



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 1, 2009

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)  
[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Don Valley East.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, on Parliament Hill, we are honoured by the presence of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs from across Canada, the national voice for fire services. Many of them have travelled great distances to inform members of Parliament of the successes and challenges of the courageous men and women who, when called upon, put their lives on the line to protect our homes and businesses and save lives.

Firefighters increasingly face new dangers, such as new building materials that burn hotter and faster, grow ops with hydro bypasses and meth labs.

Of 108,000 firefighters in Canada, 80,000 in smaller, rural and remote communities are unpaid volunteers. Firefighters demonstrate the pioneer spirit of community that allowed our settlers to battle the dangers of isolation and extreme weather to build this nation.

We salute all of the brave men and women who fight fires from Labrador to Oakville, Ontario, British Columbia and Yukon for their dedication in the greatest tradition of public service and sacrifice.

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### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with all that is happening in our communities, I am concerned that the Conservative government has failed to act while so many of our constituents are suffering.

In Mississauga—Brampton South, we have already felt the effects of a declining housing market, crumbling infrastructure and a collapsing auto sector. The economic crisis, which continues to worsen under the Conservatives, has made life very tough for my constituents.

Seniors worry if they have enough money to get through the month. Families are having to cut their budgets and young people wonder what the future has in store for them.

Fortunately, there is hope. Canadians everywhere see the Liberal opposition as a compassionate alternative to the cold indifference of the Conservative Party.

We were elected to work for our constituents and build a better country for all. Let us put Canada first and get through these tough times together.

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[Translation]

### FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION SYSTEM

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is time for the federal government to review its policy, which puts a 2% limit on the indexing of financing for first nations post-secondary education programs.

Furthermore, not only is post-secondary education under funded, but so is the entire first nations education system. Primary and secondary level programs are also suffering, because their respective funding is not being indexed to the cost of living. The fact that the number of students has increased since 1996 is not helping the situation. This has resulted in the loss of several million dollars over 13 years and the situation cannot continue.

I will be presenting a petition today on behalf of Quebec first nation people who are calling on the government to take action on this. The first nations education system is facing a crisis. It is time for the government to do something about it.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, who among us was not horrified by the revelations brought to the House by the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam about the Karzai Afghan regime's plans to subordinate and subjugate women? Not only is this deeply disturbing in terms of human rights but also in terms of the lost potential it represents.

By all accounts, when women are empowered, communities can overcome even the worst conditions. As has been said, the rising of the women is the rising of the human race.

I saw this firsthand in Bangladesh on a trip sponsored by Results Canada. I saw with my own eyes how a few dollars in aid can empower women to lift themselves and their families up out of enormous poverty. I saw women at the heart of the microcredit movement building sustainable economic futures.

I thank Chris Dendys and Katy Kydd Wright with Results Canada for leading us on this journey and showing us that poverty can be solved one step at a time when women are empowered to tackle basic issues like clean water, sanitation and TB prevention.

I also thank the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam for her tireless work in this place, empowering women and fighting for a sustainable, peaceful future. I wish her well on her new journey.

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**ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE**

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 85 years ago today, a royal proclamation gave birth to the Royal Canadian Air Force. In its history of excellence, the men, women and machines of the RCAF have chased the wailing winds and topped the sun swept summits with easy grace in the cause of freedom and justice.

Whether in the swirling skies over London, the dark deadly nights over Berlin, the training airfields of the prairies, the hostile skies of Korea, facing off against the Warsaw Pact in Europe, intercepting potential intruders near North American skies or while dazzling millions of fans with the Snowbirds, our Air Force has been on the job, around the clock, around the world for 85 years.

I am proud to represent an integral part of that history in the fighter squadrons and support organizations of 4 Wing Cold Lake and Edmonton Garrison's 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron.

Today I salute the dedication of the men and women of today's Canadian Air Force and the courage and sacrifice of those who preceded them. They have truly taken Canada *Per ardua ad astra*, through adversity to the stars.

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[Translation]

**PATRO LE PRÉVOST**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Patro Le Prévost, a community organization located in the heart of my riding of Papineau, is celebrating this year its 100th anniversary.

Over the year, numerous activities will be held to celebrate this momentous occasion. For example, starting on April 15, the citizens and friends of Papineau will be invited to take part in the 2009 cultural exhibition “Art over the years”.

The Patro is continuing a long tradition, guided by history and compassion. It welcomes on average nearly 1,000 people per day from all generations and all social and cultural backgrounds.

I want to congratulate the Patro and acknowledge its 100th anniversary. More than just a pool, a library and a series of gymnasiums, the Patro is the epicentre of our community.

An organization like the Patro Le Prévost cannot be successful without the outstanding support of its volunteers, whose efforts and encouragement I salute today.

To the volunteers and to the Patro, we say thanks and happy 100th anniversary.

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● (1410)

[English]

**PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH**

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the launch of Parkinson's Awareness Month across Canada. Over 100,000 Canadians are living with Parkinson's disease today. It is chronic, progressive and results in increasing disability that dramatically impacts individuals, families and communities everywhere in Canada.

Parkinson Society Canada works to educate parliamentarians and policymakers about the needs of Canadians living with brain conditions like Parkinson's. The organization is committed to positioning the brain as a priority health, social and economic issue in Canada, one that warrants increased research and policy investments.

As we launch Parkinson's Awareness Month, I encourage every member of Parliament to think about their constituents living with Parkinson's. This insidious disease affects men and women of every age and they are relying on our leadership to help them live with the highest quality and most productive lives they can.

Finally, I want to pay special tribute to Greg McGinnis of the Barrie Parkinson's Association who has done so much in my region to raise funds and awareness for this important cause.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN**

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a controversial new law in Afghanistan would allow men to rape their wives. This law, which was passed to please the Shia minority, would also prevent women from leaving the house without their husband's permission and would do away with their right to have custody of their children in the event of a separation or divorce. This practice has been condemned since 1993 by the UN High Commission for Human Rights, and this new legislation has been criticized by Afghan women parliamentarians and a UN agency for women.

The Conservative government likes to boast that Canada is in Afghanistan to defend women's right to equality and education. It is inconceivable that the government should do nothing to condemn and correct this injustice. This is a serious setback for women in Afghanistan.

The Conservative government should have the courage to stand up in this House and condemn this aberration and send a strong message to the Afghan government that this law violates its obligations regarding women's rights.

