us cold.

It is sending chills through Quebec even before winter arrives.

I have a completely different vision for my country, Quebec. That is why I want it to be sovereign, independent and free.

● (1030)

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the last election there was a financial earthquake. Unfortunately, it also occurred in the middle of a global sea and it will create a tsunami that has yet to hit the world and Canada.

In the last Parliament, one of the first things the government was to do was to pass the Federal Accountability Act and to create the position of Parliamentary Budget Officer, who, yesterday, completely refuted the government's arguments that things were sound, that we will keep the course and that we are in better shape. In fact, he announced to the government and Canadians that the deficit next year will be about \$13.8 billion and about \$11 billion each year thereafter until the year 2013, accumulating increased debt by about \$50 billion. He says, very clearly, that it is due to the decisions and actions of the Conservative government and not the deteriorating global economy.

It would appear that the Prime Minister's position has been eroding very slowly and that he, very slowly, is admitting that some things may need to be done. However, what concerns me the most, notwithstanding that Parliament passed that act, created the position of a Parliamentary Budget Officer and received a report from that budget officer, is that the finance minister's position now in the media is that the government has its own set of economic forecasts.

It appears that the government continues to be in denial about the seriousness of the economic crisis that Canada is in and will be facing for some time. I wonder if the member shares that view.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Dorion: Mr. Speaker, the government's lack of transparency is a serious problem. As far as relations with Quebec are concerned, in the past, federal governments often used difficult financial times as an excuse for not making the necessary transfer payments. In the coming years, I believe we are going to witness the same sort of denial of financial reality.

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my friend made an excellent speech, and I would like to ask him to tell us more about the need for Quebec sovereignty.

● (1035)

Mr. Jean Dorion: Mr. Speaker, if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself. The people who oppose Quebec sovereignty are people who would like to see Quebec in a position they would never accept for themselves. For example, I do not believe that English Canada would agree to join the United States as a group of states. English Canada wants to keep on running Canada in accordance with its own concerns, its own values, its own interests. We have the same concern in Quebec.

I was Quebec's delegate general in Tokyo at the time of the Quebec referendum. When the Japanese asked me why Quebec should be a sovereign country, I asked them whether it made sense for Quebec, which is a nation in itself, to be relegated to the status of a province of another country. I asked them whether, as Japanese citizens, they would agree to have Japan be a province of China. Now, one could say that China has many faults. But even if China were perfect, a highly democratic and prosperous nation, would they want Japan to be a province of China? Embarrassed, they would smile and acknowledge that there is nothing unusual about Quebec's aspirations. We do not want to be a province of another country; we want to be our own country.

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to personally congratulate you on your re-election as the Speaker of the House. I am certain your re-election was due to your past record of non-partisan oversight of this House and your commitment to fairness to all members of the House.

I also would like to take this time to thank the constituents of Okanagan—Shuswap for their overwhelming and increased confidence in me as their voice in this place. It truly is an honour and I am humbled to be given such a vote of confidence. I would be remiss if I did not credit my electoral success on the leadership of our Prime Minister and the great job my staff in the riding and Ottawa offices have done in serving the constituents of Okanagan—Shuswap. I thank the many volunteers who helped during my campaign. Their time and dedication is sincerely appreciated.

The theme for this session's Speech from the Throne is protecting Canada's future. This theme is a reflection of our government's approach to these uncertain economic times. Our government will not react in a knee-jerk, irresponsible physical manner today at the detriment of tomorrow. The Speech from the Throne is very clear: our government will make calculated decisions that will weather the current storm in preparation for the sunny days in the future.

The problem today is that the current global financial framework has not served the global community well. Lack of sound fiscal policy and regulation framework has proven the undoing of many developed nations' financial institutions.

The Address

Canadians can be proud of the policy and regulatory work that this government and previous governments have put in place to ensure Canadians of a secure and stable financial sector. Our government's budgets have been balanced, our economic growth has proven surpluses and the \$37 billion in national debt repayment has cushioned Canada from this current economic meltdown.

As our throne speech indicates, Canada will work with the global community to put in place international regulations to prevent this type of exploitation of financial markets and overextension of the credit markets. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance began this important work on November 15, joining the leaders of the G-20 in Washington, D.C., and will continue to pursue this in the future.

The global economic downturn has challenged the liquidity in global financial institutions and compromised the capitalization of the equity markets causing a lack of capital for home mortgages, business capital expansion and development. This credit crisis has weakened dramatically the prospects for growth of our domestic economy in the global economy.

Canada needed a throne speech that assured Canadians that we will keep our house in order by tight fiscal management and prudent targeted spending. This throne speech is just what the doctor ordered. We must remind ourselves that Canada is built on the promise of opportunity, the chance to work hard, raise a family and make a better life. Today it is more important than ever to deliver on this promise and ensure that all Canadians share in the hope and prosperity of this land.

Our government has already cut the shackles of high taxes and released businesses to be more competitive, labour to have more disposable income and investment to be more vibrant.

Our government has lowered consumer taxes, such as the GST by 2%, has increased tax credits for spouses, children, seniors and businesses, all contributing to less money in government and more money in citizens' pockets as well as in the economy.

• (1040)

Initiatives such as accelerated capital cost allowance invite businesses to retool, expand, and create new jobs, resulting in new wealth for Canada.

Statistics tell us that one-third of our economy is wealth creation, that is, creating new money. Resource extraction, manufacturing, farming, power generation, forestry, and technology products generate new dollars for the economy. The other two-thirds of our economy takes this new wealth and provides services such as transportation, retail goods, food services, consumer goods, financial services and government. A drop of 10% in the resource and manufacturing sectors results in a 20% drop in the service sector.

In my past, when I was gold mining in the Yukon, our motto was "The buck starts here". For every dollar created, there were two dollars spent in the service sector.

I tell members this so that they will understand why it is so important that our government invest in education and skills training, infrastructure, transportation, and research and development: so that

those who are creating wealth for this nation will have the tools to create new money in the economy.

This Speech from the Throne sets a stage for investment and a climate for success for those who would risk and succeed.

In Vernon in my own constituency of Okanagan—Shuswap, Tolko Industries, the fifth-largest lumber products company in the world, has its head office. This company is a well-run and innovative company, but it has, as has all the forest industry, struggled in the past three years.

Tolko Industries has not hung its head low. It has taken the opportunity to make its operations more streamlined and energy-efficient. The gasification project to the Heffley Creek operation saved \$1.5 million a year in natural gas costs. Its cogeneration operation in the Armstrong mill supplies electricity to the power grid in British Columbia, and its new OSB and engineered beam plants in Alberta are state-of-the-art, modern and efficient operations.

This Speech from the Throne reaffirms our government's commitment to continue to partner with industry to make Canadian businesses more competitive and more energy-efficient. Our government will continue to assist these industries through measures aimed at marketing Canadian products abroad, expanding trade opportunities and helping business to be innovative.

This means wealth creation. This means jobs.

The throne speech reveals our government's continued support for higher education, research and development, and skills training. A good example of our government's partnering with educational institutes to realize skills training for aboriginal students is in my riding. The Government of Canada partnered with the Vernon campus of Okanagan College to fund the carpentry apprentice program for aboriginal students. Through this investment, graduates were given the skills needed to fill vacancies in the building construction sector.

Canada has one of the smallest labour forces in the developed world, so we must be the most skilled, the smartest and the most innovative if we are to survive. Canada has a successful, proven track record. We must continue to invest in our greatest resource, our human resources.

Sometimes how we do things in government is just as important as what we do in government. This cannot be more clear than in the relationship between the economy and the environment. As citizens of this planet, we must do our part to ensure that we are good stewards of the environment around us. In the throne speech, our government committed to ensuring that by 2020, 90% of Canada's new energy sources will be from clean energy production.

The Address

•(1045)

We are taking action to move away from dirty coal and carbon fuels to the clean, efficient and environmentally responsible energy of the future. Truly, Canada is turning the corner on the environment. Our government will continue to work with the provinces and territories, the private sector, and our citizens to make Canada cleaner, more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable.

Our government believes that the foundation of this country is the family. In its throne speech, our government has once again supported families.

The continuance of the child care allowance, which helps parents make parental decisions for their children's best interests and supports them financially with those decisions, has further demonstrated our commitment to families.

Our government is introducing a new opportunity for family-owned businesses. The throne speech offers business women the opportunity to participate in maternity leave benefits as administered under the EI program. This is a great program to help small family-owned businesses to have children without compromising their business interests and their family income.

This throne speech also ensures that the transfer of payments to the provinces for education and health will keep up with inflation, ensuring that growing families will have top-notch education for their children and timely access to the health care they need.

Finally, the economic slowdown does not mean a slowdown in our efforts to make our communities safer. We will continue to crack down on organized crime, guns and gangs, drugs, and violence.

Governments are called upon to provide citizens with law and order. Our government will continue to review the young offenders act and make certain that a young age will not be an excuse for criminal activity.

Canadians want to know that their children are safe from those who would exploit their sons and daughters with drugs.

Our government will not only make our streets safer, but we will also continue to make our nation safer and more secure. Our government will continue to improve border security in an effort to stop the flow of guns and drugs into Canada.

Our government will build a new icebreaker and an Arctic port. We will increase our presence in the Arctic and protect Canada's sovereignty over our northern frontier.

Security of our nation is the responsibility of the men and women of our Canadian Forces. Our government will continue to support their efforts by purchasing new and more modern equipment. Whether in a foreign field or at home, our men and women stand bravely for the freedom we enjoy daily, and we appreciate their commitment. We support them in their work and we will continue to give them the tools needed to do their job.

I once again remind the House of a good definition of good government. As a famous statesman said many years ago:

—a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain [its citizens] from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of

industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government—

This Speech from the Throne embraces all of these: law and order, freedom of enterprise, and low taxes. It is no wonder Canadians returned this Conservative government to office with a larger mandate.

•(1050)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for being re-elected.

I have three suggestions for him to take to his government. They are three easy things it could do to address the pressing concerns of our citizenry.

First, arguably the second most important issue affecting Canadians is health care. Would the member ask the Minister of Health to work with her counterparts across the country to address the medical manpower crisis we are facing?

Second, consistent with the interest the government and all of us share in dealing with the issue of crime, the most effective preventive measure is actually the early learning head start program for children, which has proven to reduce youth crime 60%.

My last question is with regard to our veterans, to whom we owe a debt that cannot be repaid. Many of our veterans are coming back and struggling to find the care they need. The veterans charter was intended to be a starting point, a living document. Will the member ask the minister and committee to do a public review of the veterans charter to ensure that our veterans will receive timely access to the quality care they desperately need and seek?

Mr. Colin Mayes: Mr. Speaker, our government has a proven track record on delivering support to the provinces for health care. We increased health care transfer payments to the provinces by 6% each year for the past three years.

In the last Parliament we worked with the provinces to shorten wait times, and we saw some significant decreases in wait times in our health care system. Our transfers of those dollars to the provinces proves we are concerned about health care and patient wait times.

I was at a fundraising foundation's reception for the local hospital in Vernon, the Vernon Jubilee Hospital. It was very encouraging to hear one of the physicians from that hospital say that they are seeing some new equipment and some capital investment in the hospital, and that what our government is doing in the financial support for the provinces is great. That was very encouraging.

With regard to our initiatives around the issue of crime, when we made our announcement about our challenges with drugs and said that we would attack that problem in our society, we looked at rehabilitation, education and enforcement. These three things were funded equally. Our concern is to make sure we educate the youth of this country on the challenges drugs bring to life and on the need to stay away from them.

Statements by Members

We increased the funding for Veterans Affairs and we established an ombudsman so that veterans could have a better resource for appealing any decisions for benefits. Those measures were brought forward by our government in the last Parliament. I spoke with some of our veterans during my campaign, and I found they were deeply impressed by the increased benefits and the easy access to Veterans Affairs.

We have done it in the past and we will continue to do it in the future.

•(1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for electing me to this House for the first time, and for trusting me to represent them. I would also like to thank the team of volunteers and activists who worked on my election campaign.

My question is of course for the member who spoke in this House about the same old measures just packaged a little differently. In the throne speech there was a list of important objectives, but there were no big surprises.

Unfortunately, Canada and Quebec are currently experiencing huge job losses. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost in the past few years, and unfortunately, the Conservative government, with its laissez-faire attitude, has done nothing.

Now, it is waking up and saying it will do something for the automotive and aerospace industries. The Conservatives boasted about giving \$80 million to Ford. But everyone knows that in the automotive industry, \$80 million is peanuts. It takes money to move this type of industry forward.

My question is about what the Conservative government plans on doing in the present dire situation to help workers who are affected by major lay-offs. What will the government do to help them?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Mayes: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that we do not have our previous Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada to tell the good news about what we did in the last Parliament, which was to fund skills training for those who have been laid off in the forestry sector and to fund retooling for factories that have been shut down.

It is interesting that no province in this country took more advantage of the moneys and programs put forward by the government than did Quebec. It was great to see people who had been in the forest industry being retrained, having the opportunity to go into, for instance, the aerospace industry, and actually finding better-paying jobs after they were retrained with those new skills.

I see this also in my own constituency, where a glass factory shut down on November 1. All those people have the opportunity to be retrained for other jobs in the sectors that are growing in British Columbia.

It is the same in Quebec, where we see so many good things happening in the aerospace industry. Those developments are a credit to Quebec and to that industry. They are innovative and

aggressive. They are world leaders in that sector, which will make more opportunities for people who are looking for jobs.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your election. As this is the first opportunity I have had to speak in this honourable House, I would like to thank the voters of Halifax.

The hon. member referenced his time in the gold mines in the Yukon. He actually used the phrase, "the buck starts here". I am originally from a gold mining town in northern Ontario called Kirkland Lake. The irony is there is no lake. The lake is filled with mine tailings. We have poisoned lakes and rivers. Workers are living in poverty. Hundreds of miners have died underground. This is the kind of legacy the government wants to see, bucks made at the expense of health, safety and the environment.

How can the hon. member talk about doing our part for the environment when the Speech from the Throne is silent on mining regulations, silent on the impacts of resource extraction and silent on the impacts on our environment?

Mr. Colin Mayes: Mr. Speaker, things have changed. The regulations in place for the mining industry are actually some of the toughest regulations in the world. If anything, they have become a bit of an economic challenge for those who want to develop new ore bodies.

It is good that those regulations are in place to protect the environment. We definitely want wealth creation. We want to see these resources developed. We also recognize the need to assure Canadians that the environment is protected.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

•(1100)

[*English*]

SEA CADETS

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 4, Bonnie Rourke, a constituent of mine, released a historic compilation of her memories of growing up at the Queen Elizabeth and Princess Alice sea cadet camps on Minicoganshene Island. The book is called *The Sea Cadet Years on Georgian Bay*.

From 1943 to 1953, Bonnie lived at the cadet camps with her family. From these recollections, her father's journal, Navy League documents and the stories of former sea cadets, Bonnie has made a profound contribution to the history of Canada's Sea Cadet program and our Navy League.

Gary Garnett, National President of the Navy League, has praised her work, noting that, "The fertile ground of Minicoganshene grew much more than blueberries. For a time, it served to grow our country".

Please join me in congratulating Bonnie and Canada's Sea Cadets, past and present, who helped create this tremendous and historic work.

BENNETT CAMPBELL

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this chamber today to pay tribute to a great Canadian who passed away on September 11, 2008. I speak of the Hon. Bennett Campbell, a former member of the House and minister of veterans affairs for Canada. Mr. Campbell was also a former premier of Prince Edward Island and held cabinet positions in the Prince Edward Island legislature. Mr. Campbell was also an educator for 10 years before he entered politics.

Since leaving public office, Bennett worked tirelessly for his community, serving on many boards and committees. He was chair of his village commission and an active member of the local funeral co-op. Bennett loved politics. Bennett loved people. He was happiest serving his community and his neighbours. Bennett Campbell will be sorely missed by all whose lives he touched. I wish to offer my condolences to his wife, Shirley, and his family.

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[Translation]

FILTER MARSH AT FITCH BAY

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Compton—Stanstead, two businesses—La Sagesse de l'eau and the Fitch Bay marina—decided to revitalize a beach on Fitch Bay in Memphrémagog Lake.

This beach had problems with blue-green algae and odours. Thanks to various measures, including a filter marsh made up of new varieties of plants provided by La Sagesse de l'eau as well as management of plants encircling the beach area, the Township of Stanstead was able to meet its goal of reducing blue-green algae in the water.

In addition, this project placed second among the entrants for the Awards for Innovation in Infrastructure from Quebec's Ministère des Affaires municipales et des Régions. I would like to pay tribute to Stéphane and José Pouliot and their businesses, which developed this innovative project.

* * *

[English]

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially the people of Marystown and the Burin Peninsula, were shocked to hear in late August, just a few days before the election was called, that the Conservative government decided to suspend the plan to build joint supply ships for the Canadian navy needed to provide at-sea support to naval task groups and sealift, and support to deploy forces ashore.

The Marystown yard was on the shortlist of two and was seen as the leading contender for the 25 year contract to build and maintain these vessels. It is a significant opportunity to create a stable employment future for a skilled workforce hit hard by the fishery collapse and now forced to travel away for work. The fear is that this opportunity has slipped from its grasp and the government will look offshore. We need a commitment from the government to proceed with this project in Canada, the sooner the better. Canadians have

Statements by Members

already spent \$28 million on the bidding process and it should be concluded with the shortlisted yards.

This is a necessary project for the country and would provide vital economic stimulus in these uncertain times.

* * *

WORLD WAR I

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year during Veterans Week I had the honour and privilege of being part of the official Government of Canada delegation travelling in France and Belgium to mark the 90th anniversary of the end of the first world war.

In my speech at Vimy Ridge, I called for a renewed commitment to remembrance. We honour those who stood together, fighting shoulder to shoulder, some in villages in which they were born and raised, others in foreign lands far, far from home.

Residents came out in droves to pay their respects to the Canadians who fought for their freedom. Everyone I met knew about the contributions of our Canadian troops. They knew it was Canadians who liberated the city of Mons. They remembered. They told me that what Canada did for France and Belgium in the first world war was unforgettable.

It was a highly emotional experience touring places where Canadian troops were buried.

I know all members of the House had the opportunity to remember the sacrifice of our Canadian veterans last week on Remembrance Day. I hope that all of us will make a renewed commitment to remember them throughout the year.

Lest we forget.

* * *

●(1105)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the worst mass slaughter of civilians since World War II continues unabated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One thousand innocent people are dying every single day, adding to the more than seven million who have perished in the last decade. The international community says “never again” to mass murder, yet blithely ignores Congo's agony.

Despite Canada's being the leading driver of the responsibility to protect, our government's response has been pathetic.

I call on our government to provide resources for the new 3,000-person increase in peacekeeping forces, to facilitate a multilateral response to dismantle the ex-Interahamwe groups, and to encourage a Congolese-led grassroots conflict resolution process to resolve long-standing grievances over land and resources.

We cannot continue to stand by in cowardice and ignorance as mass murder continues. We must back up our responsibility to protect with an obligation to act.

*Statements by Members***RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my thanks to the people of Kitchener Centre for giving me the honour of representing them in Canada's Parliament. I intend to work hard to justify the trust they have placed in me. In coming to Ottawa, I carry the people of Kitchener in my heart.

I also want to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Sharon, and our children for their support of all my efforts.

This week Kitchener is hosting the restorative justice conference and celebrating the birth in Kitchener of the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program now adopted across Canada.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate Mark Yantzi, retired judge Gordon McConnell, and the other pioneers of restorative justice on receiving the Ron Wiebe award this week. Their efforts are an example of original social innovation at its finest and part of what makes me so very proud of my community.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the latest Speech from the Throne, the Conservative Government decided to ignore the bargaining rules in negotiations with its own public servants.

The Bloc Québécois has always thought it best for labour contracts with the public service to be negotiated to the satisfaction of the parties, but now the President of the Treasury Board wants to introduce a bill to impose his final offer without going to the bargaining table. That is unacceptable.

The Conservative government would rather go on investing more in the military than respect the members of the Professional Institute of the Public Service and the Public Service Alliance by negotiating in good faith.

The Conservative government would be crazy to privatize part of the public service, but that is what it wants to do. This would allow the government to divest itself of its responsibility to provide Canadians with the best public service possible through public servants in their communities.

* * *

[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, violence against women is an affliction that affects too many women around the world. One in three girls is sexually assaulted before the age of 18. Women are more likely than men to be the victims of the most severe forms of spousal assault, as well as spousal homicide, sexual assault and criminal harassment. Protecting women and their families is something that this government takes very seriously.

[Translation]

I am proud that Canada is participating in UNIFEM's efforts to achieve worldwide political commitment to ending violence against women. That is why, yesterday, the Minister of State (Status of Women) announced that the government will sign on to UNIFEM's campaign to end violence against women around the world.

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[English]

SURREY BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to attend the 10th Annual Business Excellence Awards gala held by the Surrey Board of Trade.

I would like to recognize the following winners: Tracy Bell of La Belle Fleur Floral Boutique; Kultar Thiara, Sucha Padda and Harpal Sookh of the Grand Taj Banquet Hall; Helen Dolmat and Kimberly Daw of F.U.E.L. Catering; Mary Pichette of the Servants Anonymous Society; Susan Keeping of the Newton Advocacy Group Society; Glen Chua, student entrepreneur of the year; and 29-year-old Dale Regehr, business person of the year.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these winners.

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● (1110)

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my sympathies to all Canadians who have lost loved ones in road collisions. Earlier this week, Canada celebrated the first National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims. We reflect on the lives lost and renew our resolve to improve the safety of Canadian roads.

On average, eight Canadians are killed in road collisions every day. Many more are impacted. Family members, friends and other loved ones are left grieving.

We all have a part to play in keeping our roads safe. That is why our government took action and toughened the laws meant to deter impaired driving, while giving police better tools to keep offenders in jail. This is just a start.

Most of the deaths caused by road collisions are preventable and avoidable. Whether it is observing speed limits, wearing a seat belt or abstaining from driving while impaired or fatigued, let us work together to prevent these tragedies. Let that be the legacy of the victims we remember today.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, November 22 marks National Housing Day in Canada and tomorrow we will have little cause to celebrate.

Over 30 years ago Canada signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights saying out loud to the world that there is a right to housing in Canada, but three million Canadians do not have access to affordable housing.

Statements by Members

We need a national housing strategy, especially now in these tough economic times ahead. There is no better time than now to build, as economists are urging infrastructure spending to boost the economy. Building new, energy efficient housing and fixing up the existing stock would create jobs, fight climate change, and ensure truly affordable housing for people living in poverty.

In these tough economic times let us not lose sight of who makes up the real economy, of what needs to be done, who we are and who we represent.

* * *

CALGARY STAMPEDERS

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me tell the House why Calgary should receive the Grey Cup this weekend.

Sure, the Montreal Alouettes settled the banks of the St. Lawrence hundreds of years ago, but there is a new, fresh pioneer spirit in the west. Alberta is the most valuable player of all the provinces.

Our Stampeders are cowboys who tackled the national energy program and lived to tell the tale. They huddle in the most conservative, pro-business turf in the country. They have defended a can-do business attitude from the rookie fumbling hands of Stéphane Dion.

At this rodeo, we are going to horn in the Liberal—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Calgary West is an experienced member. He knows very well he cannot use another member's name and I heard him mention one. He will want to comply with the rules in every respect in the course of his statement.

Mr. Rob Anders: Mr. Speaker, it was in light of the hon. member not being with us for much longer.

At this rodeo we are going to horn in the Liberal carbon tax and steer the country in the right direction.

They make yards being my hometown and the ultimate touchdown.

They are the team for Canada's back-to-back elected, trusted and savvy Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Go Stamps go.

The Speaker: The hon. member was cautioned once and did it twice. I am shocked. He will have to recant.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

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[*Translation*]**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in November 2007, the Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-482 to amend the Official Languages Act and the Canada Labour Code. The amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois would have forced the federal government to recognize the primacy of Bill 101 in Quebec and required private companies under federal jurisdiction

to respect French as the language of work. This would have allowed the workers of such businesses to work in French in Quebec.

Quebeckers form a nation; this House has recognized that fact. It is time to put those words into action. So that all workers in Quebec may work in French, the Bloc Québécois will introduce another bill to ensure that the Charter of the French Language applies to all businesses in Quebec, including those under federal jurisdiction.

* * *

●(1115)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past 18 months, in my travels throughout my riding of Papineau, I heard time and time again how access to affordable housing is a major challenge for Canadian families.

[*English*]

High housing costs mean young people and new Canadians cannot buy homes, which leads to increased pressure on existing affordable housing.

[*Translation*]

November 22, 2008, is National Housing Day. In this period of economic uncertainty, Canadians have the right to demand that their government make access to affordable, safe housing a priority.

[*English*]

In this respect, the throne speech was disappointing. This government has frozen funding for affordable housing and combating homelessness, while also ignoring the housing crises in first nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

[*Translation*]

National Housing Day is a reminder that we must ensure that all Canadians are able to access affordable, safe housing and maintain their dignity.

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MONTREAL ALOUETTES

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, November 23, many football fans will set aside all their commitments to watch the game everyone is waiting for—the Grey Cup game between the Montreal Alouettes and the Calgary Stampeders.

Those lucky enough to be in Montreal will be in the company of more than 60,000 spectators. What more could the Alouettes ask for than to play the final match in their hometown? To win the 96th Grey Cup, of course.

On behalf of all Quebeckers and Montreal Alouettes fans across Canada, I wish them the best of luck. And as a true fan of the Alouettes, I say: Go, Alouettes, Go!

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government set aside a contingency reserve to be used in case of economic crisis, an emergency fund to avoid running a deficit and to ensure the government's capacity to help Canadians.

Why did the Conservatives do away with our capacity to help vulnerable Canadians now during the bad times?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me welcome you back to the chair. I think it was a wise choice by those who supported you, Mr. Speaker. We are glad to have you back, looking after this wonderful establishment that we call our home during the week.

In answer to the question, this fictional contingency fund that the hon. member speaks of was never legislated. It was on the backs of taxpayers. Once again, Liberals think that tax dollars are their money. They are not. They are Canadians' money.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadians who are suffering right now are not fictional. They are real and they are in real trouble because the government spent the contingency reserve and eliminated the capacity for the government to help Canadians during an economic downturn.

Why on earth, during the good times, would the Conservative government spend the cupboard bare so that it did not have any capacity to help Canadians today during the bad times?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is not Liberals' money. It is taxpayers' money. The Conservative government does not believe in overtaxing Canadians just to build a slush fund so it can have its March madness as happened in Liberal years. We also will not transfer the costs of a potential deficit of this financial struggle we are in onto the backs of the provinces as the Liberals did during the 1990s.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons budget officer was very clear yesterday when he blamed the pending Conservative deficit on "previous policy decisions as opposed to weakened economic conditions". The Conservative policies he refers to are bad tax and big spending policies. In fact, the Conservatives have increased government spending by 25% during their time in power.

If the Prime Minister saw tough economic times on the horizon over a year ago, as he said he did, why did he spend so recklessly during the good times that he eliminated and gutted our fiscal capacity to help vulnerable Canadians today during the tough times?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I might remind hon. members that the hon. member's seatmate in budget 2004 actually increased spending by 15%. The Liberals are making wild accusations about increased spending from this side of the House. The only reason that the government had to increase spending was to pay back the provinces the Liberal government's cuts to transfer payments. That is not fair.

We do not treat provinces like that. We do not treat Canadians like that.

• (1120)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we cannot know where we are going if we do not understand where we have been. So it is with the deficit: Canada's new Conservative deficit.

To fix it the government must be honest about where it came from. Private analysts like Global Insight and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an officer created by the current government, all say Canada's new Conservative deficit is caused by mistaken Conservative policies.

Will the government explain what logic led it to eliminate both the prudence factor and the contingency reserve from the federal budget?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I will remind the hon. member that there was no legislated contingency fund. It was a surplus that was driven by Liberal policies that overtaxed Canadians. Canadians do not want to be overtaxed. We heard that loud and clear during the campaign this year. Canadians thanked us for cutting their taxes. Canadians thanked us for taking 700,000 people off the tax roll.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 10 consecutive balanced budgets, the biggest reduction in debt, and the biggest tax cuts in Canadian history. That is the Liberal record.

The government says Canada's new Conservative deficit is just temporary, not structural, but its spending is structural. Its tax laws are structural. Killing the contingency reserve is structural. Canadian pensions, savings, jobs and economic security are now in jeopardy because of its mismanagement and it has no plan. When will the government produce a discernible plan to protect Canadians from its failures?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of failures, I believe that is why we have a Conservative government.

People soundly rejected the policies of the Liberal government, a Liberal government that transferred the costs to the provinces. During the nineties, the Liberal government slashed transfer payments for education, for social programs, for health. That is why we are spending more money trying to rebuild the damage that was created by a former Liberal government.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister admitted that his throne speech did not contain any specifics about dealing with the crisis, and his Minister of Finance has warned us not to expect any concrete measures in next week's economic statement. That kind of laissez-faire attitude is totally unacceptable.

Oral Questions

Instead, will the government listen to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who has recommended specific actions to be taken immediately, and announce emergency measures to address the crisis? Time is of the essence.

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my hon. colleague back to the House and congratulate him on his re-election.

In answer to his question, I would suggest that he wait, like the rest of us, until next Thursday when he will see some concrete measures and some improvements on how we can deal with the financial situation that we are faced with right now.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have already been waiting far too long.

Since the government seems to have run out of ideas, and since the Prime Minister said, yesterday, that he was open to the Bloc Québécois' suggestions, then might I suggest that the coming economic statement include loans and loan guarantees, as well as refundable tax credits for research and development to provide the forestry and manufacturing sectors with the funds they are in desperate need of now?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have taken many of those measures. It would be good if the hon. member would go back to budget 2008 and recognize what we did for investments in research and development and what we did with the billion dollar community development trust fund for those communities that were struggling at the time.

We will be discussing this in more detail. The finance minister will be tabling the fall economic update next Thursday.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when asked what he planned to do to help seniors who have seen the value of their RRSPs drop significantly following the stock market downturn, the Minister of Finance mentioned a letter that he would be sending to financial institutions asking for more information about asset transfers. Clearly, the minister did not understand.

What we want to know is what he himself plans to do to help seniors deal with this crisis.

• (1125)

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is very concerned about the plight in which seniors are caught. It is a very serious matter. Seniors are concerned about their futures, their investments and their retirement funds. That is why the minister yesterday wrote letters to all federally regulated financial institutions to ensure that seniors who were transferring money out of their RRSPs into their RRIFs could actually do that without consequences.

The finance minister is ahead of the opposition by a long shot.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the minister seems to be out of ideas, might he reconsider the Bloc Québécois' suggestion to raise the age at which seniors are required to roll their RRSPs into RRIFs from 71 to 73?

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only did we address that in the last budget by raising it from 69 to 71 when seniors could rollover their RRSPs into RRIFs, we came up with a novel idea, and that was a way for taxpayers to save their money tax-free. That is in the tax-free savings account.

We are encouraging seniors, when they are rolling out of their RRSPs, to open a tax free savings account that they can benefit from tax free.

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SENIORS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, GM has just announced hundreds more layoffs, adding to the already volatile situation facing Canadians. Seniors are seeing their hard-earned pensions evaporate as the TSX falls day after day. Mutual funds take a hit with every point lost on the markets, yet the government has done nothing to protect the savings of Canadians.

Will the government protect pensions before there is nothing left to protect?

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, regarding the auto industry, the minister has said that we need to see a plan from automakers and unions for the industry's long-term success. No one wants to be back where we are at a year from now.

Legislators in the U.S. said the same thing yesterday. They sent automakers back and told them to come back on December 2.

We need to see a solid, accountable business plan from automakers and their stakeholders.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to add insult to injury, soon if people fall behind in a couple of payments, they will face a punishing 5% increase in credit card rates. The finance minister's response was another ineffective letter. The minister has failed to protect consumers on ATM fees, on outrageous text messaging fees and now on credit card interest rates.

Why is the government not standing up for Canadians? Why is it letting profitable banks exploit the pain of average people?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): In fact, Mr. Speaker, we are very proactive on this file. We have raised the issue with the banks, although the banks are their own governors. They decide how credit card fees are set.

Oral Questions

We can encourage that. The finance minister was very successful in his interventions with the banking sector, but we do not regulate fees charged by financial sectors, nor should we.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not being proactive if the government is leaving generations of Canadians behind, with no action on protecting seniors' pensions and no action on credit card hikes. Today Campaign 2000 is again forced to demand urgent action to combat poverty. Over 760,000 children, nearly 12% of all Canadian kids, live in poverty.

Where is the government's national poverty reduction strategy? Why is there no action for the poorest of Canadians, yet there are huge tax cuts for the richest of Canada's CEOs?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has been very clear that we want to work with our colleagues in the House to eliminate poverty.

That is why we have taken the many steps we have to ensure families, and especially children and seniors, are in a much better financial position. That is why we introduced the universal child care benefit. That is why we have lowered the GST, which, by the way, helps the lower income people the most. Certainly people who are not paying taxes would not benefit from tax cuts in the way the GST cuts help them.

We are doing this because we want to eliminate poverty.

• (1130)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this economic crisis seniors across Canada have seen their savings and pensions decimated. Seniors face uncertainty about how to pay their bills, their heat, their groceries and the government has offered them nothing: no plan, no action.

Since the Prime Minister offered his gratuitous stock tips that there are buying opportunities out there, the market has fallen by 20%, 765 points alone yesterday. The government's dithering and bad management only serve to prolong the anxiety and fears of seniors.

Where is the plan?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are so many people wanting to answer this question that we have to decide who will stand up first.

Let me remind the hon. member and the House that it was this Conservative government that established a minister responsible for seniors issues. That was never done before in the 13 years under the Liberal government. Talk about a lack of respect for seniors.

We put a minister in place to look after seniors issues. We have allowed them pension income splitting.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is a minister for seniors issues, where is he or she? For goodness' sake, the Prime Minister has demonstrated that he is incompetent in managing the nation's economy and as a stock tip adviser, he is a disaster.

Canadians have not seen this much carnage in the markets since income trusts, on which the Prime Minister misled Canadians.

The report from the Desjardins Group says that Canadians are going to have to push back their retirement by six years. Seniors deserve real answers from a minister or, indeed, anyone on that side.

What is the government going to do to now protect seniors? Where is the plan?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that those people who have helped build our country into what it is today, our seniors, get all the support that they deserve.

That is why we have, as my colleague said, installed for the very first time a Minister of State for Seniors. We have launched a National Seniors Council, which is providing the government with advice, particularly on issues of seniors' poverty and on how to combat elder abuse, something about which the hon. member does not even seem to care.

We have streamlined the guaranteed income supplement, increased it significantly and made it easier to get.

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, instead of real action, the Minister of Finance wrote a meaningless letter to the banks. His small gesture will only help seniors with large cash reserves, a select few. His letter will not help seniors on fixed pension income or with limited RRSPs.

What about the majority of seniors? Where is the plan?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is new to the House and she is probably not aware of the many other things that we have done and continue to do for seniors.

Not only did we increase the guaranteed income supplement for seniors who needed it, but we also made sure they would get less clawback. We increased by 500% the allowance that they can claim and still qualify for GIS. We introduced pension splitting for seniors to reduce their taxes so they would have more of the money they would need to spend their way.

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of what the Conservative government has done. Nor are the rest of Canadians aware of what the Conservative government has done.

In this economic crisis, seniors across my riding have seen their savings and pensions wiped out. Seniors face real uncertainty about how to pay their bills. Conservative dithering and bad management will only prolong their anxiety.

Seniors deserve a real answer. Where is the plan for seniors?

• (1135)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been working the plan. We have been for two and half years now.

I invite the member opposite to keep pace with all the good things that we have been doing for seniors. We have introduced pension splitting. That has made a huge difference to many families. In fact, several people in my riding approached me this spring after they calculated their income tax and said that it meant up to \$7,000 in perks for them at the end of the year.

The Liberals can talk all they want about having a plan. We are making it happen.

* * *

[Translation]

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government made drastic cuts to cultural budgets and has no intention of reversing its decision. What is even more worrisome is that the throne speech announced more restrictions on culture, under the guise of administrative streamlining.

In light of its blatant disregard for culture, why does the government not transfer cultural budgets, and the associated powers, to Quebec, which can take care of such things itself?

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this being the first opportunity to rise in this fashion in the House, I would like to thank the people of the electorate city region of Peterborough for once again returning me to the House.

No government in history has provided as much funding and support to the Department of Canadian Heritage as this government has, an 8% increase over the previous government, some almost \$200 million.

We support the arts in Canada. We also support arts and culture. I am proud that the government has provided so much support to this critical department.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government made a big deal out of its decision to recognize the Quebec nation.

If the government wants to put its money where its mouth is, here, why does it not transfer power over all cultural matters to Quebec?

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, we see the Department of Canadian Heritage as a critical institution

Oral Questions

within government. We see the role that it plays in defining Canadians and representing Canadian values. It is critical. That is why we put so much funding support behind it. We have increased the funding and support it broadly right across Canada.

We see this as part of being Canadian, part of the Canadian identity. We are proud of our record. We are proud that we are providing a level of support that we are.

* * *

[Translation]

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, the government clearly announced that it intended to raise the issue of harsher measures for young offenders, despite Quebec's objections.