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[English]

**ROYAL NETHERLANDS ARMY**

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour Mr. Albert Hartkamp and retired major, Frans Rondel, of the Royal Netherlands Army from the Thank You Canada and Allied Forces group.

The group helps to ensure that the legacy of Canadian and allied forces in the liberation of the Netherlands never fades and that those who lost their lives are never forgotten.

As the son of two immigrants from the Netherlands who both lived through the second world war, it is an honour to recognize these men.

Along with their yearly commemorative events, they are also organizing a special 65th anniversary ceremony for 2010. This special event will incorporate veterans and dignitaries and will be attended by thousands of Canadian students.

The Thank You Canada and Allied Forces group is ensuring that Canadian and Dutch youth will know the shared experiences of sacrifices made.

So, as they organize a big "thank you" to all Canadian veterans, I call on all members of the House to recognize the great work they do in organizing their tribute to remember those who gave their lives for our democracy.

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**PAUKTUUTIT**

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the 25th anniversary of Pauktuutit, the Inuit Women's Association.

Pauktuutit has worked tirelessly to address a broad range of health and social issues of concern to women in the north. Issues include the elimination of violence and abuse against Inuit women and children, housing, education, and economic development. It is to be congratulated for its success in advocating for Inuit women.

However, today also is the 10th anniversary of Nunavut.

Nunavut, which means "our land" in Inuktitut, has much to offer the world, with its panoramic landscapes, beautiful people and strong cultural traditions.

However, it is a community that continues to face many social challenges. These challenges must be addressed and the federal government must be there to ensure that the people of Nunavut have every opportunity for success.

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● (1415)

**NUNAVUT**

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand before the House today to commemorate the creation of a new territory.

Today we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Nunavut. This is an occasion to reflect on the hard work and dedication of many people, on the many accomplishments that have been made and the many more that will follow.

Nunavut is vast in size, rich with resources, and has grown rapidly in the last 10 years. Our government and this Prime Minister are committed to ensuring the growth and success of Nunavut and the north.

This government recognizes the importance of the north like no other government has done before. Nunavut is well represented through the hard work of the Minister of Health, and this government has committed over \$200 million over two years to social housing, \$87 million toward a high-Arctic research station, continued growth in federal health transfers, and much more.

Nunavummiut and all Canadians should be proud of a territory that so perfectly represents the true north strong and free.

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**B.C. ECONOMY**

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the policies of the B.C. government have had a devastating impact on my province over the past eight years. Hospitals have been closed, emergency room service reduced and ambulance service cut back.

Rural communities have been especially hit hard. Seniors have been shifted around from community to community, often with tragic consequences. Our medical services plan is contracted out to an American corporation, and a once-profitable BC Rail has been sold off to the private sector.

According to Rafe Mair, a former Socred cabinet minister, the Campbell energy plan will mean the end of BC Hydro and the end of hundreds of rivers.

### Oral Questions

I call the last eight years in B.C. “an experiment”: less government, privatization and deregulation, all part of the global corporate agenda.

Rafe Mair has given his support to Carole James and the NDP in the upcoming provincial election. I urge all citizens of B.C., regardless of political stripe, who wish to stop the systematic devastation of our province to vote NDP on May 12.

Yes, we can.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have confidence in Quebeckers. Our government is working for the future of all Quebeckers no matter where they live in the province. We hear from them daily that at least the Conservatives deliver the goods and they urge us to continue doing so.

While the Bloc Québécois is busy voting against everything in Ottawa, our government is working to develop Quebec and build its future. Unlike the Bloc, our government does not feel the need to scare Quebec, to divide it in order to better control it, to mislead it or tell it lies morning, noon and night. Our government is working on building, not tearing down. We are looking to the future, not to the past.

Yes, we, the Quebec Conservatives, have confidence in Quebeckers. We are truly there to serve them. On behalf of the Quebec Conservatives, I have a clear message for the Bloc: recess is over.

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#### ROYAL 22ND REGIMENT

**Mr. Claude Bachand (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Royal 22nd Regiment is on its way to Afghanistan. It will take over from the Royal Canadian Regiment, which has completed its tour. I had the honour and privilege of training with its members in 2001, then accompanying them to Bosnia. I would like to commend these troops on their professionalism and skill. Quebec can be proud of this regiment. These men and women are completely committed to their mission. Their work and dedication are beyond reproach.

While the Bloc opposes prolonging this mission, it has never doubted these soldiers' bravery. I know that this deployment is hard on their friends and family members, but the cause is noble. I would like to join my Bloc Québécois colleagues and the family and friends of these courageous soldiers in wishing them good luck in their mission.

We admire them. Our hearts are with them. See them soon.

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[English]

#### NEW BRUNSWICK VARSITY REDS

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of New Brunswick Varsity Reds, who this past weekend captured their

second University Cup in three years, with a 4-2 win over the University of Western Ontario Mustangs.

It was the third-year forward, Lachlan MacIntosh of Perth-Andover, New Brunswick, who scored a hat trick to solidify the win in the gold-medal final of the 2009 CIS men's hockey championship, Sunday afternoon, at Fort William Gardens in Thunder Bay.

[Translation]

UNB is the seventh team to participate in three consecutive Canadian Interuniversity Sport finals. The Varsity Reds, who won their first title in 1998, lost to Alberta by a score of three to two in last year's final. In 2007, UNB beat our local team, the University of Moncton Blue Eagles, and won the gold medal.

● (1420)

[English]

Hats off to UNB and to all the teams that played, from across this great country, in the national championships for the university hockey title.

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#### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia, the Liberal Party plan is to not help the auto industry, but in Ontario the Liberals have a different plan. One day the Liberal Party plan is to champion the job-killing carbon tax, claiming it must be implemented immediately. The next day the Liberal plan is to distance itself from the tax.

The Liberal Party pretends to defend the seal hunt, yet at the same time the Liberals' plan is to introduce a bill that would ban the seal hunt.

While the Liberal Party pretends to appeal to forestry workers in one province, the Liberal plan is to now call the industry a “basement” industry in another province.

It is clear that the Liberal plan is no plan at all. In these times, Canadians need real leadership with a real plan. They need the Conservative government's economic action plan.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister is urging other countries to do more, here at home the OECD says that another half million Canadians are going to lose their jobs. People in places like Markham and Whitby will be deprived of employment insurance simply because they do not live in some other riding.