Will the minister create a special system for Quebec, as called for unanimously by the Quebec National Assembly, and will he recognize the Quebec model for rehabilitating young offenders on its territory?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to a balanced approach. We have been very clear that those individuals who commit serious offences in this country, whether they be young persons or adults, can expect serious consequences.

When it comes to fighting crime, Canadians know they can count on this government.

[Translation]

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers all agree that the model for rehabilitating young offenders is a proven model that gives results. Recognizing a nation also means recognizing its way of dealing with young people.

Will the minister create a special system, as all Quebecers are calling for?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely committed to an effective criminal justice system that applies to all Canadians, young and old. We indicated that during the election and previous to that.

From my consultations right across the country, people have concerns with the level of youth violence in Canada.

We will come forward with a measured, balanced approach to fighting crime in this country.

*Oral Questions***AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canada's auto sector continues to suffer from years of the Conservative government's dismal economic mismanagement and as families lose their jobs and worry about their futures, the Minister of Industry returns from Washington with no results. In a time of crisis, all he brings back are business cards.

When will the government stop sitting on its hands, stop crossing its fingers and finally come up with a plan that would really help Canadian auto workers and their families?

• (1140)

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard time and time again from members on the other side of the House their proposals for a knee-jerk reaction to this complex global situation involving the auto sector.

The minister has said that he will listen to stakeholders and to the industry on both sides of the border because it is an integrated industry. He will make a well thought out decision in due course in the best interest of Canadian workers, Canadian businesses, Canadian consumers and Canadian taxpayers.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after three years what we would like to see is any type of action from the government. It has failed to realize just how urgent this situation is; that further mismanagement could mean thousands of additional job losses and more pain to communities that are already suffering.

While the U.S. develops a plan to save the American auto sector, the government's inaction, its laissez-faire attitude and its hope that it will all just go away could mean that Canadian jobs become American jobs.

After three years of doing nothing will the government finally act? Will it table a plan immediately to ensure that Canadian workers are protected, and do it before it is too late?

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the hon. member talk about the American plan because the American's sent the auto executives back to come up with a plan and come back on December 2. If the member had been paying any attention he would have noticed that.

Our minister is meeting with industry leaders and stakeholders on both sides of the border to gather the best information so he can make a decision that will be taken in the best interest of Canadian consumers, Canadian auto workers, Canadian businesses and Canadian taxpayers.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the crisis in the auto industry affects the entire country, including Cape Breton.

While other countries are investing in their auto sector, the Conservatives are not. They do not have a plan.

There have been recent layoffs of auto workers in my riding and more may come. It should not be this way and it does not need to be.

When will the Conservatives step up with a plan to help the auto sector and keep our jobs in Cape Breton?

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is concerned about any family that is being affected negatively by the global economic slowdown.

I reiterate the same answer that I have given when asked this same question twice. Our minister is carefully considering options, gathering information from stakeholders, people who have valuable information and ideas to add to the conversation.

We will be coming up with a course of action in due course that will benefit Canadian taxpayers, Canadian consumers, Canadian workers and business interests as well.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing the government has shown it is that it cannot be trusted to stand up for our workers.

The government ignored the auto sector for over two years, that is until there was an election coming. As we can see today, its plan was too little and too late.

When will the government come up with a real auto strategy?

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the fourth question in a row from the Liberal Party demanding a knee-jerk reaction to a very complex global issue.

The minister is gathering the best information in order to make the best possible decision in the interest of Canadian workers and their families, Canadian businesses, Canadian taxpayers and Canadian consumers.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian seniors know that no government has done more for them than the Conservative government. We delivered pension income splitting for seniors when the opposition voted against it. We increased the age limit for RRSP to RRIF conversion to 71 from 69, which the opposition voted against.

The recent downturn in market conditions has many seniors truly worried about their RRIFs. Some misunderstandings about the rules surrounding minimum withdrawal requirements has occurred recently.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance please advise the House as to what has been done to address their concerns?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our new member from London West for that great question.

Yesterday, the finance minister personally wrote to every federally regulated financial institution raising this concern that seniors have brought forward. Seniors should be allowed in-kind asset transfers, which means that their investments are transferred from their accounts with no cost to seniors.

There was a demand for a response to the minister from those institutions by November 28.

Oral Questions

• (1145)

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, four of Canada's five major economic partners are members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and APEC represents more than half of the global economy. However, the Prime Minister is about to leave for the APEC summit without any clear objectives.

Does the minister agree that international trade must engender respect for human rights and the environment and should improve workers' conditions?

[English]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to re-engagement with the Americas and part of that is free trade. The hon. member is well aware that our free trade agreements are complemented with provisions on labour and environmental co-operation.

We need to be perfectly clear that our free trade agreements promote and reinforce the protection of human rights.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, balderdash. With the softwood sellout and other examples, if the government ran a business the way it ran international trade, it would be sued by the shareholders.

Ordinary Canadians do not believe the government is acting in Canada's best interest. The new U.S. administration is willing to change NAFTA and yet the government forges ahead with secret APEC free trade talks and signs pacts with countries like Colombia that abuse human rights.

Why does the government not renegotiate the biggest of the trade deals so workers, the environment and all Canadians, not just the rich, can benefit?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, expanding our trade opportunities in the Americas is a priority of the government. Free trade is good for Canada, it is good for our free trade partners and it is good for the economies and the citizens of all the countries involved in the free trade agreements.

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*[Translation]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, Jean Perrault, president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, had this to say about infrastructure spending projects, "What is needed now is the political follow-through to cut red tape and ensure that the BCF money budgeted for these projects in 2007 and 2008 is spent immediately."

Does the Prime Minister realize that immediately does not mean in the next year, as he has implied? Will he expedite funding for infrastructure?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the president and board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities met yesterday with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and me. They called on the government to expedite funding for infrastructure. This is crucial, and it forms a major portion of the Speech from the Throne. We are prepared to do that, and I hope the Bloc members will support our throne speech, because it is the best way to achieve real results and create jobs for Canadians.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister should be as red as his tie with shame. The money has been languishing in federal coffers since 2007.

In response to the current crisis, the parliamentary budget officer is calling for measures to stimulate the economy in the short term. Will the government follow his recommendation and announce more money for Building Canada in its economic statement?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I noted with great interest the comment made by the Bloc Québécois member, who wants to build Canada. This is very important. We are very proud, and we agree with that strategy.

We are prepared to work with the municipalities and, in the case of Quebec, with the Government of Quebec, to make changes in order to create jobs in the construction industry, which is vital to economic growth, not only in Quebec, but across Canada.

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*[English]***ARTS AND CULTURE**

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conference Board of Canada calls the arts and cultural sector a key engine of economic growth, contributing \$85 million to Canada's GDP and sustaining almost one million jobs last year alone. The Conservatives, however, thought that cutting \$45 million from arts and culture was a good idea. Obviously everyone over there must have failed economics 101.

When will the Conservatives put forward a clear plan to bolster Canada's \$85 billion cultural sector?

• (1150)

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, some of the members across the way were missing in action when the various budgets were brought forward and tabled by this government, but we were not when it came to arts and culture. We were increasing funding to the Department of Canadian Heritage by some 8%, almost \$200 million more than the last Liberal government budget.

Oral Questions

It is hypocrisy at the highest to listen to a Liberal Party that made such significant cuts to arts and culture in the mid-1990s. The CEO of the CBC actually quit because so much money was cut from arts and culture and yet here are the Liberals arguing for heritage. Do not worry, we got it.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, does the minister not realize that his government's fit of ideological pique, which gutted PromArt and other cultural projects, resulted in the cancellation of over 613 cultural projects across the country which has caused huge job losses at a time when Canada cannot afford it?

Is this how the government intends to boost productivity and encourage economic activity? Where is the plan?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, that is interesting hyperbole but it is not based on fact.

As we know, the government has substantially increased funding to arts and culture. There is no question that we conducted a strategic review of the department and selected some programs that we did not feel were either delivering for taxpayers or that had outlived their useful life.

In reality, however, we need to come back to the facts. No government in history has provided more support to arts and culture and to Heritage Canada than ours has. I am very proud of that. I hope the Liberal Party is proud of it too.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 800 hard-working paperworkers in Grand Falls-Windsor and their families are anxiously waiting to find out whether they are about to lose their jobs. AbitibiBowater is set to announce its decision on closing the mill between now and the holidays.

Earlier this year, the government announced a \$1 billion trust fund to help the troubled forestry and manufacturing sectors but only 2% of that money went to Newfoundland and Labrador.

What is the government's plan to help the workers of Grand Falls-Windsor?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has consistently acted to help workers and their families in the forestry crisis who are facing economic uncertainty. The NDP can sit here but it can never do anything except complain.

We have supported the Canadian forest industry by getting the softwood lumber deal done. We have created the community development trust in order to support families in those communities. We are fighting the spread of the mountain pine beetle.

We have worked across this country to protect and to work with the forestry sector on behalf of those families.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we do not want to wait until the mill closes down. An older worker adjustment and transition for other workers will help to keep this mill alive. It is

a 100-year-old business and the centrepiece of the Newfoundland and Labrador economy.

Will the government put these things in place to help save this mill?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know the consequences of the NDP's plans for Canada. Its anti-trade policies, its attacks on the energy sector and its plans to tear up the softwood lumber agreement would put Canadian jobs right across this country at risk.

There are over 270,000 jobs in the forestry sector and we are protecting them. There are over 369,000 jobs in the mining sector and we are protecting them. There are over 250,000 jobs in the energy sector and we are protecting them.

In these uncertain global economic times, Canadians cannot afford the NDP.

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HEALTH

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a newly released report by Statistics Canada shows that the level of lead contamination in Canadians has plummeted over the last 30 years. The head of the Occupational Environmental Health Laboratory at McMaster University called the numbers amazing.

Could the Minister of Health tell the House what actions the Conservative government has taken to protect Canadians from lead and other toxins?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin to answer the question, I would like to thank the great people of Nunavut for electing me to represent them in Ottawa. I am humbled by their confidence.

I am happy to report that Canadians have never had so little lead in their bodies as they do today. This week the Canadian Health Measures Survey reported that, compared to 30 years ago, well over 99% of Canadians today have such low levels of lead that they will suffer no adverse health effects.

I want to assure the House that the government also remains committed to our chemical management plan, and the food and consumer products safety action plan which will continue to reduce harmful contaminants. Under the Conservative government, our health is going to get better.

Oral Questions

• (1155)

*[Translation]***FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, things have gotten much worse for forestry and sawmill workers since the softwood sell-out deal was signed. The lines of unemployed workers in front of employment insurance offices are getting longer. It should not necessarily have to be that way, but the Conservatives have muddled the negotiations so badly that the situation is now critical.

Do the Conservatives have a plan to revitalize our forestry industry or should the communities and workers who depend on the forest just give up hope?

[English]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we face hypocrisy.

The Liberals' record on natural resources speaks for itself. When the forestry industry needed a softwood lumber deal, they could not get it done. When Canadians needed action on the mountain pine beetle issue, Liberals could not get it done. When it came to setting targets for greenhouse gas reductions, the Liberals could not get it done.

Unlike the Liberals, the Conservative government is getting the job done.

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*[Translation]***OMAR KHADR**

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that he has no intentions of asking for the repatriation of Omar Khadr, the young Canadian who has been held in Guantanamo. Of all the western countries, Canada alone refuses to act on behalf of one of its citizens. What is more, this young man was a child soldier who was tortured and mistreated.

Since we know that the new president of the United States plans to close Guantanamo, will the government finally ask that young Khadr be repatriated and will it stop feeding us the same lines?

[English]

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our position remains unchanged. Unlike many prisoners held in Guantanamo Bay, Omar Khadr has actually been charged with serious crimes and is in a judicial legal process to determine his guilt or innocence. We support this process.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had a dire warning from scientists that the government is risking an ecological crisis in the north. The Minister of Natural Resources does not see global warming as a danger to the north. She sees it as an exciting opportunity. We cannot allow the current crisis

to be an excuse for accelerating an ecological disaster. Northerners need a voice. We are not asking for massive deregulation.

I want to know if the minister will be using the Sarah Palin school of politics: drill, baby, drill.

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said in the House yesterday, the policy of the government is to strike an appropriate balance between the environment on the one hand and the economy on the other. We will endeavour to do that at every step. We will do that with respect to our climate change policy. We will do that with respect to the importance of opening up natural gas basins in the north, which has been spoken to in the throne speech. I hope that the hon. member opposite will cooperate with us in that respect.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Quebec provincial police arrested 46 people on a variety of drug and organized crime charges. The day before Winnipeg police arrested a dozen individuals and seized a significant amount of weapons and drugs.

While the global economic crisis is threatening many small and medium size businesses, organized crime enterprises are thriving in this country and around the world, primarily through the lucrative drug trade which threatens the safety of our communities and destroys the lives of those most vulnerable to drug addiction, primarily our youth.

What is the government doing to fight crime?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are doing a lot to fight crime in this country. In the last Parliament, we passed the Tackling Violent Crime Act that mandates mandatory prison terms for people who commit serious gun crimes.

We also introduced a drug bill that would send out a clear message to importers, drug dealers, and those involved with the grow-op business. Unfortunately, that bill did not get passed.

However, let me be clear. We will not be deterred. When it comes to cracking down on crime, when it comes to standing up for victims and law-abiding Canadians, Canadians know they can count on the Conservative government.

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NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for more than 30 years the Mealy Mountains region in Labrador has been considered as a future national park. Park status would not only protect this beautiful wilderness region but would generate employment opportunities and stimulate the local and regional tourism industry. Stakeholders, such as municipal and aboriginal leaders, have reached consensus on park boundaries and other matters.

Routine Proceedings

A recommendation was sent to the environment minister last summer, yet there is no movement on the Mealy Mountains park file. What is the holdup?

• (1200)

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member for Labrador back to the House. It speaks to his unique abilities in the House that I actually heard him long before I saw him here.

I think that the hon. member is supportive. He is well aware of the physical beauty of Mealy Mountains and the importance of that to the national park system. I take from his question a willingness to cooperate with the government on any future action that relates to the Mealy Mountains park.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the minister and member for Mégantic—L'Érable promised, according to UPA's president quoted in *La Terre de chez nous*, to quickly implement a recovery program for potato farmers affected by the golden nematode outbreak.

When will the minister keep his promises? Does he agree with me that it is unacceptable to keep farmers in the dark and waiting more than two years?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of measures were implemented in 2006, with \$6.4 million given to those who suffered losses for that reason. Furthermore, in 2007, an additional \$1.4 million was provided through the AgriStability program. And discussions about how to continue supporting affected farmers are ongoing.

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[English]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of years we have seen a lot of mining companies in Canada use freshwater habitat for tailing ponds; in other words, turning them into cheap waste disposal sites.

The reality is that no government and no society should ever use freshwater healthy aquatic systems as toxic tailing ponds; whereas the alternative would be to have independent tailing ponds for the mining operation.

Would the government commit to an action plan, as New Brunswick did earlier this year, to prevent freshwater habitat from being used as toxic tailing ponds for these mining companies?

Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before in the House, we need to balance our responsibility as stewards of the environment with that of the economy. There is certainly no one in the environment department who would countenance toxic tailing ponds, to use the member's expression. Everything that is done with respect to the mining industry is done in a responsible manner. However, I can assure the

member that I am closely looking at the question of tailing ponds, freshwater tailing ponds, and how and when they are used in the mining situation.

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance tried to make the point that in previous Liberal budgets there was not in fact a contingency reserve. As it happens, I have in front of me budgetary documents relating to 2005 and 2004, and in both cases the contingency reserve is provided for with complete transparency. Both of those budgets were adopted by the House of Commons. So, indeed, the contingency reserve was there, and was voted on and approved by the House of Commons in each and every case.

The Speaker: I am sure that all hon. members are delighted to hear from the member for Wascana on this point, but it does sound like a matter for debate rather than a point of order to me. Facts often arise in debates.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CANADIAN FORCES SUPERANNUATION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-201, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act (deletion of deduction from annuity).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. friends and people of the riding of Sackville—Eastern Shore for re-electing me for the fifth time to represent them in the House of Commons.

On behalf of Roger Boutin, Mel Pittman and John Labelle, it is a great honour to introduce this legislation which would end the clawback from the pensions of our military personnel and RCMP personnel at age 65. We all in this House support the troops but the reality is that we need to learn to support them long after the uniform comes off and clawing back their pensions at age 65 is simply wrong. It is time to reverse that decision. This bill will do it.

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

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• (1205)

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-202, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (members who cross the floor).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as everyone who has been here in the House for a short while knows, I personally despise people who cross the floor to another party while they are sitting as elected representatives. My firm belief is that if members wish to cross the floor, members should resign their seat, seek the nomination of the new party, and allow their constituents to determine what party banner they should fly under in the House of Commons.

I encourage quick adoption of this bill to prevent floor crossing because the carpet between the two rows is very expensive. We cannot keep replacing it every time people cross it, so we need to put an end to that practice immediately.

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

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EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-203, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (no GST on the sale of home heating fuels).

He said: Mr. Speaker, when the GST was introduced by the previous Conservative Party, our party clearly said that if it was put on essentials like home heating oil or electricity to heat people's homes it was going to have a detrimental effect. That is exactly what has happened. In Atlantic Canada we have the HST, where the provincial and federal taxes are combined on home heating oil and electricity to heat homes. A surprise to the government I know, but people in Canada actually have to heat their homes and putting a tax on that essential is simply wrong. We would like that eliminated to put more money into people's pockets. They should never be taxed on an essential such as heating their homes and we would like it removed immediately.

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

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SUDAN ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-204, An Act to encourage accountability by Canada and the international community with respect to Sudan.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to reintroduce the Sudan Accountability Act, a bill that seeks to encourage accountability and enhance the role of Canada and the international community in combatting the genocide in Darfur.

On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Genocide Convention and the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is only appropriate that this legislation be introduced to combat the first genocide of the 21st century through targeted divestment and international initiatives. We know that more than 400,000 people have died in this genocide by attrition in Darfur, that at least four million people are on a life support system and that two million have been internally displaced and are the target of continuing assaults.

As the student posters at Darfur rallies around the globe ask: If not us, who, and if not now, when?

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Even though this bill alone will not put an end to the genocide, it is a vital step that we must take immediately.

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

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[English]

FOOD PRODUCTS LABELLING ACT

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-205, An Act respecting the labelling of food products.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg for seconding the bill.

Canadians are worried about what is in their food. They are worried about the lack of regulation and support by the government on food regulation. This bill would be explicit about what is in their food. It is something we should have had a long time ago. If the government wants to adopt this bill, I would be happy to give it to them.

I would like to thank Dr. Shiv Chopra and many others in the food safety movement for their help on this bill.

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

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● (1210)

EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-206, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (no GST on books or pamphlets).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as an educator and as someone who supports access to books, one of the things we can do is eliminate the cost of books. We saw this recently with the cost of books going up. Punishing people who want to educate their children and themselves is something we should not do, and I believe that having the GST on books and education materials does just that.

This bill would alleviate the costs that people must pay to educate their children and themselves.

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

* * *

NATIONAL CAPITAL ACT

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-207, An Act to amend the National Capital Act (appointments and meetings).

Routine Proceedings

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am reintroducing this bill and I want to give kudos to the government for good first steps on reforming the NCC. However, there is more that needs to be done.

This bill would bring into practice and force the public appointments commission to ensure people are appointed to agencies, boards and commissions based on merit. I believe this should happen, specifically with the National Capital Commission. I urge the government to adopt this bill.

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

* * *

SALE OF MEDALS PROHIBITION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-208, An Act to prohibit the sale of Canadian military and police medals.

He said: Mr. Speaker, our honoured veterans are very proud of the medals they received. These medals are not currency on their chest. They are given for valour, service, honour and duty to their country. Most important, these men and women wear their medals in remembrance of those who never had the opportunity to wear their medals because they paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I do not believe these medals should end up at flea markets, garage sales or on e-Bay. They should not be sold. They are too honourable for that. The reality is that nobody should profit financially from the valour of other human beings.

I encourage quick adoption of the bill by the House at its earliest convenience.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following motion. I move:

That the following change be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs:

Kelly Block for Barry Devolin

As the House knows, Mr. Speaker, with the appointments of your Deputy Speakers this morning, this change has become necessary.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHY PREVENTION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-209, An Act to prevent the use of the Internet to distribute pornographic material involving children.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we see governments at all levels around the world moving toward this type of legislation. One of the most

despicable crimes we have in the world involve pedophiles and individuals who use the Internet to lure unsuspecting children for despicable acts.

The premise of my bill would give ISP providers some responsibility to monitor the sites and encourage them to inform authorities of any information they may run across so direct action can be taken.

If the Conservatives believe in being tough on crime, this is something they should be working on immediately to help reduce child pornography on the Internet.

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

* * *

●(1215)

CANADIAN FORCES SUPERANNUATION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-210, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act (marriage after the age of sixty years).

He said: Mr. Speaker, if we truly believe in supporting our troops, we need to ensure that we support them long after the uniform comes off.

Many people do not realize that when a military person remarries after the age of 60 and then dies, the second spouse is not entitled to any of the person's pension benefits. This needs to change. There should be no discrimination when a military person or another person marries after the age of 60. That is their personal business. The reality is that those people who care for our veterans and others deserve to have that pension benefit.

We ask that the government remove that clause from the act so that these men and women can have these benefits as properly accorded to them.

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

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SENIORS' DAY ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-211, An Act respecting a Seniors' Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a non-monetary bill.

Many seniors in my riding have asked that a special day be marked on the calendar honouring the work and sacrifices made by our seniors. It would be just a token gesture to pick a day on the calendar as seniors' day to recognize and honour those golden citizens, as we call them, for their great work in building this country, for keeping an eye on us and for helping to raise us.

This is a non-monetary bill and something which could be adopted unanimously fairly quickly.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-212, An Act to amend the Income tax Act (in-home care of relatives).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as everybody knows, there is quite a sandwich generation in this country where individuals are looking after their children as well as looking after their seniors. In many cases, some seniors are infirm with various ailments and concerns.

We believe that any expenses incurred by those individuals should be tax deductible. We also believe they should be allowed time off work to provide care so that seniors and people with certain disabilities have the opportunity to stay at home and be cared for by their loved ones.

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

* * *

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-213, An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act and the Passport Services Fees Regulations (passports for veterans, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their spouses or common-law partners, and seniors).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill comes from other countries. The United States, for example, allows its military and federal policing forces the opportunity to have their passports for free. They do not necessarily have to pay that charge.

We think this is something our country can adopt as well. It is a small, additional benefit to thank our serving men and women for their services. When they need a passport to travel, they will not have to pay anything for it, as they do now.

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

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● (1220)

TARTAN DAY ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-214, An Act respecting a Tartan Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is in honour of our great friend and former colleague, Mr. Bill Blaikie, who is a very proud Scotsman.

Many Scots groups across the country, in just about every province and territory, have a tartan day on April 6. We ask that the federal government, in a non-monetary way, recognize April 6 as national tartan day to honour and recognize all those people from the great land of Scotland who migrated to Canada over the years and helped build this country.

Of course, being from Nova Scotia, new Scotland, we think it would be a wonderful gesture to honour and recognize their great sacrifice and service to our country.

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

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES READJUSTMENT ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-215, An Act to change the name of the electoral district of Sackville — Eastern Shore.

He said: Mr. Speaker, a few folks would know that in my riding is the great community of Preston. It has the largest indigenous black population in Canada. They trace their roots back over 400 years.

The community of Preston is a very historic and wonderful community and it is geographically right in the centre of my riding.

I would like to change the name of my riding from Sackville—Eastern Shore to Sackville—Preston—Eastern Shore in recognition of that fabulous community.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-216, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (services to a charity or public authority).

He said: Mr. Speaker, there are many organizations, like legions and others, that do a great job in this country and yet the membership dues to those particular agencies are not necessarily tax deductible.

We are looking for more people to join things like the army, navy, air force veterans halls, legions, et cetera, but we think the membership dues they pay to join should be completely tax deductible.

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

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-217, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act and the Canada Labour Code (compassionate care benefits for caregivers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I worked on this bill for many years. This a reintroduction of a former bill. I give the previous Liberal government and the current Conservative government recognition for putting in a provision in a very small way into the Income Tax Act. However, the allowable leave is only for eight weeks.

We have asked that the Employment Insurance Act allow up to six months' leave. This would allow individuals to take time of work and stay at home to provide extreme rehabilitative care or palliative care to their loved ones.

Routine Proceedings

We have a program which provides maternal and paternal leave for parents at the beginning of a child's life. We would like to have a complete program called eternity leave. This would allow people to care for their loved ones in their own homes for a period of up to six months. This would allow people who wish to die with dignity in their own homes the opportunity to do so under the care of their loved ones.

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

* * *

CANADIAN FORCES SUPERANNUATION ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-218, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act (increase of allowance for surviving spouse and children).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this recommendation comes right out of the Royal Canadian Legion playbook from its last convention and the previous one as well.

The legion's members are concerned that when a veteran dies, unfortunately the surviving spouse only receives 50% of the veteran's pension, which means that most of the surviving spouses are living at or below the poverty level. They have asked that the amount be increased to up to two-thirds to offer more financial assistance to the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran.

That recommendation comes from the Royal Canadian Legion. It is something this side fully supports. I know on an individual basis a few Conservatives support it as well.

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

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●(1225)

FISHERIES ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act (deposit in lakes).

He said: Mr. Speaker, schedule 2 of the Mining Act allows mining companies to use freshwater aquatic systems of fish-bearing lakes as cheap waste disposal sites. We think that is absolutely wrong. We have seen three lakes in the great province of Newfoundland and Labrador now destroyed and four on Baffin Island are being destroyed. We also know that 16 across the country are slated for destruction.

Freshwater in this country is a fragile resource. Fish habitat must be one of the greatest priorities of the fisheries minister. We are asking that the government stop the practice, as was done in New Brunswick, of using freshwater habitat as toxic waste tailing ponds for mining companies.

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

EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-220, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act (no GST on funeral arrangements).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, there are two things hard to avoid and they are death and taxes, but when one has to pay tax on one's death, that is objectionable.

When the Conservatives introduced the GST in the 1980s, they put a tax on funeral and crematorium services. We think that is wrong. A grieving family should not have to pay tax for those services on the death of a loved one. We would like that tax removed from funeral and crematorium services and the sooner the better.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-221, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (peace officers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, when a peace officer pays the ultimate sacrifice and dies in the line of duty, it affects the entire country. We believe very strongly that the minimum sentence should be 25 years in jail with absolutely no chance of parole. Personally I would like to see it increased. The reality is that when a peace officer pays the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, the justice system should make it very clear, no ifs, ands or buts, that the criminal will serve a minimum of 25 years with no chance of parole during that period.

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

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INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-222, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (physical activity and amateur sport fees).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill has been around for a quite a while. I thank the government for introducing legislation in previous budgets that allows a very small deduction for amateur sports fees for children under 16 years of age. I would like that tax deduction for amateur sports fees to apply to all ages. For example, I pay annual dues to play on a soccer team. Some members in the House play hockey and they pay fees for that. There should be a tax deduction for people who join gymnasiums and various athletic associations.

Regardless of a person's age, the fee should be tax deductible to encourage further physical activity, not just for young children but for everybody in the country. This would result in a savings for our health care system down the road as well.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

● (1230)

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-223, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (community service group membership dues).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is very similar to the bill I just introduced. Members of Lions and Kiwanis clubs, church groups or whatever who allocate 250 hours a year of volunteer time should be able to have a tax deduction of up to \$1,000.

We have worked on deductions for volunteer firefighters, but the reality is that many Canadians volunteer countless hours to various charitable organizations across the country. With the rising cost of gasoline, et cetera, we think that a small stipend of \$1,000 for those who volunteer for those charities, such as food banks, Meals on Wheels, et cetera, should be allowed a small annual tax deduction.

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

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CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-224, An Act to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights (right to housing).

He said: Mr. Speaker, not many people in the House have to suffer this problem, but thousands and thousands of Canadians lack affordable housing. There is a national housing crisis in Canada right now. We believe that shelter should be an inherent Canadian right. We would like housing to be included in the Canadian Bill of Rights to ensure that every Canadian has a safe, warm and affordable place to call home.

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

* * *

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-225, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (expenses incurred by caregivers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to the bill concerning employment insurance, where people can take time off work to care for their loved ones. They incur expenses. They may have to purchase medical equipment, prescriptions, et cetera, or they may need to hire someone for respite leave. Those expenses should be tax deductible.

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

* * *

ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS VISITING MILITARY MEMORIAL SITES ABROAD ACT

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-226, An Act to propose and examine a program giving financial assistance to high-school students visiting military memorial sites abroad.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as the veterans affairs critic for the NDP, and on behalf of my constituents and the House, I have had the opportunity to travel with delegations to very famous war sites and gravesites of our brave fallen around the world.

Several times while there, the great Mr. Cliff Chadderton indicated that it would be wonderful if all students had an opportunity at least once in their lives to go overseas to Europe to see these gravesites in order to completely understand the sacrifices made by our brave men and women in previous conflicts around the world.

This bill would encourage discussions by the federal, provincial and municipal governments and the school boards to see if there is a way to allow all students, at least once during their educational career, a chance to travel overseas to see these gravesites and understand the sacrifices made by our brave men and women.

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

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● (1235)

PETITIONS**INTERPROVINCIAL BRIDGE**

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition, the second of these petitions, from the greater national capital region but principally from the people of the riding I have the honour to represent.

The petition is to the effect that the petitioners understand there is a need for a new bridge in the national capital area so that we can get the heavy truck traffic out of the downtown core, but at the same time not to inflict the same problem on another community. It is also to see to the eventual construction of a ring road around the national capital region.

These petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to instruct the National Capital Commission to proceed with a detailed assessment of an interprovincial bridge linking the Canotek Industrial Park to the Gatineau airport, which is option 7 of the first phase of the interprovincial crossing environmental assessment, as opposed to option 5, which calls for a crossing at Kettle Island, which would essentially put heavy truck traffic in established communities, which, in the view of these petitioners, would be unacceptable.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Address

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Mount Royal.

This is the first opportunity I have had to thank the wonderful people of St. John's South—Mount Pearl for giving me the opportunity to work on their behalf in the Parliament of Canada. I consider it a great honour to represent them and their interests, and to serve my country. I will work hard every day to ensure they are well represented.

I would also like to recognize the many volunteers who worked so diligently to ensure a healthy democracy. Their efforts were appreciated by all who sit in this chamber and all those who offered themselves for public service.

We are joined together in the House in common purpose: to improve the lives of Canadians. Let us focus on ensuring that the decisions we make reflect the needs of our citizens a hundred times a day; no, a thousand. We should remind ourselves that we are here on behalf of the people. Let us always be reminded of and always do what is right for the citizens of our great country.

By way of introduction, I am a first generation Canadian, an eighth generation Newfoundlander and Labradorian, and I am proud to have the opportunity to contribute to building our great country.

Nearly 60 years ago, my father, as a young man, voted in favour of Confederation. He, along with my mother, have instilled a sense of responsibility to ensure that Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador in it, develops along a successful path.

I mentioned that I am a Newfoundlander. I also hold the seat held by the Hon. Loyola Hearn and the Hon. John Crosbie. Their contributions have been numerous and they are known not only for their work, but for being great orators. I can only hope that one day I will be too.

Among the first honours I had as a new member of Parliament was to participate in a Remembrance Day ceremony to pay tribute to those who served our country. Many hon. members may not be aware of the tremendous contribution that Newfoundland, as a country at the time, made during the first and second world wars. Many hon. members may not be aware of the contribution that many young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians make today as members of the Canadian Forces. In fact, the number of Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians serving in the Canadian Forces today is way above the national average. My sister is one of them.

The riding of St. John's South—Mount Pearl is the location of Bowring Park, the home of the statue of The Fighting Newfoundlander. This statue has come to symbolize not only our respect for those who have served in the armed forces, but it has also come to symbolize our determination and persistence as a people. I will reflect upon this contribution and the statue of The Fighting Newfoundlander as I make decisions in the House. They who has given so much deserve our respect, our admiration and, most of all, they deserve dignity.

In the Speech from the Throne mention was made of our heroic Canadian Forces, however there was little mention of our veterans. Today, many of our veterans face uncertain and difficult times. I have spoken with numerous who have struggled financially, as pensions are clawed back despite their sacrifices.

I am sure I am joined in the House in giving recognition to our veterans and ask that the government recognize their contributions to global security by working to improve their well-being.

The Speech from the Throne weighs heavily on the economic situation we are now facing in Canada. It states “structural deficits must never return”, yet a series of deliberate policy decisions by the government has led to the challenges we currently face, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, a situation of the Conservatives' own doing by not providing sound fiscal management, a steady hand at the wheel.

As we navigate these fiscal waters, we find ourselves in a gale of uncertainty. The rough winds of the mortgage, credit, fiscal and now global financial crises are blowing us to the shoals of uncertainty.

Let this be our goal then: to instill in our institutions, in our companies, in our investors, in our communities and, as important, in our people, a knowledge that we are working on their behalf to ensure stability, to ensure a strong and productive Canada.

● (1240)

The Speech from the Throne indicates that the building Canada plan will be expedited. These important infrastructure investments would not only stimulate the economy, they would indeed improve our country.

It reminds me of an extremely important project under way in St. John's right now, the cleanup of St. John's harbour and the building of the sewage treatment plant.

The city of St. John's, the city of Mount Pearl and the town of Paradise have a combined population of 130,000 people. Municipal waste water from these municipalities is currently discharged, untreated, into St. John's harbour. Thankfully, since 1999, the Government of Canada, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the municipal governments of the cities of St. John's, Mount Pearl and the town of Paradise have partnered in ensuring this environmentally challenging, not to mention aesthetically concerning, project is under way. This has required incredible engineering, carving from rocks, unearthing streets and sewers.

The Address

I am sure the members of the House are very pleased to be a partner in this project, in ensuring that raw sewage is no longer spewed into this historic harbour, a partner with the citizens of Mount Pearl, St. John's and Paradise, a partner.

As members can imagine, the costs have escalated over the last decade. The cost of materials and labour has soared. The project is close to \$50 million over budget.

As a partner, one believes the federal government would help, would participate in its responsibility. I ask that it does. I ask for this in the spirit of the Speech from the Throne in protecting Canada's future by preserving Canada's environment.

I also noted in the Speech from the Throne that fisheries was mentioned with respect to giving assistance for international marketing and helping businesses to innovate. I look forward to further details on these initiatives.

As members of the House will remember, the largest layoff in Canadian history occurred in 1992 when the cod fisheries was placed under moratorium, where it remains today. The modernization of the fishery continues and there is much to be done to ensure its sustainability and its viability.

We have to help those who wish to retire to do so with dignity and assistance.

We need to continue to ensure funding for small craft harbours so we have adequate infrastructure.

We need to ensure to that foreign overfishing on the Nose and the Tail of the Grand Banks is stopped.

These are a few of the further initiatives not found in the Speech from the Throne but which are important in the fisheries today.

The Speech from the Throne also refers to securing our energy future by developing our rich energy resources and pursuing new greener strategies. This is particularly relevant to Newfoundland and Labrador as one of the best opportunities for hydroelectricity is in the province. The Churchill River in Labrador is a significant source of renewable clean electroenergy. The Lower Churchill project consists of two of the best underdeveloped hydroelectric sites in North America. Securing our energy future will be made much easier by working with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to help develop this project.

There is much to be done. As I stand in this historic House, surrounded by its members, I recognize we have been entrusted by the people of Canada to work to improve their lives.

I started today by reminding Mr. Speaker and all hon. members that our responsibility is to the individuals who make up the mosaic of Canada. Let us never forget our duty to them. Let us never forget that our fiscal responsibility is to them. Let us never forget we are here because of them.

• (1245)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Let me congratulate the member on her election to this place. She is already an impressive orator.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Mississauga South.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member gave an excellent maiden speech. It is a very important time for new members to establish themselves. Clearly, with the respect she has paid to her predecessors, she has a very good start to one day earning the same level of respect that they have earned in the history of Parliament.

The fishery has been one of the most vital elements of the economy in the Maritimes and Atlantic Canada. It is usually the first one to suffer when things go bad and the last to recover when things recover.

We are now facing a severe economic and financial crisis, which is going to get worse. The unemployment rates historically in the Maritimes have been high. There has been some encouragement through the growth of the energy sector. However, we cannot forget that we rely on the fishery and the proper management of the fishery. I hope the member will continue the legacy of the representation of her riding and continue to fight for the resources and the support necessary from the Government of Canada to have a sustainable fishery in Canada.

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, the fishery has felt the burden of the economic crisis in the country and it has suffered under the heavy cost of fuels and insurances and the continuing challenges within our fiscal environment.

We will do everything we can to work with the government to ensure the fishery is set on solid footing and has the opportunity to contribute to our country and to our food sources. There is a lot to be done in the fishery, including ensuring that those who wish to retire can do so with dignity and that we have the proper infrastructure in small craft harbours. There is much to be done in this regard.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I, too, congratulate the hon. member on her speech. Given the state of the nation's economy, the fiscal mismanagement going on and the recent development in Newfoundland and Labrador whereby it became a have province as opposed to a have-not province and given that there is a large dependency for that status upon offshore oil, could the hon. member make some suggestions to the government, since it is apparently seeking suggestions after having ridiculed this party for a year and a half, as to how Newfoundland and Labrador can preserve its have status?