When Mark Carney says today that Canada is in its worst recession in 50 years, is it not obvious that the time has come for a national standard for employment insurance eligibility?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday to the hon. member, when the EI system was put in place in 1997 with variable entrance requirements, the unemployment rate was higher than it is today.

We have extended the benefits in a series of ways by adding five weeks to the program, ensuring that there is work sharing, ensuring that a number of people will maintain their jobs, and for those who are not able to qualify for EI, we ensure they can take training. We have invested significant dollars to ensure that happens.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**G20**

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, Paul Martin, the father of the G20, pushed for the creation of an international bank monitoring system. That is what the G20 will be talking about this week. Yet before George Bush hosted the G20 meeting, this Prime Minister had no time for the group, saying that the G20's objective was to keep the United States in check.

Will the Prime Minister admit that from the beginning, he was wrong and Paul Martin was right?

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think you would ever hear a Conservative admit that.

Our Prime Minister and our finance minister are participating in the G20 meetings. We have other ministers at G8 meetings simultaneously. This Conservative government is actually putting us back on the international stage and showing leadership, leadership that we have not seen for many years coming out of Canada.

In fact, we co-chair with India the most important committee in the G20. We are leading all around the world.

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**INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND**

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives were honest, they would admit the obvious. The IMF is the banker of last resort to the world's poorer countries, but the IMF is running out of money. While Europe and the United States want to double or triple IMF resources, the Conservatives say it is simply not a priority.

Is it not shameful that Canada, one of the richest countries in the world, stands alone in committing nothing to help less fortunate countries get through this crisis?

• (1425)

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I suppose that would have been part of the plan in the prebudget consultations that the Liberals actually never delivered to the finance minister, how they plan to help people in other countries less fortunate than ours.

As I said in this House yesterday, we continue to support countries that are less fortunate than we are. We continue on our track to double aid to Africa.

We have developed programs in South America with our partners down there, not only in promoting trade with those countries but in development projects there and around the world.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AIR CANADA**

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Air Canada could be on the verge of bankruptcy. An analyst has estimated that it has a 50/50 chance of surviving. Restructuring Air Canada would mean thousands of layoffs, in the midst of the economic recession. The last time Air Canada underwent restructuring, 3,000 people lost their jobs.

What is the minister doing to protect the jobs of Canadians who work for Air Canada?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are obviously very concerned when any Canadian company is losing more than \$1 billion, as was reported most recently with respect to Air Canada.

Yesterday I met with one of the biggest unions of the employees there and indicated my active engagement with the file. I have also offered to meet with the new executive team at Air Canada. We are very concerned and will certainly keep a watchful eye.

Obviously our concern is jobs, the economy and economic growth. There are many issues in dealing with this problem and we are working on all of them.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Macfarlane of Dorval has been an Air Canada employee for over 20 years. Thousands of Canadians and hundreds of my constituents work for Air Canada. Like Mr. Macfarlane, they are sick with worry over the security of their jobs and their pensions in the face of this looming restructuring.

Will the minister stand right now, do more than keep a watchful eye and actually reassure Air Canada's 30,000 employees that their pensions and the financial security of their families will be protected by the government?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult issue. The member opposite will know that more than nine air carriers went bankrupt when her party was in government.

These are challenging issues. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance is looking at the pension situation with respect to federally regulated areas. That is helpful. The airline did hedge fuel at \$110 a barrel. The government cannot do anything with respect to that.

We have seen some steady declines in ridership. We are engaged in it and following it. The one thing this government would never do to Air Canada and to the travelling public is bring in a monster-sized carbon tax, which would have decimated the industry.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government is refusing to compensate Quebec, which has harmonized its sales tax with the GST. Yet the situation of Quebec and Ontario is the same: neither has experienced a loss of revenue as a result of harmonization and their respective sales taxes do not apply to certain products. In fact, the only difference between Quebec and Ontario is that, in Quebec, medium and large businesses with sales in excess of \$10 million do not get a QST rebate on the purchase of certain goods.

Since the Quebec finance minister has made a commitment to reimburse the businesses concerned, will the government commit to compensating Quebec as it has Ontario?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday we discussed the difference in the situations in Ontario and Quebec, and it is still the same. The Quebec finance minister said so yesterday: if there has to be harmonization, if there have to be adjustments, it will be done.

We will follow the debate and, in good faith, if negotiations are begun, we will be there. But they need to stop create fake debates like this one.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is certainly not a fake debate. This was the object of a unanimous motion in the Quebec national assembly, in other words by the Liberals, PQ and ADQ. There are \$2.6 billion at stake. The Quebec finance minister has identified the single difference between the Ontario and Quebec sales taxes, which requires a simple adjustment for companies with over \$10 million in revenue for whom certain goods are not reimbursed.

If she makes that little adjustment, will the federal government compensate Quebec to the tune of \$2.6 billion? That is the question.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what I have just said. The finance minister said yesterday that her tax was not harmonized and that adjustments would be made. We are following the situation closely.

We are getting called names, “token Quebecers” among others, and I can understand that the leader of the Bloc is here frustrated and making a ruckus. He has never governed, nor will he ever. He tried his luck in Quebec but his head office sent him here. I prefer to be at the service of my constituents rather than a token, an on-looker.

• (1430)

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, the minister will say anything to avoid answering the question. Quebec's finance minister has clearly stated that the tax is harmonized in Quebec. Yesterday, she promised to change the few details in the harmonization of the TVQ with the GST that the federal government is using as an excuse to refuse to compensate Quebec.

Will the federal government show good faith and promise to “treat Quebec justly and equitably, by granting compensation that is

comparable to that offered to Ontario”, as the National Assembly has unanimously called on it to do?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I will tell my colleague that he should listen instead of reading his sheet while I answer questions. I said that we would monitor the situation closely. If there are negotiations, the government will negotiate in good faith. This cannot be negotiated here in the House of Commons or in the newspapers. Our government is federalist, like the Government of Quebec. We want this to work, and we will negotiate in good faith.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister had really wanted to show good faith, he would have admitted that Quebec's finance minister said that the tax was harmonized in Quebec.

Quebec has never been compensated for being the first province to harmonize its sales tax with the GST, even though three Atlantic provinces received \$1 billion in 1997 and Ontario is now getting \$4.3 billion.

Instead of showing bad faith, will the government make a clear commitment to compensate Quebec and pay it the \$2.6 billion it is entitled to?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the Minister of Finance of Quebec said yesterday in the National Assembly that adjustments would have to be made to harmonize Quebec's tax. I am referring to the debates, which he should read.

That said, we are looking at the situation and, as a good government, we will negotiate in good faith if negotiations are held, and we will monitor the situation, but this will not be negotiated here in the House of Commons or in the newspapers.

They wanted to engage in a false debate, but now they see that the tax was not harmonized. The Minister of Finance said so herself.

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[English]

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in response to a question from the New Democrat member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, the government said:

The onus is on the government of Afghanistan to live up to its responsibilities for human rights...including rights of women. If there is any wavering on this point from the government of Afghanistan, this will create serious problems and be a serious disappointment for us.

Could the government tell us today how it will express the disappointment of the Canadian people with regard to these laws that attack women? Will it tell us what real consequences there will be for the government of Afghanistan and whether the mission and its purpose will be reconsidered in this context?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister has expressed serious concerns with this Afghanistan law. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs has done that also and continues to do that. The status of the law is still unclear, even among the Afghan legislators themselves.

However, what is very clear is we are concerned with the provisions in this law as we see them. We are calling unequivocally upon the government in Afghanistan to ensure it lives up to its international treaty obligations for human rights, especially human rights for women. We are very clear on this.

[Translation]

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this law grants men all legal rights when it comes to custody of children, divorce and inheritance. And it permits rape. This is a very serious attack on the rights of Afghan women. One hundred and sixteen of our soldiers have given their lives to change things in Afghanistan.

How can the government say that our soldiers died to protect women's rights when Hamid Karzai allows such a law to pass?

If Afghanistan goes ahead with this law, is the government prepared to reconsider its approach in Afghanistan, yes or no?

• (1435)

[English]

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has indicated, and we continue to indicate, that this could have serious implications. Other countries that are helping the people in Afghanistan are also expressing concern.

We are being very clear on this. What we know about this law causes us serious concerns. We are calling on the government of Afghanistan to live up to its obligations, to clarify its position on where it stands and to ensure that the human rights of all people, including and especially the human rights of women, are protected to the full extent of its obligations.

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for years now, the government has ridiculed anyone in the House who dared to question what was going on in Afghanistan. The government said over and over again that the underpinning of this mission was to defend women's rights and to provide education for girls.

After all the sacrifices, after all Canadian families have put on the line, could this really end up being what we are fighting for in Afghanistan? Will the minister stand immediately in the House today and tell us he will take decisive action to force Hamid Karzai—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of International Trade.

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with due respect, we have been very clear on this. I really do not appreciate a question being raised about what our soldiers have been standing for. They have been standing for the protection of human rights. They have been standing for the protection of women. They have been standing for the protection of children. They have literally been giving their lives for that. That is why we are concerned about this.

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#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Francis Valeriotte (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's auto industry is on life support. The auto industry will only succeed

#### Oral Questions

when people start buying and leasing cars again. People buy and lease cars when they have jobs and access to credit.

Canadians are looking to the government for confidence in the industry and they are looking for credit. The government announced a loan guarantee facility in December. We are still waiting for it to become a reality. Waiting until May is not good enough.

When will the government show some real leadership on the issue and do its part to restore consumer confidence?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are moving ahead with the Canadian secured credit facility. That is a \$12 billion program in our budget to support vehicle financing and equipment purchases. We have also increased the limit for the Business Development Bank, which in turn increases credit availability for small businesses so they can buy into fleets.

These are the things for which our government stands. We are proud of our budget and we think it will help the situation. The folks on the other side voted for it, and now they laugh.

They can laugh all they want, but these are serious issues for the people of Canada.

**Mr. Francis Valeriotte (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, nobody on this side is laughing.

Auto retail represents 20% of all retail sales in Canada. The industry says that there will be a dealership a day closing across Canada. Imagine, an average of 85 core jobs will be lost each and every day, touching every community in our country.

This could have been avoided if the minister had heeded the requests of the industry and provided a credit facility to spark sales and leasing sooner. Yet the Conservatives continue to drag their feet.

Why does the minister continue to stonewall consumers when they need credit the most?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our budget was praised by the auto manufacturers. It was praised by the auto parts sector. It was praised by the auto dealers because they saw real action. They saw a government that knew what it was doing and was working toward a solution.

On the other side, we have a Liberal leader who says one thing in British Columbia and another in the House of Commons. We do not know where the Liberals stand on any of these issues. That is not leadership.

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, "We must not miss an opportunity to lead, to confront a crisis that knows no borders". Those are the words of President Obama.

The Americans have a government that is delivering for its people. Canadians are stuck with a government that has been absent, that has failed to provide leadership and take any action.

*Oral Questions*

Will the Conservative government back the warranties for Canadians who own GM and Chrysler cars? The Americans got that assurance on Monday. When will the government step up to the plate and deliver the same for Canadians?

• (1440)

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are examining the American situation. The Americans have not come up with any details.

The hon. member talks about leadership. There is no leadership on the other side. They Liberals remind me of that *Seinfeld* episode where the person knew how to take the car reservation, he just did not know what to do with the car reservation. On that side, they aspire to the leadership, but if they ever got it, they would not know what to do with it. That is not leadership.

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is not a *Seinfeld* episode. This is a reality that Canadians are living day in and day out.

The auto sector is on life support and band-aid solutions will simply not work. The job losses across the country are increasing every day. To date, the government has done nothing to reach out to help those who are struggling.

Chrysler closed its third shift and my constituents in Brampton—Springdale lost their jobs in the thousands. Now thousands of others in my constituency are in limbo.

What will the government do to help?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as was indicated, we are working in concert with the Ontario government, the Dalton McGuinty government. We are working in concert with the Obama administration. He praised Canada's leadership when he made his speech to the people of the United States of America on Monday.

We are leading. We are showing the way. At times, the Obama administration has taken our lead. At other times, we have had those discussions and we are working in concert with it.

That is the kind of collaborative leadership that we show. On the other side, we have a multitude of voices: no actual policy, sound and fury, signifying nothing.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's GDP has shrunk for the sixth consecutive month providing confirmation, as though we needed it, that we are in a recession. The OECD forecasts that Canada's unemployment rate could reach 10.5% next year and is asking that more be done, especially in the way of income support for laid-off workers.