• (1250)

Ms. Siobhan Coady: Mr. Speaker, it is a proud moment as a Newfoundlander and Labradorian to be in a have province. It is proud moment for all of us in Canada to see one of the regions of our country continuing to do well.

However, the hon. member is absolutely correct in that it is largely dependent upon the offshore oil and gas revenues that the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador have enjoyed over the last number of years. While we have done much in Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure diversity within our economy and sustainability of our have status, there is much to be done.

The Address

We ask the Conservatives to work with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure its continued success. We ask them to have a plan for fiscal responsibility. We ask that they do indeed focus on ensuring fiscal responsibility and good sound fiscal management for the country.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise on behalf of the constituents of Mount Royal, one of the great and diverse ridings in our country, in response to the throne speech.

It is understandable that the throne speech focused on the economy, given as the throne speech itself put it, “This is a time of extraordinary global economic challenge and uncertainty”. The throne speech is not incorrect saying that the first order of business must be to put the international financial system on a sounder footing.

The government must also acknowledge that its own stewardship of the economy raises troubling questions and lessons to be learned here at home. I trust, and I say this in the hope that the government will reflect upon these questions and the lessons to be learned, and in the words from the Speech from the Throne, the government will “provide the strong leadership that Canadians expect...will protect Canadians in difficult times...will maintain a prudent course for the country’s finances...will work with Canadians to secure our future prosperity”.

We on this side of the House will join in that mission on behalf of all Canadians and in that context pose the following questions and the corresponding lessons to be learned.

[*Translation*]

How is it that, in the space of only two years, Stephen Harper’s Conservatives have been able to transform eight consecutive years of strong growth and budget surpluses into economic slowdown and a deficit?

Why has Stephen Harper’s government been the biggest spending government in Canadian history? Federal expenditures—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member is a veteran in the House and he knows he cannot name members.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Why is the Prime Minister the biggest spender in Canadian history? Federal expenditures have increased by more than 14% in two years and billions of dollars were spent in the six months before the election was called so arbitrarily .

Why did the Conservative Minister of Finance, against the advice of an overwhelming majority of economists, decide to lower the GST, reducing federal revenues by \$11 billion per year? Under the previous Liberal government, that money was used to fund programs in the areas of health care, day care, the environment and seniors’ care.

Why did the Conservatives eliminate the \$3 billion contingency reserve—the buffer in the event of an economic crisis? This money could have been used to help Canadians in trouble, to create jobs, to

stimulate the economy, and to ease seniors’ retirement worries without incurring a deficit.

[*English*]

The throne speech said:

Canada will use its experience in developing a strong model of financial regulation to help lead the world in the repair and strengthening of the international financial system.

The question is: Why is Canada not using its experience, having been an architect of the “responsibility to protect” model, to help lead the way in the protection and repair of the international human rights and humanitarian system?

For example, I am referring to the genocide by attrition in Darfur, where 400,000 have already died, where four million are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance, where the violence, including the indiscriminate bombing and burning of villages, sexual violence and assaults on humanitarian aid workers continues unabated, where the culture of impunity mocks arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court, and where both the Darfur peace process and the comprehensive peace process are in danger of unraveling, threatening not only the stability of Sudan but its nine neighbouring countries.

I am not saying that the government is unaware of the Darfur tragedy, or that the government has done nothing, but it has not yet identified it as a priority. The best evidence of this is that, yet again, and not unlike the last Speech from the Throne, neither the word “Darfur”, nor the word “Africa” are mentioned in the throne speech, let alone addressed in terms of the commitment and action of which the throne speech otherwise speaks.

This is not a partisan problem. To put it simply, while the international community dithers, Darfurians continue to die. I would hope that the government would show the necessary moral, political, juridical and diplomatic leadership within the international community to ensure that the required concrete action is taken. To that end, I have introduced the Sudan accountability act today, a private member’s initiative, that I hope the government will support if not adopt as its own.

The throne speech, as its predecessor, makes eloquent mention of our shared values: democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and the need for international leadership to protect these values. It also contains reference to an important initiative: the establishment of a new, non-partisan democracy promotion agency.

However, it ignores the most compelling international concerns of today, as in the case of Darfur, and the corresponding assaults on these very fundamental values, as in the case of Ahmadinejad’s Iran. There is no mention in the throne speech of the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide in Ahmadinejad’s Iran. I say Ahmadinejad’s Iran because I am not referring to the Iranian people, nor to the many publics in Iran, who are themselves the objects of a massive, domestic repression of human rights, and I say this as we mark the 20th anniversary of mass killings and massive domestic repression in Iran.

The Address

This flagrant omission remains particularly disconcerting. As I mentioned in a speech last week at McGill University, on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the genocide convention, the enduring lesson of the Holocaust, and the genocides that occurred thereafter in the Balkans, Rwanda, and now Darfur, is that these genocides occurred not only because of the machinery of death but because of a state-sanctioned ideology of hate.

This teaching of contempt, this demonizing of the other, this is where it all begins. As the Supreme Court of Canada recognized, the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers, it began with words. Tragically, Ahmadinejad's Iran, in violation of the prohibition against the direct and public incitement to genocide, in both the genocide convention and the treaty for an international criminal court, exhibits all the precursors to genocide that have led us down that road in the past.

Accordingly, and I repeat that this is not a partisan issue, the Canadian government should be a world leader in combating the crime of incitement to genocide and the culture of impunity that attends it, and should refer this matter to the United Nations and its agencies in order to ensure that Ahmadinejad's Iran will be held to account.

Let me move now to identify a number of domestic priorities that reflect not only the concerns of my constituents but Canadians as a whole.

First, is the question of health care, which received passing mention in the throne speech, but is a crosscutting concern in my riding, if not in the country as a whole, and can be expected to accentuate in an economic meltdown. In particular, we need to be concerned about the decline of health care professionals, where one in five Canadians do not have access to a family doctor, where the shrinking supply of doctors and nurses is adversely affecting all forms of health care: primary care, home care, palliative care, emergency care, and the like.

Accordingly, may I recommend that the government invest, as we the opposition suggested, in a one billion dollar doctor and nurses medical resource fund to alleviate not only the shortage of health care professionals but the attending and prejudicial fallout for the health care system as a whole, while protecting our right to health care as a fundamental human right.

•(1255)

Second, the economic meltdown could be expected to adversely affect the most vulnerable amongst us, especially children and the poor, and particularly children living in poverty. Forty years ago we stated that poverty in this country was a national disgrace. Twenty years ago Parliament adopted a resolution to make poverty history in the year 2000, yet there is only perfunctory mention of poverty and the plight of the poor and no undertaking in the throne speech of making poverty history on the international level, or poverty reduction on the domestic level as a government priority.

Accordingly, may I recommend that the government and Parliament adopt, as a matter of principle and priority, the 30-50 policy as proposed by the Liberal Party in the last election, to reduce poverty by a third and the incidence of poverty in children by one-half in the next five years.

Third, on the issue of immigration, while we support the government's intention to streamline the process of foreign accreditation, the immigration system as a whole continues to fail newcomers to this country, including, in particular, those in my riding and elsewhere who seek to form a new life in Canada with their families and loved ones.

Accordingly, I urge the government to repair and reform the immigration system in a systemic way. As the member of Parliament for Mount Royal with, arguably, the best riding office on immigration matters in the country, we would be pleased to share our experience, expertise and recommendations for best practices with the government as it embarks on immigration reform and I have conveyed that to the newly appointed Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Fourth, on the matter of the justice agenda, the only justice priority in the throne speech appears to be that of crime control. The objective of safe streets and communities are the shared aspirations of all Canadians and the common objective of all parliamentarians and parties.

The more important point, however, is that the justice agenda should not only be about combating violent crime, which objective we share, but it should include as a priority the protection of the vulnerable: women, children, aboriginals, minorities and the poor. The test of a just society is how it protects the most vulnerable among us.

There is no reference to the imperative of equal justice and equal access to justice. There is no mention, for example, of women's rights. There is no mention of the need to restore the court challenges program, which was a bulwark in the promotion of equality rights and minority rights. There is no reference to the need for a national and comprehensive sustainable legal aid plan in civil and criminal matters, all the more warranted in a time of economic adversity.

I close by saying that the government's throne speech, which contains some important initiatives, is diminished by the absence of any reference to these priorities, domestic and international, and we trust that the government will incorporate them in this 40th Parliament for the advancement of the public good and for Canadians as a whole.

•(1300)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new position. I want to ask my friend and colleague a question. He has been a comrade in arms in dealing with some of the most egregious human rights abuses around the world.

He mentioned the issue of Darfur. Does he not think that the Sudan should be dealt with as a whole country approach? The comprehensive peace agreement in the south is going to collapse and if or when that collapses, which is the likely situation, that will result in a conflagration that will make Darfur look small by comparison.

The Address

I would also like to ask him whether or not he thinks that the government should address the issue of the Congo? The eastern Congo is the world's worst humanitarian disaster. It is the largest mass killing of civilians since the second world war. Seven million people have died in the last decade and 1,000 people are being killed day in and day out, dying frequently from entirely preventable causes.

I would like to ask my friend whether he believes that the government should step up to the plate: take on the responsibility to protect an obligation to act and formally engage the African Union and the United Nations to support assets on the ground; support and provide assets to the recent increase in 3,000 troops for MONUC, the peacekeeping force in eastern Congo; and lead an international movement to produce an on-the-ground Congolese-led reconciliation process to deal with the grassroots grievances over land and resources that have not been addressed but are a major driver in the death and destruction taking place in that country?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, I agree fully that we are dealing with Darfur as a specific, compelling item of concern but in the context of Sudan as a whole, and that is why I mentioned that the two peace processes, both the Darfur peace process and the comprehensive peace process, are now in a coma and in danger of unravelling, and can thereby prejudicially affect the nine neighbouring countries.

This brings me to the second point and the second part of my hon. colleague's question. As I mentioned in my remarks, not only was there no reference to Darfur and Sudan in the Speech from the Throne but there was no reference to Africa as a whole. Africa is an abandoned continent in the Speech from the Throne at a time when it is in desperate need of leadership by the government and the international community.

Reference was made to the Congo, again one of the more compelling human rights and humanitarian concerns in the world today where we should exercise our responsibility to protect, in concert with the international community. There are other places in Africa, which my colleague knows because as he mentioned, we have been comrades in arms in this regard: Zimbabwe, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, with threatening hunger and poverty as well.

Therefore, I would call on the government to take a lead with respect to the global financial system, to use our experience as a model in that regard, to take the lead with respect to the global unravelling of human rights and humanitarian law, particularly in Africa, and take a lead using the responsibility to protect principle in that regard as well.

• (1305)

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask my colleague, an expert in international law, a question with respect to Afghanistan, the government's leading issue. The government has understandably put in a lot of assets on the military side, but what is needed I believe in Afghanistan is an Afghan-led grassroots reconciliation process to deal with the intertribal conflicts that have affected the country for years.

As well, I would like to ask whether he believes that our government should do the responsible thing and work with other countries to produce a regional working group that involves India,

Pakistan and Afghanistan to make sure that all these countries are on the same page to address the insurgency coming from the tribal lands in western Pakistan.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, I would concur with both those recommendations by my colleague. We do need a grassroots reconciliation plan and process in Afghanistan. We need as well a regional working group that, in concert with this grassroots movement, can attend to the compelling issues in Afghanistan which are not only of a military character but which are clearly of a compelling developmental and humanitarian character.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous honour that I rise today in the House of Commons to debate our newly re-elected government's Speech from the Throne.

First, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your personal re-election and also on your appointment to the Chair. The people of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock have chosen their member of Parliament very well and I know that we have chosen you very well to sit in the Chair, representing all of us in this chamber.

I would also like to thank the voters in the great constituency of Wetaskiwin for sending me to Ottawa for this, my second term. It was truly an honour and a privilege to serve them here in the 39th Parliament and I humbly accept their faith in me to serve once again here in Canada's 40th Parliament.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the campaign workers, all the donors and everyone else who helped make my campaign so very successful. It is their hard work, their determination, coupled with their firm belief that a Conservative government implementing sound economic principles is best suited to govern this country, and all of those volunteers make it possible for all of us here in the House to be here today.

I also want to thank the Prime Minister for his excellent leadership in the 39th Parliament. I know Canada is very well served by his strong leadership at this difficult, global economic time.

Last, I want to acknowledge those most dear to me, as they are the ones who sacrifice most for me to be here, and that is my wonderful wife, Barbara, and my children, Eryk, Kasandra and Krystian. I know they are watching right now and I love them.

To emphasize how much a family means to me, it is the primary reason that I sought office in 2006. I came here to correct what appeared to me as a gradual devaluing of families in Canada.

As the 2005-06 campaign started, I was the sole income earner for our family by choice, because my wife and I believe that one parent should be home to look after the children. Many other Canadian families feel the same way. However, it was really hard to make ends meet. The tax burden was high and there was an inherent unfairness in the tax system that seemed to punish rather than reward families.

The Address

Since we took office in 2006, there have been great strides made in our country to correct these inequities. We have seen direct support to parents with small children through the choice in child care allowance. This is great for families in the many small communities in the constituency of Wetaskiwin, such as Alhambra, Condor and Withrow which would never have the benefit of a federal child care facility.

We have seen an end to the spousal allotment differential, known as the marriage penalty, making the work of a stay-at-home parent of equal value in the eyes of the tax system to that of a wage earner. We have seen a \$2,000 per child tax credit applied, among other family friendly initiatives, such as the children's fitness tax credit.

At the time of the October 14 election, the average Canadian family was better off by over \$3,000 a year in tax savings, compared to the 2005 tax year and before. Now, as promised in the last election campaign and reiterated in the Speech from the Throne, our government will improve the universal child care benefit and increase access to maternity and parental benefits under the employment insurance program for parents who wish today to access these services.

We promised during the campaign and now in the throne speech to help families caring for a loved one with disabilities by expanding upon our previous commitments, such as the registered disability savings plan.

The Speech from the Throne also outlined our government's plan to help first time home buyers deal with the financial hurdles they face when buying that all important first home for their families. This is good for our construction industry right across our country. These are just some of the family friendly measures that send a clear signal to Canadian families that a Conservative government respects and appreciates all that they do in raising their families.

We believe that families are an essential building block of our society. The government's role is to protect and empower families and the commitments of the throne speech do just that.

From Rocky Mountain House to Gwynne and from Breton to Alix, the constituency of Wetaskiwin is home to hard-working, honest Canadians who believe they can make their own way in the world. All they ask for is a fair and level playing field to compete. They are farmers, entrepreneurs, small business owners, oil field workers, forestry workers and construction workers. They know the value of hard work and they take pride in their self-determination.

● (1310)

In the last Parliament, we pledged to revamp farm income programs to respond to the needs of farmers in a rapidly changing economic environment. We tried over the past two years to provide western Canadian farmers with the freedom to make marketing choices that best meet their farm and business needs. However, the opposition parties, most of whom are not from western provinces, interfered with that progress and access to some of the best spot prices for wheat and barley are now nothing more than a heartbreaking memory of lost market opportunities.

However, there is good news. After the October 14 election, more Conservatives were returned to the House and we are committed to ensuring freedom of choice for grain marketing in western Canada.

Furthermore, our tax policies now leave more hard-earned money in the pockets of farmers and business owners when they sell their assets because we raised the capital gains exemption by a quarter of a million dollars. The Speech from the Throne adds to this great policy initiative by indexing the lifetime capital gains exemption and ensuring that people's investments in property and other assets maintain as much tax exempt value as possible to ensure a better retirement when it comes time for individual Canadians to sell their property.

There is much more good news on the horizon. Farmers and manufacturers need to have markets for their products. The Speech from the Throne reaffirms our commitments to continue to push for access into new markets and create a level playing field for Canadians to take advantage of further opportunities.

We will work with the new administration in the United States on the current economic turbulence and to strengthen our trade relationships so that we can emerge from this crisis as stronger nations.

We signed several free trade agreements since we took office in 2006 with several European and South American countries. However, this is not the time to rest on our laurels. The government will seek opportunities for trade with the European Union and further engagement in the Americas and the Pacific Rim.

The world needs more of Canada. It needs more of our products, our expertise and our know-how and an aggressive move to new bilateral trade deals will position our hard-working producers, exporters and service providers with a wider and more level playing field, thereby boosting and stimulating our economy.

If we are to build a stronger economy and rise like a phoenix from the ashes of this economic crisis, then the government must be involved in providing the infrastructure and transportation backbone necessary for economic growth and expansion.

Our government is committed to expediting the building Canada plan so that communities, large and small, can build and modernize their infrastructure. Communities in Alberta have already seen the benefit of our government's infrastructure initiatives.

The constituency of Wetaskiwin benefited well from the Canada-Alberta municipal rural infrastructure fund. In Alberta we affectionately know this as CAMRIF. The residents of Wetaskiwin county will have a reliable waste management system and safer, more efficient roads that will play a vital role in improving the economic and environmental efficiencies at Mulhurst, Lakedell, Winfield and West Buck Lake.

The Address

Road construction and upgrades in the country will improve safety and enhance the response times for emergency vehicles. In the beautiful town of Millet, the construction of paved roadway, curb and gutter, storm sewer, sidewalk and street lighting project will lead the way to the new Middle School and support residential growth.

More than \$1.3 million were invested by the federal government in the historic town of Lacombe to improve the quality of life of residents by making their environment cleaner, encouraging growth and providing more recreational and business opportunities for local residents.

In Lacombe county, the upgrading of Aspelund Road will improve safety for drivers, support increased traffic and better enable industry and farmers who use the road to deliver products and services on a year-round basis. I very much enjoyed driving down that new Aspelund Road in the last campaign. It looks great.

The small hamlet of Mirror used its CAMRIF funds to construct a new outdoor multi-use facility that will provide more recreational opportunities for their young people. Provinces and municipalities across Canada will now be able to count on predictable, flexible and long-term funding to address their infrastructure needs.

● (1315)

However, as we move forward to strengthen our roads, bridges and infrastructure, we also must assure the people living in our communities that we will also make those same roads and streets safer.

The constituents of Wetaskiwin will be pleased with the government's plan to take tough action against crime and to deal with criminal activity fairly, swiftly and effectively.

Our government is committed to protecting Canadians from violence brought on by guns, gangs and organized crime.

While moving to protect communities from young people who pose a danger to our society, we will also help youth make good choices.

The Four Nations of Hobbema has received considerable media attention for the violence that has plagued its communities but little attention has been paid to the remarkable community cadet program that has an enrolment of over 900 young people. In fact, Saturday marks the third anniversary of the Hobbema community cadet corps, the largest native cadet program in Alberta and perhaps the world. The program emphasizes native culture, sports, a healthy lifestyle and, most important, requires cadets to stay in school. It has proven to be a very effective crime prevention initiative, so much so that school attendance has improved, there are fewer bullying issues, fights and other complaints.