What will it take for the government to realize that, if it were to eliminate the employment insurance waiting period, it could help not only workers who are laid off but the economy as well?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once

again, the Bloc Québécois has been asking the same question about the waiting period for 18 years. It does not look at the whole picture.

Take, for example, a worker who has 30 weeks of employment insurance. If we eliminate the waiting period, the only thing that happens is that benefits start two weeks earlier and stop two weeks earlier.

However, on top of these 30 weeks we are adding five more. If the individual receives \$400 in employment insurance, that results in \$2,000 more in his pockets compared to nothing for the other scenario.

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, only a small number of the unemployed will benefit from an additional five weeks at the end of their benefit period whereas 100% of the unemployed will benefit from the elimination of the waiting period. Furthermore, the two measures are not mutually exclusive.

How can the government defend a measure that leaves the unemployed reeling and without financial resources for two weeks at a time when they need it most

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that we conducted extensive consultations before presenting our action plan. People asked for additional help in terms of employment insurance.

We decided to provide five additional weeks to workers who lose their jobs at a time when our country is in a difficult economic situation because we believe that it is clearly more beneficial for them. Our proposal will help 400,000 individuals who have lost their jobs or are at risk of doing so over the next few months.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, "some corporations, both foreign owned and Canadian, have taken advantage of Canada's tax rules to avoid tax. Others, especially wealthy individuals, use tax havens to help them hide income and evade tax. In all of these cases, working Canadians and small businesses, among others, are left having to pay more tax than they otherwise should. This is simply not fair."

If the Minister of National Revenue agrees with those statements, why does he allow tax loopholes for billionaire companies?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tax havens are indeed a very serious problem.

We tell Canadians that, of course, no matter where they earn their income, they must declare it and pay their fair share of income tax. That said, we are working with an international committee to try to move forward on this issue. We are even trying to organize a meeting with several countries in the near future to see how we can work together to resolve this issue or make some progress in order to protect our tax base.

• (1445)

**Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the statements I quoted earlier were those of his colleague, the finance minister, on page 239 of the budget plan 2007.

If the Minister of National Revenue is worried about people using tax havens to avoid paying the income tax they owe to the Government of Canada, how can he explain the about-face by his government, which is re-implementing a tax loophole that it promised to abolish?

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to have a cheerleading section, but let me answer the question.

We are cracking down on tax havens. In fact, it is a topic of discussion at the G20, as we speak. We are working with other countries to make sure that we provide protection for taxpayers, so taxpayers are taxed on an even basis, whether they are in the country or whether they are in another country. We are providing more resources to National Revenue to make sure that it is able to police these transactions.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### AFGHANISTAN

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of International Trade said there would be serious consequences if the Afghan government maintained its retrograde, reactionary plan with respect to women in Afghanistan. I have a very specific question to put to the minister. What are those consequences?

[English]

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will just briefly preface my response by extending our sympathy to the people, especially in Kandahar province. Only a few hours ago their provincial council building was destroyed by a suicide bomb and their provincial director of education and deputy director of public health were both killed. We extend our sympathies and absolutely condemn this activity.

We are also taking a very strong line against any law in Afghanistan which in any way diminishes the rights of women. We are asking for clarification. Afghan officials are still in the process of clarifying that and our position is very clear.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister talked about the very serious consequences. I asked him what the consequences are and he has not told us.

The question is quite simple. What is Canada going to do to lead the coalition of those people who understand that the passage of these kinds of laws throws into question not only what has happened for Canada but for the Dutch, the French, the British, the 60 countries that signed the Afghan Compact, and all those who sacrificed so much? What is the minister going to do about that? Where is the Canadian leadership?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we could not be clearer. We have expressed in no uncertain terms that we expect the government of Afghanistan to live up to its international treaties to protect the rights of all people, especially

#### Oral Questions

in this case, with this law that is before them, to do the right thing and protect the rights of women.

The Afghanistan legislators themselves are still dealing with it. We have sent a message that is very clear. None of the other countries, which are involved in helping Afghanistan, have suggested that they are taking unilateral preemptive action. I do not think even my friend across the way would suggest unilateral preemptive action.

However, we have made our position very clear.

\* \* \*

#### AIRPORT SECURITY

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, imagine, Transport Canada is allowing individuals with criminal links access to restricted areas at airports. One person is even under investigation for murder.

The minister, feigning outrage, says he will come up with a security solution within 10 days, but the minister knew about the Auditor General's report before yesterday and his government has known about the security issues since 2006.

What is the minister going to accomplish in 10 days that his government was unwilling or unable to accomplish in three years? What is his plan?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in December the Minister of Public Safety and I announced a five point plan to give the RCMP the tools it needs to keep Canadians safe. We are working on a memorandum of understanding with the RCMP. The discussions, in my judgment, have gone on far too long.

We have given 10 days for an agreement to be signed or the RCMP will be called in for discussions with both my colleague and the Minister of Public Safety.

● (1450)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know how those breaches will be resolved. They are not interested in what the Auditor General says about departmental turf wars, lack of criminal intelligence distribution, legal constraints on information sharing, or differences between the RCMP and Transport Canada, or any other excuses.

What Canadians want to know is when are the Ministers of Transport and Public Safety going to work together to fix these outstanding and longstanding problems. Are their egos more important than the safety of Canadians and the security of the country?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are taking the following actions to drive organized crime from Canadian airports. I have spoken of strengthening information, a sharing agreement between Transport Canada and the RCMP.

### Oral Questions

We are exploring legislative initiatives to enhance search and seizure methods. We are reviewing existing security clearances and examining new clearance levels. We are revoking the security clearance when RCMP have provided evidence that a person may pose a security risk. We are working toward strengthening legal provisions for organized crime and ensuring that serious offences are met with serious penalties.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is very fitting that yesterday, on the last day of Fraud Awareness Month, our government introduced identity theft legislation in the senate.

Law enforcement has identified identity theft as one of the fastest growing crimes in North America, with almost 1.7 million Canadian victims. The Canadian Council of Better Business Bureaus has estimated that identity theft costs \$2.5 billion a year to both consumers and businesses.

Could the Minister of Justice explain if this legislation is similar to that introduced during the last Parliament that created three new offences for identity theft?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for Edmonton—Leduc for all the work that he has done on this issue. We all owe him a debt of thanks on this issue.

This bill is similar to Bill C-27 that we introduced in the previous Parliament, but we are not able to get it out of committee because of the tactics of the opposition. I hope that changes. Canada needs new ID theft legislation, like this one.

This is one more step in our fight against crime in this country, and it should have the support of all members of the House of Commons.

\* \* \*

### CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that intelligence extracted through torture is wrong. The RCMP says that it is by definition unreliable. The Arar inquiry condemned it. Even the Conservative government has said that Canada has stopped even considering it as useful. Yesterday a senior CSIS official admitted that the spy organization does not rule out the use of information obtained through torture.

If the government still believes that information through torture is wrong, when will it rein in CSIS and stop this policy?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government does not condone the use of torture in any way. It certainly does not have a place in any kinds of inquisition techniques.

CSIS has made it quite clear that it does not practise the use of torture in information gathering and intelligence gathering. The head of CSIS, Jim Judd, has made it quite clear, as well, that he personally

considers torture to be morally repugnant. That is the leadership that CSIS has provided and that is the practice of CSIS.

\* \* \*

### AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government must come out unequivocally against torture. The Afghanistan Human Rights Independent Commission cites the use of torture, get this, by law enforcement agencies in every province of Afghanistan. Among the practices that it has reported are: electric shocks, hot iron rods, and the use of cable beatings. That is not what we are there fighting for.

How can Canada be an accomplice to the use of torture by the police and the army? Will the government, in no uncertain terms, tell President Karzai that Canada will not support the use of torture?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House certainly embrace the concept that the member has said. We absolutely condone the use of torture.

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

**Hon. Peter MacKay:** This particular issue has been discussed on occasion.

By the way, the enhanced agreement that this government put in place does ensure regular inspections. This requires close collaboration with the Afghan government, which ultimately bears the responsibility for this. We continue to have close contact with them on a whole myriad of issues, including this.

\* \* \*

● (1455)

[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the American representative in Bonn, Todd Stern, said in regard to the negotiations, “the United States is going to be powerfully and fervently engaged in this process”. The Conservatives have always hidden behind the excuse that they needed to wait and see what the United States was going to propose before they could act.

Now that we know President Obama is determined to make progress in the fight against climate change, what is the government waiting for to do the same?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the story today is not in Bonn but right here in Ottawa. This afternoon I presented the automobile industry with regulatory standards limiting exhaust emissions. These standards reflect both the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and the fuel economy standards in the United States. That is the story today. The Bloc should support our efforts and objectives regarding industry and the environment.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the story today is also in Bonn where the government is doing nothing. That is the reality.

*Oral Questions*

It is certainly true that we need to take the particular situation of each country into account. That means we also need to take Quebec's situation into account. Its manufacturers reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by 24% between 1990 and 2006 but that might not count for anything if the current international reference year is dropped.

Will the government offer credits to companies that have reduced their greenhouse gases since 1990 so that they can trade them on the carbon exchange, or will it favour the oil industry to the detriment of Quebec's manufacturing industry?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, everything is always partisan with the Bloc.

[*English*]

It is hard to take the Bloc members seriously. In terms of peculiarities, their peculiarity in the House of Commons is that they signed a coalition document in December binding themselves to a North American cap and trade. Two months later, they support in this House a private member's bill that is entirely inconsistent with a North American cap and trade regime.

How can anybody take seriously what comes from that end of the House of Commons?

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has left local Service Canada employees alone with the EI crisis. The posting for more citizen service agents started in March 2008. One year later and still many new employees have not been hired.

People need help to get through this EI crisis. Why is the Conservative government not supporting Service Canada and hiring new employees? What is it waiting for?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we fully understand the difficulty that Canadians are going through at this difficult economic time. That is why this government will do what it needs to do to ensure the help is there when they need it. Our minister has announced \$60 million that will be applied specifically to ensure the resources are there to have the benefits flow as quickly as possible. We are very thankful that our employees at Service Canada are doing their utmost to ensure that happens.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are not even able to fill the positions posted in 2008 and they think they are making a difference today. The Conservatives refused to act even though they knew the economic crisis was coming and many people would be thrown onto employment insurance.

After more than a year, many citizen service agent positions have still not been filled. How can we believe what the Conservatives say?

After a year of inaction, can we expect more of the same when it comes to hiring new employees to process employment insurance applications?

Will workers also have to wait another year before getting help? Will workers who need employment insurance get the necessary assistance immediately?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will say once again that in view of the fact that a lot more people have applied for employment insurance, we have instituted special measures to accelerate the processing of applications: we have invested \$60 million, hired more resources, among other things, and made changes so that people who have to fill out a form can do so electronically to speed up the process.

It is the same for people who benefit from work sharing and who, instead of having to fill out a form every two weeks, will only have to do so if there is a change.

We are definitely acting.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**AIR CANADA**

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, another week, another group of Canadian workers let down by the government.

ACE Aviation owns 75% of Air Canada and claims the recession has left it with zero dollars for the debt-ridden pension fund of Air Canada's employees. Not only does ACE Aviation have \$388 million in cash reserves, but in 2007 it paid its CEO \$47 million in bonuses. Where is the fairness for Air Canada workers?

When will the government stop allowing big corporations to hide behind the recession and start standing up to protect the pensions of hard-working Canadians?

• (1500)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, we are tremendously concerned about the workers at Air Canada. Air Canada provides important civil aviation services across the country and indeed in every part of the world.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance is currently looking at the pension liabilities of federally regulated pensions. That is obviously a central part of the challenge that Air Canada is facing. I know the member for Macleod will do a great job and that he will be responding in very short order.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is cold comfort for Air Canada workers.

Air Canada has the money to pay that former CEO millions of dollars in bonuses, but not enough for employee pension funds. This is a simple matter of priorities for ACE, and more important, for the government.

We know whose side we are on. Whose side is the government on, the CEO with the millions of dollars in bonuses, or the workers who will lose their pensions that they have been counting on for dignity in their retirement?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unequivocally this government stands on the side of hard-working Canadians, Canadians who work hard, who play by the rules, who want to be able to count on their pension plans for a stable retirement. The government is currently reviewing this important issue and will be reporting back in very short order.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for several days now, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie has been rewriting the dictionary of synonyms and finding all manner of names to call the members from Quebec who do not think the same way as he.