The members of the Hobbema cadets are discovering that there is an alternative to gangs, drugs and violence. Thanks to this innovative program, they are on the road to becoming responsible future leaders who will ensure the traditions and values of their heritage are upheld in a safe and vibrant community.

I was in Wetaskiwin on Remembrance Day and I met a young fellow from the cadet program who had just enlisted in the Canadian armed forces. He was proudly going from hospital to various nursing

homes along with a contingent of other military people from CFB Edmonton and also with the RCMP. He was very proud of the progress that he has made. He reflects very well on the good people in those communities who are working hard to ensure their young people have a future.

That is an example of the kind of program that will help Canadian youth make those good choices for their future. I hope that future will see them take on leadership roles in their bands and their communities as we move forward.

Our young people are the leaders of tomorrow. They will benefit from our plan to strengthen Canada's democratic institutions.

Our government plans to reintroduce legislation that will link the number of seats in the House of Commons for Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia to their growing population. Representation by population is a fundamental principle that we have in this country and it is time for more Albertans to take their rightful place in the House of Commons.

Canadians across the country deserve to have fairness in representation and this legislation would restore the principle of representation by population in the House of Commons while protecting the seat counts of other provinces as so enshrined in our Constitution.

My home province of Alberta has experienced unprecedented growth over the last decade. The strength of our energy sector has attracted newcomers from across Canada and around the globe. The 2006 census showed that Alberta's population had almost tripled in the past 50 years. In the first quarter of 2008 alone, numbers showed that the population had grown by another 14,500 people.

In the throne speech, Her Excellency reiterated this government's commitment to work with the provinces to remove barriers to internal trade, investment and labour mobility by 2010. We are already benefiting from that in Alberta with the great relationship that we have with British Columbia, and now we are engaged in discussions with Saskatchewan. It is called TILMA, the trade investment labour mobility agreement. Reducing these interprovincial barriers is a very important step in further enhancing our economic ties. We have enough issues with international trade. We do not need to create issues in internal trade.

Our government will continue to support Canadian researchers and innovators in their quest to develop new ideas by investing in new world-class research facilities.

We will also support the traditional industries that are the backbone of our communities and we will provide help for workers in transition.

Earlier this summer, the competition policy review panel provided a report entitled "Compete to Win". This report put forward several policy recommendations aimed at making Canada a more attractive destination for talent, investment and innovation.

The Address

The Speech from the Throne indicates our intention to listen to those recommendations by expanding opportunities for Canadian firms to benefit from foreign investment and knowledge while taking steps to safeguard consumers and our national security.

Greater competitive intensity in Canada will have the effect of better products, lower prices, more jobs and higher earnings, stronger companies and an overall stronger economy.

We also recognize, however, that in these challenging economic times some jobs will be lost and older workers, particularly those who live in vulnerable communities, will need job training and new skills to remain part of the changing workforce.

● (1320)

While the oil sands in the northern areas of Alberta are the most popular destination for newcomers to our province, southern communities like those in the constituency of Wetaskiwin are also experiencing growth in technology, investment and new business opportunities to support that growing energy sector.

That is why the Pacific gateway is so important to Alberta. The expansion of existing corridors will be important to our long-term economic growth. Canada's Asia Pacific gateway and corridor initiative will ensure the quick and easy movement of goods produced in the heartland of Alberta, like our world famous beef, wheat, malt barley, canola and other products, through British Columbia and ultimately to the lucrative South Pacific and Asian markets. The development of the Pacific gateway and the signing of new free trade agreements will provide opportunities to the many producers, processors and manufacturers in the constituency of Wetaskiwin.

As I mentioned earlier, from Eckville to Calmar and from Warburg to Clive, the constituency of Wetaskiwin is home to hard-working, law-abiding Canadians. I know they will be heartened to hear that our focus will be on stronger penalties for those who use guns in the commission of crimes, not at criminalizing law-abiding firearms owners, farmers and hunters.

I know they want us to continue with prudent spending and keeping focused on our tax plan that gives Canadian businesses an economic advantage around the world. I know they are heartened to hear that Canada will not engage in any discussions regarding the bulk sale of our freshwater.

I know they will be pleased that we will continue investing in and promoting green technologies that keep our environment clean and our economy strong. I know they are optimistic about the potential for new markets abroad and expanded markets here at home, such as we have created with biofuels and the use of wood biomass as an energy source.

I know they can see that we are the envy of the G-7 for our strong economic fundamentals, low taxes and well-regulated banking system. I want to ensure all the constituents of Wetaskiwin that we will devote all of our energy to addressing the challenges that they, their families and their businesses face both today and in the future.

Thanks to the strong leadership of our Prime Minister and the sound fiscal management plan and agenda outlined in the Speech

from the Throne, Canada will emerge from this period of global economic instability stronger than ever before.

● (1325)

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have worked with the member for Wetaskiwin before on various committees and I appreciate his insight on various matters.

One issue that I know must be important to him, as I think his background is in computer technology, is the need for reform of our Copyright Act, which was in process in the last Parliament. Obviously, since the Speech from the Throne is a guideline and not a fleshed-out document as to what the actual budget and program of the government will be, I want to ask him for his thoughts on the government direction in this regard.

Connected to it, with respect to the cultural and arts side of things, I want to hear from him on what the government proposes in the field of arts of culture because it was hardly addressed in the Speech from the Throne. He must know, as I do, one does not have to be from a big city to understand that the impact of cuts to arts and cultural groups across Canada is profound. It is not a deleterious effect just to the artists and the gala-goers. It has a very bad effect on the people who are in the entertainment industry, the bars and restaurants, and in the carpentry and other trades who are so dependent on the arts and cultural sector.

What are his thoughts on where the government is going in this regard?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate my colleague across the way on his re-election. I know he had an interesting night on election night. It is certainly good to see him back in the House.

He asked me about my expertise and knowledge in the information technology field as it pertains to copyright reform.

We could go on and on about the WIPO treaties and the need to be part of an international organization or part of a greater picture that takes a look at how we do this copyright reform because, frankly, media comes from all over the world. We are not the makers of all the media and we are not certainly the listeners and users of all the media, so we have to ensure we get along in the international sandbox, so to speak.

In the last session, we brought forward legislation that would have improved our current copyright regime immensely. We would have had time-shifting. I believe we cannot even legally do that today. Under the current laws, we cannot tape something earlier and watch it later. That is actually a violation of the current law. Therefore, we would have accounted for that and allowed that time-shifting.

Then there is format-shifting. When I taught at Red Deer College, I taught computer systems technology. All the time I saw many young kids walking around with their iPods. They would rip some music, or a movie or whatever the case might be, which is illegal behaviour. We would have allowed for that format-shifting to happen. That would have been a significant improvement. Canadians would have been much better off today had that legislation gone through.

The Address

As for what is going to happen, we will have to leave it up to the Minister of Industry to come forward with legislation. I know it is addressed in the Speech from the Throne. We will have to take a look at what that legislation looks like. We plan to deal with the issue. I would encourage the hon. member to wait and take a look at the legislation when it gets here.

Then he talked about arts and culture. The reality is quite different from what he said. We have increased funding to arts and culture. In fact, I spoke eloquently about the needs of families. One of the things I liked most about our last campaign was the fact that we would use the tax system to promote the advancement of arts and culture for our young people by giving the same tax advantage families have for sports, so they could write off those piano lessons and those dance lessons. Those things are very important. That would be a great use of arts money in our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my Conservative colleague's speech. I did not get any sense that his speech or his description of the throne speech responded in any way to the current economic crisis being felt by all Canadians.

In the previous Parliament, I introduced a bill concerning seniors. All members have seniors in their ridings—even in Alberta, at least I hope so. Our seniors are going through a difficult time and living in precarious situations. In Quebec alone, 40,000 people do not even receive the guaranteed income supplement, even though they are entitled to it, because the government is not telling them about it and is not automatically registering them. Across Canada, that number is 135,000 people. These are people living on very low incomes. Even those who do receive the infamous guaranteed income supplement are living below the poverty line. We are talking about a segment of the population who are really having a tough time, over and above the current crisis that affects everyone. I had hoped that the throne speech would correct this situation.

In the previous Parliament, when that bill was being voted on here, all Conservative members voted against it. That is why I had hoped, considering the current difficult situation, that the government would change its stance and do something for this segment of the population, at least.

I would like the member to explain his government's profoundly insensitive attitude towards seniors.

• (1330)

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to dissolve any of the suggestions in the member's question, that this government is not sensitive to seniors. I have a large number of seniors in my constituency. On numerous occasions, whether I am in the coffee shop or whether I go to a lodge, they tell me that they appreciate the measures our government has taken. They appreciate the fact that we have increased and streamlined applications for GIS. GIS is something for which they have to qualify. My hon. friend talks about entitlements, but I guess that is the way they do things, that everything is an entitlement. GIS is something for which people have to qualify. I know Canadians who have good representation do get access to those services they need.

We have increased the amount that Canadian seniors can work for without having their guaranteed income supplement clawed back. We increased that from \$500 to \$3,500. It means seniors who choose or want to work have more room in their GIS clawback area to go back and contribute to our society and not lose those benefits so quickly.

We have introduced pension income splitting, and this is a wonderful thing. I know I have already mentioned this, but pension income splitting is a great thing for my constituents. They are very happy about it. Now when it comes to seniors needing to protect their savings, starting January 1, we have a great policy coming forward in our tax system, the tax-free savings account. This is going to be one of the most important vehicles for investors to hold onto their savings. I am really looking forward to all the great news that is going to come out of the implementation of tax-free savings accounts across our country.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. I would also like to congratulate the member for Wetaskiwin on his election.

The hon. member mentions chipping away or eroding family structures and presents income splitting as one solution to that problem. However, this leaves behind individuals. What about single mothers or persons with disabilities? What about individuals trying to get by? Has the hon. member considered these individuals who would be left behind?

How can the member stand behind a throne speech that continues tax cuts to large corporate winners and ignores the opportunities to use those taxes to invest in Canadians? The 1% GST reduction was about \$6 billion, which would be enough to fund post-secondary education for every student in Canada.

Why have we not seen a throne speech that invests in people, both individuals and families, who are the backbone of any strong economy?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what throne speech the member listened to or read, but it certainly does not describe the one I heard the other day, which offered a vision of hope and encouragement for Canadians. I spent a lot of time in the post-secondary education system as a faculty member and as a student. I know very well how disrespected I was by previous governments. I could not claim textbook expenses. With the Conservative government, students can do that now.

We have increased transfers to the provinces. My province of Alberta was never treated the same as other provinces across the country until a Conservative government was elected in Ottawa. Albertans never even received their fair share of per capita transfers for health and for education, and now we do. That is a great thing for Canadians.

The Address

The member highlighted single mothers with disabilities. Of course we care about all people and all segments of society. This is why we have that registered disability savings plan for families or single people. In fact, we are going to extend it so even people outside organizations can contribute to these savings plans for our children and for our future.

• (1335)

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time with the hon. member for Halifax.

I am pleased to be here again after 20 years of absence from the House of Commons. Actually yesterday, the 20th of November, was the 20th anniversary of my involuntary retirement from federal politics, but I have not been idle since then. I have spent about 16 of the last 20 years in the House of Assembly in Newfoundland and have had five successful elections to that assembly.

I want to first of all thank my wife, Ann, and our children, Amelia, Sarah and John, for their support in my decision to attempt to come back to federal politics. I am pleased to say that the voters of St. John's East gave me full support. I want to thank them, my supporters, and my campaign workers for making this an extremely successful election for me. I also want to congratulate all the other members, either returning members who have proven to their constituents that they deserve to be re-elected or members new to this House.

We do share here, despite our party differences, a great deal of collegiality. We share the honour and privilege of representing our constituents in this House. I expect there will be a great deal of collegiality, but also some competitiveness, as we each pursue arguments about the best way to build a better Canada.

I should also add that our party was successful in getting the support of 34% of Newfoundland and Labrador. That is a considerable level of support, and I wanted to make sure hon. members here and people watching at home knew that. I understand that 34% is almost enough to get a minority government in Canada. The current government has a little better than that, but not much.

I want to say that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have shown great wisdom in providing this level of support to the New Democratic Party of Canada. I thank our leader for leading that support in that election.

As a result, I am here not only to represent and speak up for my supporters in St. John's East, but also to try to play a role in representing the people and issues of Newfoundland and Labrador in this House of Commons.

I also want to congratulate my other colleagues from Newfoundland and Labrador who succeeded in the last election. We will have many issues to raise in this House of Commons because many issues of great importance to Newfoundland and Labrador are in the federal sphere.

Let me mention the important and significant Atlantic accord, which is designed to ensure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are the principal beneficiaries of their offshore oil and gas reserves. Our party fully supports that position, and we condemn the fallbacks from that position that were practised by the Conservative

government, contrary to the promises it and the Prime Minister of Canada made in various election campaigns.

We want to see the full implementation of that accord. Our support for it is in writing from our leader, and when our leader puts something in writing, we can count on him to follow through in support of those issues.

I hope to play a role in this House as the deputy energy critic for the east coast. We have a tremendous level of development of oil and gas and of other forms of hydroelectricity in the Atlantic region. My appointment by our leader is emblematic of our recognition of the important role our energy plays in the Canadian energy supply. Newfoundland and Labrador produces some 40% of the Canadian requirement for crude oil, and hon. members may not be fully aware of that fact.

I also will have roles as an ACOA critic and for national security, very important matters that I understand will be discussed in this session of the House.

• (1340)

There are many issues of great importance. I could list a whole series of issues of great importance to my riding in particular and to Newfoundland and Labrador generally.

We want to see action on issues such as affordable housing. This issue is particularly important in my riding, where the Canada Lands Company is redeveloping some 80 hectares of land. We want affordable housing to be a significant part of that mix. We need to have a national housing plan or affordable housing programs to help do that. Those did not come forward in the speech, but we will continue to fight for those things.

As a province we are also very interested in seeing the transfer to the province of the Hibernia share that the Government of Canada now holds. This is something that was never intended to be a windfall to the Government of Canada. Rather, that was its share of getting that project going. The Newfoundland and Labrador government did its share as well, by giving a permanent holiday for sales tax and through other concessions it made to get the project going.

It would be fitting to have that share transferred to the province on terms agreeable to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I think some discussions have been under way in that regard.

I cannot end my remarks without making reference to the recent developments on the fiscal front. Newfoundland and Labrador has been slated to enter that magical world of "have" status over the next months. I regret that our neighbours in Ontario seem to have gone the other way, if only slightly and if only for a short period of time. I do not envy them that.

It is very important that we all know it is a fiscal measure and it is a significant part of our constitution.

I cannot help but remark on the concerns expressed by the opposition leader in Ontario, Bob Runciman. He talked about the concept of being poor cousins to Newfoundland being hard to swallow.

The Address

What was hard to swallow was being told by the Prime Minister that Atlantic Canadians suffered from a culture of dependence, that somehow we were the product of failed regional development policies. Imagine if I said that Ontario's problem was the result of failed regional development policies like the national railway or the St. Lawrence Seaway or the auto pact. That is not the kind of talk we need. We need to understand that nobody needs to feel inferior because the fiscal situation of their province has changed.

We have a great country. It has an equalization formula that applies equally to all parts of our country. It applies to Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and, yes, even Ontario.

We are pleased to be part of an economic change in our province. The price of oil makes a big difference. It is all the more important that commitments like the Atlantic accord be followed, because we will need to have that support while we continue to develop our prosperity.

We do have other projects to go forward, such as the Churchill Falls project. That project will very likely require the support of the Government of Canada, at least in the form of loan guarantees.

If hon. members want to understand the importance of this step to the people of Newfoundland, I would encourage hon. members who are computer literate to use one of the search engines, perhaps Google, to look up the words "Yes, we have". Those three words will lead you to a website showing a little video put together by a private company. It puts a speech given by Premier Danny Williams to music.

It will give you an idea of the kind of passion and pride that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feel having taken this step. The step is fiscal, but it is psychological as well. Looking at that video might give people some insight into the way we Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have sometimes been made to feel because of our economic situation. I certainly intend to play a role in trying to change that as much as I can.

We are here from Newfoundland and Labrador as equal participants in Confederation. We have lots to say about what needs to be done in this country and for our province.

• (1345)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our newly rejoined colleague and my friend from Newfoundland served in the House for a brief time with my mother in 1987. It is good to have him back.

I would also like to underline the importance of what he said, that when we look at our country, we do not pit one region against the other, but we acknowledge it is a federation. Implicit in that is that we share resources to ensure all Canadians are looked after and supported when they need it. However, the government has turned its back on one area, and my colleague from Halifax talked a bit about this. It is fine to talk about income splitting, but what about those who struggle on their own?

My question for my colleague from Newfoundland is about seniors. Specifically, does he see the importance of raising the OAS to help seniors out at this time to benefit not only seniors but local economies as well?

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be elected in 1987 on the very same day as the hon. member's mother was. I am very proud to have known her and served with her in the House of Commons. I know all hon. members share in our condolences to him on the loss of his mother at the beginning of the election campaign this year.

The question is an important one. I do not even think the word "poverty" was mentioned in the speech. We all know the people who will be most affected by a recession. We are not fearmongering, we are just talking about the projections of what will follow the kind of financial crisis we have. We expect there to be some sort of recession. Some places are already in a recession. However, the people who are most hurt by that are the ones who are already in poor circumstances.

We had the advantage of a series of economists, including from the CAW and the Conference Board of Canada, appear before our caucus on Wednesday. One thing we were told was that if we raised the OAS, that alone could significantly reduce, in fact possibly eliminate, poverty for our seniors. That is something I think we should do. It is more important than corporate tax cuts.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on attaining the enviable position of Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole.

I listened closely to my colleague's speech. I would like to congratulate him on his election. He seems to be a very wise man. I would like to ask him a question about the Speech from the Throne. If I understood correctly, my colleague said that he wanted people in the regions to be treated equally, in both Quebec and Canada. I assume that he wants equality for all women in Canada and Quebec as well.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the fact that, in the Speech from the Throne, there was no mention of women, not one mention of the decisions that should be and should have been made to ensure that women also have every necessary opportunity to survive this economic crisis. As we know, the economic crisis is even more challenging for the most vulnerable among us because they have even less of a chance of making it through. I would like to hear his opinion on this.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, the throne speech is as important for what is not in it as for what is in it. Poverty is omitted, equality for women is omitted as are many other things, specifically with respect to women, things that we would support. One of the fundamentals for ensuring a more equal society is a full national universal child care program that would deliver the goods. This would be a foundation for greater equality for women and greater participation in all measures of our workforce, as well as provide economic stimulation and plenty of jobs that will be needed.