His behaviour does nothing to improve the image of politicians, and we could very easily do without it.

Yesterday, the Bloc leader was even contradicted by the Quebec finance minister and the government of Quebec, when they clearly explained that the Quebec tax was not harmonized.

Can my colleague, the honourable Minister of Public Works and Government Services, at last show him how open federalism applies in this case?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I see some reactions, but I would like to read two things said by the Quebec finance minister yesterday in the Quebec National Assembly: “I expect, Mr. Speaker, to completely harmonize things here as in Ontario and then to obtain the \$2.6 billion in compensation.” She went on to add “We are going to propose (to the federal Minister of Finance) the adoption of exactly the same agreement as he signed with Ontario—”

Contrary to what the Bloc Québécois is saying, or the hon. member for Outremont, the Quebec sales tax is not harmonized, as the Ontario one will be. We prefer to be at the service of the population rather than to be token spectators, because there is nothing token about representing Quebec.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Auditor General's report, the Conservative government's delay in filling vacancies on the IRB has resulted in a record refugee backlog. Since the Conservatives took office, we have witnessed a 50% decrease in finalized claims, an increase in processing times, long delays in rendering decisions, and thousands of lives being negatively affected.

Why did the minister ignore the recommendations of the IRB? Why did he fail to reappoint over 50% of the qualified individuals whose terms have now expired?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in point of fact, this government took a dramatic departure from the kind of patronage

system that the Liberals had for appointments to the IRB. We gave to the IRB the responsibility for pre-screening candidates through an exhaustive process of exams and interviews before recommending them to the government. Consequently, appointments slowed down for a certain period of time, but I am pleased to announce to the House we are now operating at nearly 95% occupancy on the IRB.

There are other reasons for the backlog, including the one-third increase in refugee claims last year. We need to address that as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MONTREAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Montreal airport authority has made the unilateral decision to alter the way taxi services to and from the Montreal Dorval airport are being managed. The Montreal taxi industry is unanimously opposed to the approach taken by the airport authority.

Will the minister impose a moratorium on the bidding process and bring to the table his departmental officials, the airport authority and representatives of the Montreal taxi industry, in order to break this impasse?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's airports operate independently and at arm's length from the government. The member has raised a concern with respect to the airport authority in the city of Montreal. I would be very happy to sit with him after question period to learn more about that concern and to take it back to the relevant authority.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if the president of Visa Canada has his way, everyday consumers and small business are going to be further fleeced with yet higher fees. Yesterday in Toronto, the president of Visa called on the government to leave consumers open to gouging and rip-offs. It is time the government took bold action to regulate the credit and debit market and tell Visa that fleecing consumers during the recession is off limits.

Whose side is the government on, the side of hard-working Canadians and small business, or the side of credit card companies like Visa?

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that brings to mind the question whose side is that hon. member on, because we actually put in a number of suggestions in the budget that we are willing to do to protect consumers. That hon. member voted against the budget. We want to require a minimum grace period on new purchases made on credit cards. He and his party voted against it. As a matter of fact, they never even read it.

*Private Members' Business***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, only hours ago the Minister of the Environment made an announcement relating to the automotive industry that advances both our industrial and environmental agendas.

Today, 27% of Canada's carbon emissions come from transportation. Can the minister advise the House on how he intends to regulate those emissions?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I advised the House of the names of three distinguished Canadians who have taken on leadership responsibilities in the working groups under the clean energy dialogue.

Today I can advise the House that Canada has become the first federal authority in North America to impose tailpipe emission regulations for carbon emissions from vehicles beginning in 2011.

Our carbon emissions approach will be harmonized completely with the approach being followed by the Americans. This is continental leadership, environmental leadership, making our industry more competitive and fulfilling our obligation with respect to the environment.

\* \* \*

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, in my prebudget submission, the mayor of Truro, the mayor of Colchester County, and the province of Nova Scotia all highlighted the Truro civic centre as a high priority for stimulation money. The province, municipality and the communities have all provided their contributions. On March 12, I raised this issue in the House of Commons about the federal contribution. Since then, similar projects have been announced. I wonder if the minister could let Truro know when it might expect an answer on its application for the civic centre?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the representation the member opposite made to me on this yesterday.

Last week we met with the Minister of National Defence and with representatives of the Nova Scotia government. Step by step we are identifying priorities and moving forward. I would be very happy to take his project to the table.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have asked all members of Parliament for advice and suggestions on infrastructure projects in their ridings and I appreciate that the member has come forward with one.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**CLIMATE CHANGE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT**

The House resumed from March 26 consideration of the motion that Bill C-311, An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** Order. It being 3:02 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, March 31, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-311 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1515)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 47)

**YEAS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bachand
Bagnell	Bains
Beaudin	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bevilacqua
Bevington	Bigras
Black	Bonsant
Bouchard	Bourgeois
Brunelle	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Coderre	Comartin
Cotler	Crête
Crombie	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
D'Amours	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	DeBellefeuille
Demers	Deschamps
Desnoyers	Dewar
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Dorion
Dosanjh	Dryden
Duceppe	Dufour
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking
Faille	Folco
Foote	Fry
Gagnon	Gameau
Gaudet	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Guarnieri	Guay
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	Harris (St. John's East)
Holland	Hughes
Hyer	Jennings
Julian	Kennedy
Laforest	Laframboise
Lavallée	Layton
Lee	Lemay
Leslie	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Masse
Mathysen	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McTeague	Ménard (Hochelaga)
Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin)	Mendes
Minna	Mourani
Mulcair	Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Oliphant	Ouellet
Pacetti	Paillé
Paquette	Patry
Pearson	Plamondon
Pomerleau	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Ratansi	Regan
Rodriguez	Rota

*Points of Order*

Roy  
Savoie  
Sgro  
Silva  
Szabo  
Tonks  
Valeriotte  
Völpe  
Wilfert  
Zarac— 141

Russell  
Scarpaleggia  
Siksay  
Simson  
Thibeault  
Trudeau  
Vincent  
Wasylycia-Leis  
Wrzesnewskyj