The Address

•(1350)

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be here in the House in the 40th Parliament as a new member representing Halifax. May I start with a heartfelt thank you to the people of Halifax who have placed their trust in me as their member of Parliament.

I also wish to recognize and thank Alexa McDonough, who represented my riding at the federal and provincial levels for more than 30 effective and passionate years.

I have to say, as I am making my inaugural speech, that I feel a very heavy responsibility as I struggle to find the words that will focus the attention of the House on the urgent situation facing the communities that I represent.

We are a riding with a highly mixed urban community as well as fishing villages. We have very diverse and multicultural backgrounds. My constituency is made up of people who are coping with the everyday difficulties of life. It has struck me that the pomp and pageantry of this magnificent House seems very far removed from the realities of everyday life in Halifax.

With the highest density of students of any city in Canada, Halifax has residents struggling with monumental student debt and uncertain futures. We have the legacy of Africville, with members of the African Nova Scotian community still contributing their vibrant and active sense of culture throughout our city despite their unanswered calls for recognition and reparations.

We have thousands of seniors who are finding it more and more difficult to do simple things, such as paying their heating bills. We have Mi'kmaq people still looking for concrete commitments to improve their lives after the ray of hope which was the residential school apology.

We have the communities of Spryfield, Fairview, Harrietsfield and Ketch Harbour. Each are unique and each have a strong sense of community.

We also have a strong military presence in our city with many families who have loved ones on the base, overseas in Afghanistan, or at sea. Our military families live with the terrible uncertainty the war in Afghanistan has brought about and the lack of support which seems to await our veterans after their military service has ended.

Over the past number of years I have worked with individuals who heat with their ovens or heat only one room of their home at a time because they cannot afford fuel. Their choice is between heating their home or feeding their kids. They choose between heat or eat. They know they should insulate and upgrade, but they cannot afford the initial costs. There was nothing for them in the throne speech.

I listened very carefully to the throne speech. I listened for words of concrete action to be taken. I was hopeful that I would hear decisive action on the issues facing Canadians.

I hoped I would hear a plan to restore confidence in pensions which many seniors now feel are uncertain. There was no reassurance there; only promises on Senate reform and nuclear deregulation.

I hoped to hear about a real industrial strategy. Nova Scotian manufacturing industries are hurting. We continue to lose workers to the west. The reality is that under successive Liberal and Conservative governments, the Canadian economy has lost its innovative edge. Instead of grasping new opportunities, Canada is more reliant on the broken U.S. economy and more dependent on resource extraction. We are more than just the hewers of wood and the drawers of water.

The NDP recognizes that diversity and productivity are the basis for an effective economic strategy. The NDP understands that the opportunities of the green economy must be grasped quickly. Most important, our party sees the security and competence of people as the backbone to any economy. This must be our priority. I did not hear the throne speech make these things the focus of our collective efforts here in the House of Commons as I had hoped.

Halifax is home to some of the premier research institutions in Canada which are waiting for a real strategy for innovation in the knowledge based green economy of the future. These are the economic results that I want to see. These are the economic results that Nova Scotians want to see. These are the economic results that all Canadians want to see.

I had hoped to hear about a creative new federal environmental policy to deal with catastrophic climate change. Listening to the throne speech I was thinking about my riding with its wind, waves and tides and contrasted it to this government which has decided that Canadian energy must come from nuclear or fossil fuels. In our province we know that the consequence of remaining dependent on fossil fuels is ever-increasing energy costs. The consequence of the government's plan is to continue to see money taken out of our pockets and handed over to the fossil fuel executives, while the benefits of the green economy pass us by.

•(1355)

The Halifax transit system is bursting at the seams. When new services have been added, people in Halifax have responded by using sustainable transportation.

Some say that high gas prices will force people to take the bus, but Sambro, a fishing community in my riding, does not even have a bus. Fishers in my riding deserve as much service as the rest of us.

We need more buses and ferries and bike lanes, not more greenhouse gases, not more radioactive uranium tailings, not more spent nuclear fuel warehouses who knows where.

The world has developed a quick consensus around the need for economic stimulus. We do not need to waste more money on failed solutions such as corporate tax cuts and nuclear plants. We need to create jobs throughout Canada.

The Address

In Halifax I have seen how jobs can be created in an energy efficient industry. These jobs can be created throughout the country in every community. This is where we need to direct our efforts and our creativity, creating jobs by tackling the twin crises of international finance and climate change.

Economists are calling for investment in infrastructure. In the throne speech I had hoped to hear about strong investments in public transit and affordable, efficient housing.

Housing is infrastructure. Transit is infrastructure. Building both would create jobs, reduce greenhouse gases and work toward poverty elimination. I did not hear the government seize upon these opportunities.

I also had hoped to hear recognition of arts and culture as part of our economy. Halifax has wonderful arts and culture communities that export film, music, theatre and dance, which create jobs in our city. There was no mention of this vital aspect of our culture and our economy.

I had hoped for so much from the throne speech. I had hoped to hear a commitment to act against violence against women by attacking the root causes of violence, or to hear about a national child care program, or new post-secondary funding, or a commitment to international aid.

I had hoped to hear about a spectrum of supportive housing investments, or about a plan to strengthen education in first nations communities, or for any indication that the government might finally abandon its continued march to reduce the taxes of its supporters and wealthy corporations, even when it admits it will be running a budgetary deficit.

I had hoped, and I was disappointed.

However, as New Democrats, we believe that we can bring hope and change not only to the House, but to Canadians who believe in the progress of nations.

I watched with genuine excitement as our friends in the United States elected a president who campaigned on hope and possibility. I was struck by the fact that Canadians voted overwhelmingly by over 60% to reject the milquetoast Conservative approach to the economic crisis when serious action is needed.

Canada needs bold action for the economy. We need a stimulus package that invests in the real economy of people. We need to protect people's jobs. We need to protect their savings, their homes and their pensions. We need the government to deliver real results.

While I was hopeful that the Speech from the Throne would signal a plan for this kind of action, it instead signalled to me that the Conservative government is content to continue on with the same legislative program that over 60% of Canadians opposed on October 14. This is why I must stand today and oppose the Speech from the Throne.

The people of Halifax can count on my hard work and tireless efforts to ensure their voice is heard in Parliament, and so can the millions of Canadians who voted New Democrat.

I will end with a quote from the 1996 UNICEF "Progress of Nations" report:

The day will come when the progress of nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength, nor by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the wellbeing of their peoples: by their levels of health, nutrition and education; by their opportunities to earn a fair reward for their labours; by their ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives; by the respect that is shown for their civil and political liberties; by the provision that is made for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; and by the protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children.

The people of Halifax expect and deserve no less, and I am honoured to represent and fight for their interests in the House.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate our hon. friend from Nova Scotia on her win. It is a big honour to be here at any time, especially as a first term member of Parliament.

I would like to ask her, apropos her comments, about some of the critical issues affecting our citizens, whether they live in Nova Scotia or on the coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

We have seen a collapse of fisheries stocks on both the east and west coasts. Does my colleague believe the government should convene an urgent meeting of stakeholders for the commercial fishery, sport fishery, individuals involved in conservation, as well as first nations groups in order to come up with a concrete action plan to address the collapse of our fishery stock?

My second question is with respect to children. Would my colleague and her party support our initiative to have an early learning headstart program for children? Daycare is a huge problem facing parents across our country. Would she work with us and put pressure on the government to adopt a national daycare program for children?

● (1400)

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the fisheries, we do have fishing villages in my riding, one of which is Sambro, where Sambro Fisheries is located.

I have talked with the people in the fisheries and asked them what is going on and what needs to be done. They are pretty unequivocal. They are hook and line fishers. They actually have to bait a hook and put it out. They are against dragnetting and bottom trawling, full stop. They want us to enact the UN moratorium.

We need to meet with the stakeholders and have a concrete action plan. Who better to inform us than people who are actually making their livelihoods from fisheries in a responsible and sustainable way?

With regard to the early learning head start program, I actually had the opportunity many times to visit the aboriginal head start program in downtown Halifax, the Mi'kmaq Child Development Centre. I have seen first-hand the impact that early learning and head start programs can have on children's learning. We definitely support these actions.

The Address

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to welcome our new colleague from Halifax. We are glad she is here.

Several times during her presentation, she talked about her hope for the government or for government action. She hoped the government would take various actions. That is our hope, too. I hope she will nurture her hopes long enough to see actual results. With this government, it is very difficult to get real results.

I would just like to make one point about affordable housing. One of her hopes was that the government would invest in housing. Canada has the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which has amassed an \$8.4 billion surplus. That money is tucked away and is not being used.

What does she think of a government that does not invest such a surplus in response to public demand?

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. I cannot answer it in French, though.

[*English*]

With regard to social housing, Halifax has a lot of programs that are funded by CMHC, programs that are funded by federal money to look at housing, to study housing, to think about housing and hold round tables about housing, but housing is not being built.

A new affordable housing program has been launched in Halifax. We are very excited about it. It has eight units, but eight units are not enough. When there is any kind of surplus, we need to be investing in affordable housing.

As I said earlier, this is infrastructure. It creates jobs. It reduces poverty. If we build these homes to be energy efficient, we actually could combat climate change with the building of affordable housing. It is win, win, win.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on her election and her speech. She made a comment that throne speeches are known not only for what is in them but what is excluded from them. She mentioned that international assistance was missing.

I would like to point out it is clearly included in the throne speech and also in the previous budgets. Canada has reiterated its commitment to double our international assistance to \$5 billion by 2010-11. Also, the development work that is going on in Afghanistan is a clear commitment to international assistance.

The final point I would like to make is that this government is committed to untie the foreign aid for the years after 2012-13. I would like to know why the member indicated that there is nothing in the throne speech that—

• (1405)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): We can have a short answer from the member for Halifax.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, what is in the throne speech is clearly not enough. We need to meet our millennium development goals. We need 0.7% of contributions to these goals in foreign aid.

For every \$10 spent on Afghanistan, less than \$1 is spent on aid. We need to put that money into aid.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with some words of thanks as this is the first opportunity I have had to address the House aside from a brief statement in members' statements earlier today. I want to begin by thanking the great people of the riding of Simcoe North who have given me the privilege to serve a second time in the House.

I also want to thank my family members, particularly my wife Heather, and our two daughters, Valerie and Lauren. By the way, in the middle of this past election we had to move. Heather and the girls had to do a lot of that work while I was out on the campaign trail, and I thank them for that. I also thank my two older children and their families: Stephanie and Chris, Jason and Amanda, whose families are working in our riding and starting their lives at home. I am tremendously proud to see how they are doing and living in our communities.

My parents, brothers and sisters, and I come from a family business, and they had to carry on that work without me after being in the business for 30 years. My parents, Ron and Rene, and my sisters, Dianne and Sandra, have picked up the slack and are doing a tremendous job. My brother Doug, while he is not in the business, is out in the wonderful city of Thunder Bay, represented by the two members to my right. Thunder Bay is a great city, he has come to know, and he is still a great support for me.

I wish to thank my campaign team, a tremendous group of volunteers who helped me get elected under the tutelage of Rod Williams. Finally, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to you on not only running for the premiere Speaker's chair on Tuesday but also for the appointment you have received. I am proud to be in a riding that is just next door to the great riding of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

To all hon. members who have been re-elected, and those who have been elected for the first time to the House, I know they will find this experience engaging and important for all of their constituents and indeed for all of Canada.

It has been a privilege for me as a member of Parliament to learn Canada's other official language. As a member of Parliament, we are given the opportunity to do that.

[*Translation*]

It has been a privilege to learn the language of Canada's founders. Now, I can talk with the proud people of Penetanguishene and Lafontaine and all the francophones in my riding.

I have been able to learn this beautiful language because of the support of the people in my riding, and I thank them.

[*English*]

Today I would like to address the House on why I support the Speech from the Throne and why all hon. members should do the same. After listening to Her Excellency deliver this address just two days ago in the other place, I am more confident than ever that our government has taken the right path.

The Address

For the benefit of viewers at home, I think it is important to understand what the Speech from the Throne is for. The speech outlines, in general terms, the direction and priorities of the government, and an indication of the legislation or bills it plans to introduce in the coming Parliament. It is also an occasion for the government to describe the current situation being faced by the country. The speech then takes the form of a motion, the one we are currently debating, that comes before parliamentarians for their consideration.

The detailed laws on which the government plans to implement the agenda laid out in the Speech from the Throne will come before the House in the months ahead, assuming the motion passes. All parliamentarians will have the opportunity to consider those measures in detail.

With this in mind, and considering that we have just finished a federal general election, and considering the urgent global financial crisis, it is remarkable to me that members from the Bloc and NDP are voting against the throne speech, the first step forward for a government that Canadians just chose over a month ago. It flies in the face of what I heard from constituents this fall. They want their parliamentarians back to work, putting our shoulder to the wheel to do the very best we can to protect Canada's economic strength through this difficult time.

On top of that, we heard eloquent statements from members from all sides of the House during the election of the Speaker about the need for more co-operation, more civility in dealing with the important issues facing Canadians. I urge the members of the Bloc and NDP to consider their constituents. Their expectations are what we are here to do. This is not a time for posturing and games. Let us get to work, pass this motion and get on with the business at hand.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

Now, I would like to draw members' attention to the motion that is before us.

[*English*]

The backdrop for the commencement of this 40th Parliament is, for most of us, an unprecedented time for the world economy. How we got here will most certainly be the subject of intense debate here and around the world, and that debate will undoubtedly continue for some time.

What we have learned is instructive. The current situation with which we are confronted was not caused by anything Canada or its government did or failed to do. In fact, Canada, and in particular our banking, credit and mortgage system, is the strongest in the world. Other countries would do well to follow our lead.

Our economy is the strongest of the G-8, but because more than 40% of our economy relies on exports, the economic slowdown around the world will see orders for Canadian goods and services slowed, and with it, our economic output also. The slower output will have government receiving less tax dollars in the foreseeable future, so we, as a government, indeed, we, as a Parliament, are now tasked to take the very best course that we can to protect the livelihood and economic fortunes of Canadian families and businesses under these rare and exceptional conditions.

The motion before us today, the priorities set out in the Speech from the Throne, sets that course for us. It musters the best of what we have, the lessons that we have learned and it will, if passed and implemented, get us through these extraordinary times to emerge as strong and as determined as ever.

I would like to highlight some of the commitments our government has pledged in the Speech from the Throne that may be of particular interest to the people of Simcoe North.

First, we will use our leadership position in successful financial systems to help the world financing system put that financing system on a better footing. The problems started outside our borders, so we will work with our international partners to correct the problems. Though these reforms may be too late to help the current credit crisis, they will certainly prevent disruptions in the future, further disruptions that could impact Canada's interests negatively.

We will continue to press for broader trade opportunities around the world to open new markets for Canadian producers, manufacturers and service providers. Even here at home we contend with trade barriers between provinces that restrain Canadian businesses and jobs, so we will work with our provincial counterparts to ease those barriers to get investment and labour moving to wherever those opportunities lie.

We know that our long-term prosperity relies on a healthy environment. We ignore nature at our peril, since after all, we are a part of it, but we know that progress will not be made on the environment without a healthy economy. It is the only way to fund the important environmental investments that must be made.

I know my constituents will be encouraged to know that our government is committed to reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by the year 2020, and our plan to legislate a ban on all bulk water exports will be welcomed in my riding.

My riding, a region that pioneered the use of hydro-electric power, will be keen to know of the government's pledge to have 90% of our electricity produced from non-emitting sources by the year 2020, and that is from hydro, nuclear, wind, et cetera. This is the right way and we need to recognize that.

Our prosperity also depends on safety at home in our communities. I am pleased that our government is continuing to take action to keep our communities safe. There are far too many examples of criminality and violence, gangs, drugs, impaired driving, youth crime, all of which has torn at the fabric of our communities, tearing at families, tearing them apart, eating at the foundation of civility in our communities.

Uncertain economic times or not, families expect their government to act. Serious crimes must be met with serious penalties. We began that journey in the last Parliament with the passing of the Tackling Violent Crime Act. I look forward to advancing our government's agenda to get tough on crime and to strengthen our justice system.

So far I have touched briefly on three commitments from the Speech from the Throne: international trade, the environment and on keeping Canadians safe.

The Address

•(1415)

I would now like to turn my attention to three other commitments in the speech that, for me, stand out, partly because they are of direct relevance to the region that I represent, but mostly because they represent what I believe to be the greatest challenge in these economic times.

The first major hurdle will be keeping job opportunities for Canadians. On that part, our government has already built a sound footing, having lowered taxes and begun investments in infrastructure, science and technology, but part of that challenge involves giving the people the tools they need to secure well paying employment.

The new measures outlined in the throne speech will keep Canada's workforce up to task. We are expanding financial assistance for students, encouraging more skilled trades through support for apprenticeships and taking action to get quicker recognition of foreign credentials. We will help workers who are facing transition, work with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure that workers can get the kind of training and skills they need to stay in the workforce, and support their families and the livelihood of their communities.

Keeping jobs in Canada also involves keeping Canada a great place to do business. In a world where businesses can locate wherever in the world they wish, Canada must continue to keep a competitive business climate that will attract investment and job opportunities, so it will come as a great relief to businesses in my riding that our government will stay on course to encourage investment in the manufacturing sector, especially in the automotive and aerospace industries. They will welcome our government's pledge to keep enabling capital purchases that make our producers more competitive in the global marketplace.

Staying on this jobs theme, our investments in infrastructure through the building Canada plan are already having a tremendous impact in the communities in my riding. The full GST refund, the gas tax transfer, and investments we have made through the municipal-rural infrastructure fund have made a tangible difference in our municipalities.

Now that the Canada building fund is engaged and being expedited, our communities can help position themselves for greater economic growth. An example of that is the township of Oro-Medonte right in my riding, partnering with the city of Barrie, represented by my colleague, the member for Barrie, that have come together to invest and strengthen their regional airport to ensure that they can attract business expansion in the auto and aerospace sectors, among others. They are stepping up to the plate and putting economic advantage as their first priority during these times, and that is exactly the kind of partners our government needs to bolster Canada's economic advantage. That is why the government's building Canada plan will help protect jobs in the short-term and strengthen Canada's future prosperity in the long-term.

The second key theme that will help Canadians through this period is our commitment to helping Canadians participate. Canada is built on a promise of opportunity, the chance to work hard, raise a family and make a better life. To that end, we are working to break

down barriers that prevent Canadians from reaching their full potential, improving the universal child care benefit that will see improved benefits for families that have children under six, broadening access to maternity and paternity benefits under the EI program, assisting Canadians looking to buy their first homes, and extending the homelessness partnering strategy to help more Canadians find affordable housing.

Recognizing that health issues can be a significant barrier to employment and quality of life, the government is continuing its efforts to tackle major heart, lung and neurological diseases, and build on the work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Just as an aside, on the Mental Health Commission, I know that mental health continues to be stigmatized in Canada, even though it claims countless lives, lost opportunities and heartbreak for families.

The province of Ontario's Mental Health Centre Penetanguishene in my riding has a history of leadership in this field of health care with 800 employees and hundreds of volunteers. Penetanguishene is doing its part and it gives me great pride to know that our government has committed some \$110 million in this year's budget to bolster Canada's Mental Health Commission so it can keep doing its good work. This is a great benefit to persons with mental illness, and our partners in that journey to address this illness, like those in my community of Penetanguishene.

•(1420)

We need to continue to make these important investments so that access to employment and a quality of life that we seek for all Canadians can be realized. However, during these difficult economic circumstances and the prospect of slowing government revenues, it is also imperative that Canada do its part to trim spending.

We do not want to raise taxes or navigate our way into the kind of structural deficits we experienced in the 1970s and 1980s. This would only prolong our recovery and/or push irresponsible spending off onto the shoulders of our children.

It would also be fair to say that maintaining a balanced budget at all costs may put too much of the burden of this economic downturn, a condition that arose elsewhere in the world, squarely onto the shoulders of Canadians. That, too, is not acceptable.

Our government, just as families do when they are faced with unexpected shortfalls in revenue, has committed to trimming expenses where it can. This is, in my view, the third critical path that the throne speech has set out for the consideration of Parliament. It is sensible and I believe it is expected by Canadians who will, undoubtedly, be doing the very same in their households as they are faced with shifting economic circumstance.

We have the capacity to rein in spending because we have taken steps in this past year that have bolstered the Canadian economy. We got ahead of the curve last fall, with almost 1.5% of GDP in economic stimulus, that has put us in the enviable position before heading into an economic slowdown.

The Address

The Minister of Finance will have more to say on this subject next week when he releases the economic and fiscal statement. What we do know is that grants, contributions and capital expenditures will be placed under a microscope of responsible spending and departments will have the funding they need to deliver essential programs and services, but no more. We will table legislation to ensure sustainable compensation growth in the federal public service. We also will seek the engagement of Parliament to act in an active role in scrutinizing spending and suggesting areas of restraint.

On this last part, I was really surprised to hear the comments on *Mike Duffy Live* I think just yesterday evening or perhaps the night before. The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore, expressing his outright dismissal of any notion of parliamentarians helping the cause, said that only the government could do this. With that, what he is essentially saying is that MPs in opposition parties want to reserve the position of only criticizing.

I must say that position is 180° from what I heard on the campaign trail this fall. We are faced with unprecedented economic challenges for our times but all the Liberals seem to want to do is put their political priorities in front of us. I say that is a shame. However, I remain hopeful that some parliamentarians will set their partisan interests aside and work with the government to engage in this exercise.

In conclusion, our government has mapped a way forward for our Parliament's consideration in the days ahead. I hope hon. members will support this agenda with the full knowledge that they will all have an opportunity to debate the details of these measures during the 40th Parliament before us. It is the right path. It combines important measures and investments in our environment, in expanding trade opportunities and in keeping our communities safe. It challenges us in ways we have not undertaken in recent memory to bolster Canada's workforce and help Canadians participate in our economy.

It sets a course that will require partnership with our allies, the provinces and territories, municipalities and the private sector, and with all hon. members in this chamber and in the other place to get to work on behalf of all Canadians and see our way through this uncertain global landscape.

Canada and Canadians have faced adversity in the past and it appears we will do so again. The experience we have gained is, in effect, Canada's story. It is one of patience, cooperation and determination. Let us tap that collective will again so we can emerge stronger and more united than ever.

• (1425)

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the member's discourse he mentioned a bit about the environment, which was the key issue for most of the election campaign until other events took over. There will certainly be ongoing debate about whether a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 will be satisfactory.

However, the issue of how we will do that, particularly converting from carbon based energy production to nuclear, for instance, by 2020, is almost an impossibility. He knows that in the province of Ontario, with the Nanticoke coal-fired plant coming down by 2013, it takes about a decade to plan and build a new nuclear plant.

On top of that, even in my own riding of Mississauga South, there are three proposals for natural gas-fired plants. These are based on a five-year plan laid out by the province of Ontario. Once they are committed to, there is no way to replace them. They are committed to.

I ask the member whether this is a realistic and achievable goal given that the solutions are not implementable within the timeframe specified in the throne speech.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Mr. Speaker, my congratulations on the member's re-election.

There is no doubt that the challenges we have in front of us in reducing greenhouse gases are complex. It will take a tremendous amount of cooperation, especially in the example that the member pointed out. It will take cooperation with our provincial and territorial counterparts, especially in the big emitting provinces, to ensure we are on the same page. While it appears that will be quite a hill for us to climb, I am prepared to say that this government is prepared to do everything it can to reach those targets.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the most important things this throne speech revealed was the Conservative government's disregard for the effects of the crisis on people and the economy.

Another significant announcement was made today: layoffs at Rolls-Royce will affect over 2,000 workers. That could have a serious impact on the industry in Quebec. Kenworth, a truck manufacturer in Quebec, has announced layoffs and major restructuring.

That raises a question. We know that the throne speech had nothing to say about the unemployed, nothing about improving programs, and nothing about poverty. Given the magnitude of the current crisis, something will have to be done to help the people who were left out of the throne speech: the unemployed and the poor.

What will the government do to help these workers and the poor in our society?

[*English*]

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out earlier in my remarks, there is no question that the country will, unfortunately, be facing shifts and transitions in work due to this economic slowdown, but that is precisely why we are continuing to invest in partnership programs with the provinces. We want to ensure that investments can be made into giving people the skills and knowledge they need to transition into other work opportunities. This is something that we will need to get through together. We must work closely with our provincial counterparts, including the province of Quebec, to ensure that happens in the years ahead.

• (1430)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Simcoe North will have about five minutes left in his question and answer period when we resume next week.

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

The Address

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

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MS. DENISE SAVOIE

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

HON. MAURIL BÉLANGER

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. JACQUES GOURDE

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

MR. JOE PRESTON

MR. MARCEL PROULX

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Fortieth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Labour	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	Québec	BQ
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Québec	Ind.
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	Québec	BQ
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	Québec	BQ
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Yukon	Lib.
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Baudin, Josée	Saint-Lambert	Québec	BQ
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Ontario	Lib.
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	BQ
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	CPC
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	BQ
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	Québec	BQ
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Cadman, Dona	Surrey North	British Columbia	CPC
Calandra, Paul	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pontiac	Québec	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	Québec	BQ
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	BQ
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	Ind.
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Industry	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coady, Siobhan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	BQ
Crombie, Bonnie	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	BQ
Dechert, Bob	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Demers, Nicole	Laval	Québec	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	BQ
Desnoyers, Luc	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	BQ
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	Lib.
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	Lib.
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dorion, Jean	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	BQ
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	British Columbia	Lib.
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	BQ
Dufour, Nicolas	Repentigny	Québec	BQ
Duncan, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Québec	BQ
Fast, Ed	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	Lib.
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	BQ
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	Québec	BQ
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	Québec	BQ
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	Lib.
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	BQ
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Minister of State (Status of Women)	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Guimond, Claude	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	BQ
Hall Findlay, Martha	Willowdale	Ontario	Lib.
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	NDP
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	Lib.
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Kania, Andrew	Brampton West	Ontario	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kennedy, Gerard	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	Lib.
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau— Mirabel	Québec	BQ
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Québec	BQ
Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	BQ
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	Lib.
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	BQ
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik —Eeyou	Québec	BQ
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Sport)	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	Lib.
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	BQ
Maloway, Jim	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	NDP
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River— Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	Lib.
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	Ontario	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	Lib.
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	Québec	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	BQ

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Mendes, Alexandra	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	Lib.
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Macleod	Alberta	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Transport)	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker of the House of Commons	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Ontario	Lib.
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	Québec	BQ
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill-Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Oliphant, Robert	Don Valley West	Ontario	Lib.
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Paillé, Pascal-Pierre	Louis-Hébert	Québec	BQ
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	Québec	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	Québec	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	Lib.
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Petit, Daniel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	CPC
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Pomerleau, Roger	Drummond	Québec	BQ
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	Lib.
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Natural Resources	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Ontario	Lib.
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Greg	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	Lib.
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis— Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Savoie, Denise, The Acting Speaker	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Andrew, The Deputy Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Ontario	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Simson, Michelle	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	BQ
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas— Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Ontario	Lib.
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	BQ
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Ontario	Lib.
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Uppal, Tim	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valeriote, Francis	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Minister of Public Safety	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	Québec	BQ
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	NDP
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Ontario	Lib.
Wong, Alice, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversi- fication)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Zarac, Lise	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	Lib.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Fortieth Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (28)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Labour	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Casson, Rick	Lethbridge	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Transport)	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Tim	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Black, Dawn	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Cadman, Dona	Surrey North	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Cummins, John	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Dhaliwal, Sukh	Newton—North Delta	Lib.
Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal	Vancouver South	Lib.
Duncan, John, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Ed.	Abbotsford	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Hill, Hon. Jay, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Sport)	Saanich—Gulf Islands	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
Martin, Hon. Keith	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	Lib.
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
McLeod, Cathy	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Savoie, Denise, The Acting Speaker	Victoria	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	North Vancouver	CPC
Siksay, Bill	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Langley	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Wong, Alice, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Richmond	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians	Winnipeg South	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages	Saint Boniface	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Maloway, Jim	Elmwood—Transcona	NDP
Mark, Inky	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Neville, Hon. Anita	Winnipeg South Centre	Lib.
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board	Provencher	CPC
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Wasylycia-Leis, Judy	Winnipeg North	NDP
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)....	Fredericton	CPC
D'Amours, Jean-Claude	Madawaska—Restigouche	Lib.
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Fundy Royal	CPC
Murphy, Brian	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	Lib.
O'Neill-Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Coady, Siobhan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Lib.
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Russell, Todd	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls— Windsor	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Casey, Bill	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Ind.
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.....	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Savage, Michael	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
NUNAVUT (1)		
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health	Nunavut	CPC
ONTARIO (106)		
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Bains, Hon. Navdeep	Mississauga—Brampton South	Lib.
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio	Vaughan	Lib.
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gord	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Calandra, Paul	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Cannis, John	Scarborough Centre	Lib.
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Industry	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Crombie, Bonnie	Mississauga—Streetsville	Lib.
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Dhalla, Ruby	Brampton—Springdale	Lib.
Dryden, Hon. Ken	York Centre	Lib.
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology)	Cambridge	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Guarnieri, Hon. Albina	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Lib.
Guergis, Hon. Helena, Minister of State (Status of Women)	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Hall Findlay, Martha	Willowdale	Lib.
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Holland, Mark	Ajax—Pickering	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	NDP
Ignatieff, Michael	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Lib.
Kania, Andrew	Brampton West	Lib.
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kennedy, Gerard	Parkdale—High Park	Lib.
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Layton, Hon. Jack	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Lee, Derek	Scarborough—Rouge River	Lib.
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Oxford	CPC
Malhi, Hon. Gurbax	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Lib.
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste. Marie	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
McTeague, Hon. Dan	Pickering—Scarborough East	Lib.
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker of the House of Commons	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Minna, Hon. Maria	Beaches—East York	Lib.
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Oliphant, Robert	Don Valley West	Lib.
Pearson, Glen	London North Centre	Lib.
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Natural Resources	Halton	CPC
Ratansi, Yasmin	Don Valley East	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg	Kenora	CPC
Rota, Anthony	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Lib.
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Silva, Mario	Davenport	Lib.
Simson, Michelle	Scarborough Southwest	Lib.
Stanton, Bruce	Simcoe North	CPC
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Szabo, Paul	Mississauga South	Lib.
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Tonks, Alan	York South—Weston	Lib.
Valeriotte, Francis	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham—Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Minister of Public Safety	York—Simcoe	CPC
Volpe, Hon. Joseph	Eglinton—Lawrence	Lib.
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Wilfert, Hon. Bryon	Richmond Hill	Lib.
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Wrzesnewskyj, Borys	Etobicoke Centre	Lib.
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Murphy, Hon. Shawn	Charlottetown	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	CPC
QUÉBEC (75)		
André, Guy	Berthier—Maskinongé	BQ
Arthur, André	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Ind.
Asselin, Gérard	Manicouagan	BQ
Bachand, Claude	Saint-Jean	BQ
Beaudin, Josée	Saint-Lambert	BQ
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Bernier, Hon. Maxime	Beauce	CPC
Bigras, Bernard	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	BQ
Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Jonquière—Alma	CPC
Blais, Raynald	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	BQ
Blaney, Steven	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Bonsant, France	Compton—Stanstead	BQ
Bouchard, Robert	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	BQ
Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	Beauport—Limoilou	CPC
Bourgeois, Diane	Terrebonne—Blainville	BQ
Brunelle, Paule	Trois-Rivières	BQ
Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Pontiac	CPC
Cardin, Serge	Sherbrooke	BQ
Carrier, Robert	Alfred-Pellan	BQ
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Crête, Paul	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	BQ
DeBellefeuille, Claude	Beauharnois—Salaberry	BQ
Demers, Nicole	Laval	BQ
Deschamps, Johanne	Laurentides—Labelle	BQ
Desnoyers, Luc	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	BQ
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dorion, Jean	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	BQ
Duceppe, Gilles	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	BQ
Dufour, Nicolas	Repentigny	BQ
Faille, Meili	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	BQ
Folco, Raymonde	Laval—Les Îles	Lib.
Freeman, Carole	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	BQ
Gagnon, Christiane	Québec	BQ
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gaudet, Roger	Montcalm	BQ
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Guay, Monique	Rivière-du-Nord	BQ
Guimond, Claude	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	BQ
Guimond, Michel	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	BQ
Jennings, Hon. Marlene	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Lib.
Laforest, Jean-Yves	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	BQ
Laframboise, Mario	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	BQ
Lalonde, Francine	La Pointe-de-l'Île	BQ
Lavallée, Carole	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	BQ
Label, Hon. Denis, Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
Lemay, Marc	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	BQ
Lessard, Yves	Chambly—Borduas	BQ
Lévesque, Yvon	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	BQ
Malo, Luc	Verchères—Les Patriotes	BQ
Ménard, Réal	Hochelaga	BQ
Ménard, Serge	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	BQ
Mendes, Alexandra	Brossard—La Prairie	Lib.
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas	Outremont	NDP
Nadeau, Richard	Gatineau	BQ
Ouellet, Christian	Brome—Missisquoi	BQ
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Paillé, Pascal-Pierre	Louis-Hébert	BQ
Paquette, Pierre	Joliette	BQ
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Secretary of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Bernard	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Lib.
Petit, Daniel, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	CPC
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Pomerleau, Roger	Drummond	BQ
Proulx, Marcel	Hull—Aylmer	Lib.
Rodriguez, Pablo	Honoré-Mercier	Lib.
Roy, Jean-Yves	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
St-Cyr, Thierry	Jeanne-Le Ber	BQ
Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thaï	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	BQ
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie	Louis-Saint-Laurent	CPC
Vincent, Robert	Shefford	BQ
Zarac, Lise	LaSalle—Émard	Lib.

SASKATCHEWAN (14)

Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
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Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River ..	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana	Wascana	Lib.
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Andrew, The Deputy Speaker	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Trost, Bradley	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Bagnell, Hon. Larry	Yukon	Lib.

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of November 21, 2008 — 1st Session, 40th Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FINANCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

HEALTH

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

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

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

LIAISON

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

NATURAL RESOURCES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

Harold Albrecht
Kelly Block
Rodger Cuzner

Claude DeBellefeuille
Yvon Godin
Michel Guimond

Marlene Jennings
Guy Lauzon
Tom Lukiwski

Joe Preston
Marcel Proulx
Scott Reid

(12)

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

STATUS OF WOMEN

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

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Joint Vice-Chair:

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The Honourable Senators

Representing the House of Commons:

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The Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MS. DENISE SAVOIE

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

THE MINISTRY

According to precedence

Right Hon. Stephen Harper	Prime Minister
Hon. Rob Nicholson	Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn	Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture)
Hon. Greg Thompson	Minister of Veterans Affairs
Hon. Marjory LeBreton	Leader of the Government in the Senate and Minister of State (Seniors)
Hon. Chuck Strahl	Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Hon. Peter MacKay	Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway
Hon. Stockwell Day	Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway
Hon. Vic Toews	President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Rona Ambrose	Minister of Labour
Hon. Diane Finley	Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of International Cooperation
Hon. Jim Prentice	Minister of the Environment
Hon. John Baird	Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Hon. Lawrence Cannon	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Tony Clement	Minister of Industry
Hon. Jim Flaherty	Minister of Finance
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Hon. Peter Van Loan	Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Gerry Ritz	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Jason Kenney	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
Hon. Christian Paradis	Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Secretary of State (Agriculture)
Hon. James Moore	Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
Hon. Leona Aglukkaq	Minister of Health
Hon. Lisa Raitt	Minister of Natural Resources
Hon. Gail Shea	Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Hon. Gary Lunn	Minister of State (Sport)
Hon. Gordon O'Connor	Minister of State and Chief Government Whip
Hon. Helena Guergis	Minister of State (Status of Women)
Hon. Diane Ablonczy	Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)
Hon. Rob Merrifield	Minister of State (Transport)
Hon. Lynne Yelich	Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)
Hon. Steven Fletcher	Minister of State (Democratic Reform)
Hon. Gary Goodyear	Minister of State (Science and Technology)
Hon. Denis Lebel	Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec)
Hon. Keith Ashfield	Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)
Hon. Peter Kent	Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)

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Mr. Pierre Poilievre	to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Mr. Rob Moore	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Daniel Petit	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Jacques Gourde	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue
Mr. Greg Kerr	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Mr. John Duncan	to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Mr. Laurie Hawn	to the Minister of National Defence
Mr. Gerald Keddy	to the Minister of International Trade
Mr. Andrew Saxton	to the President of the Treasury Board
Mr. Ed Komarnicki	to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour
Hon. Jim Abbott	to the Minister of International Cooperation
Mr. Mark Warawa	to the Minister of the Environment
Mr. Brian Jean	to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities
Mr. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Mike Lake	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Ted Menzies	to the Minister of Finance
Mr. Tom Lukiwski	to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons
Mr. Dave MacKenzie	to the Minister of Public Safety
Mr. Pierre Lemieux	to the Minister of Agriculture
Mr. David Anderson	to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board
Mr. Rick Dykstra	to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
Mrs. Alice Wong	for Multiculturalism
Mr. Dean Del Mastro	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mrs. Sylvie Boucher	for Status of Women
Mrs. Shelly Glover	for Official Languages
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of Health
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

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