## NAYS

## Members

Abbott  
Albrecht  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Baird  
Bernier  
Blackburn  
Block  
Boughen  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Carrie  
Chong  
Clement  
Davidson  
Dechert  
Devolin  
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
Fast  
Galipeau  
Glover  
Goodyear  
Grewal  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
Holder  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kent  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lauzon  
Lemieux  
Lukiwski  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Nicholson  
O'Connor  
Obhrai  
Paradis  
Petit  
Prentice  
Raitt  
Rathgeber  
Richards  
Ritz  
Scheer  
Shea  
Shory  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Thompson  
Toews  
Tweed  
Van Kesteren  
Vellacott  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Wong  
Yelich

Ablonczy  
Allison  
Anders  
Ashfield  
Benoit  
Bezan  
Blaney  
Boucher  
Braid  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Brown (Barrie)  
Cadman  
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Casson  
Clarke  
Cummins  
Day  
Del Mastro  
Dreeschen  
Dykstra  
Fletcher  
Gallant  
Goldring  
Gourde  
Guergis  
Hawn  
Hill  
Hoeppner  
Jean  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Komarnicki  
Lake  
Lebel  
Lobb  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
McColeman  
Menzies  
Miller  
Norlock  
O'Neill-Gordon  
Oda  
Payne  
Poilievre  
Preston  
Rajotte  
Reid  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Schellenberger  
Shipley  
Smith  
Stanton  
Sweet  
Tilson  
Trost  
Uppal  
Van Loan  
Verner  
Warawa  
Watson  
Woodworth  
Young— 128

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

\* \* \*

[English]

## POINTS OF ORDER

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to ensure there is no confusion on a question in question period. I want to clearly state for the record that the word is “condemn” and not “condone”.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Minister of Immigration was asked a question by the official opposition critic about the backlog at the Immigration Refugee Board hearings. You will recall the question.

In his answer, the minister suggested that it was the government that amended the IRB appointments process. I want to correct the record. In fact, it was the former prime minister, Paul Martin, who insisted that the IRB be restructured. along with a series of other boards, agencies, commissions and crown corporations to drive up transparency and to ensure there was a distance between the chairmanship and the CEO functions. We thank Paul Martin.

**The Speaker:** I am not sure that the hon. member for Ottawa South has raised a point of order. It sounded more like a matter of debate to me.

● (1520)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this intervention was a matter of debate. In fact, it was this government, pursuant to recommendations from the public appointments commission, that adopted a new process with the IRB, not the former government.

**The Speaker:** What I would suggest to the two hon. members is that they put their question down for one of those late shows and have some fun debating it at another time rather than on points of order after question period because it does not sound like a point of order to me.

\* \* \*

## CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the 2008 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal annual report.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, OSCE, regarding the election observation mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Georgia, January 1 to 7, 2008.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two reports to table today.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian-NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the June session 2008, held in Berlin, Germany from May 23 to May 27.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I also have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian-NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation to the visit of the science and technology committee held in Ottawa and Montreal July 7 to 10, 2008.

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three more reports to present.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, OSCE, to the bureau meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Copenhagen, Denmark, April 14, 2008.

Also pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, OSCE, regarding the election observation mission of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Georgia, May 17 to 22, 2008.

Finally, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, OSCE, to the seventh winter meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Vienna, Austria, February 21 and 22, 2008.

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on International Trade which recommends that the government vigorously defend Quebec's pesticide management code.

#### FINANCE

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's budget for 2009-10.

### Routine Proceedings

## FEDERAL COURTS ACT

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-354, An Act to amend the Federal Courts Act (international promotion and protection of human rights).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I should note at the outset that this very innovative bill was developed in close cooperation with Nick Milanovic, a research professor with the Department of Law at Carleton University, and Mark Rowlinson, the counsel for the United Steelworkers. Mr. Milanovic's daughter and mother are in the galleries today.

The bill would ensure corporate accountability for Canadian firms operating abroad. It would broaden the mandate of the Federal Court so that it protects foreign citizens against rights violations committed by corporations operating outside of Canada. This bill would hold violators accountable for gross human rights abuses, regardless of where they take place, and it would allow lawsuits in Canada for a host of universal human rights violations.

Essentially, this bill would provide legal protection for those in other countries who are the victims of gross human rights violations. It is supported by the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers.

I hope this innovative bill, which replicates what happens in the United States under the alien tort claims act, will be receiving the support of Parliament.

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

\* \* \*

•(1525)

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-355, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cyberbullying).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce this private member's bill, seconded by the member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe. The bill was developed with the aid of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. It would amend the Criminal Code to clarify that cyberbullying is an offence.

Cyberbullying is the use of electronic devices to harass, libel and send false messages, and is a major problem in Canadian schools. In a recent University of Toronto survey of high school students in the greater Toronto area, 50% of students reported that they had been bullied online in the last three months. Cyberbullying results in physical and psychological harm and, in some cases, even suicide.

*Routine Proceedings*

My bill would provide a clarification of the application of existing criminal law to cyberbullying. It would amend three sections: section 264, dealing with criminal harassment; section 298, dealing with inflammatory libel; and section 372, subsections 1 to 3, dealing with false messages.

This clarification of cyberbullying as an offence, in conjunction with a campaign of public awareness that focuses on appropriate use of computers and prevention of cyberbullying, could do a great deal to minimize the harm to many young people today.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INCOME TAX ACT**

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.)** asked for leave to introduce Bill C-356, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (volunteers).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Willowdale, for supporting my bill. This bill deals with a proposed \$500 tax credit for volunteers, to recognize the time they donate in their communities. We know that many people in our communities donate their time to charities, festivals and various groups such as golden age clubs. There comes a time when the work done by these individuals in our communities has to be recognized. Very often, they take on tasks others cannot tackle and they help those most in need in our communities.

A tax credit could be an incentive for them and a way for the Government of Canada to let them know how much it appreciates what they do for all their fellow citizens. This would surely encourage more people to get involved in volunteer work to advance the important causes dear to the hearts of the various populations we represent in this great country of ours.

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

\* \* \*

● (1530)

[English]

**PETITIONS**

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition today, signed at a Hamilton forum on job losses, co-chaired by our federal leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, and Andrea Horvath, the newly elected NDP leader in Ontario.

The workers signed the petition almost to a person, especially after listening to Shannon Horner-Shepherd's heartbreaking story about her struggle to support her disabled daughter, Gabby, and her other three children after losing her well-paying job at U.S. Steel.

The petitioners point out that they have paid into EI all of their working lives, but now that they need the safety net they themselves built, it is no longer there for them.

The petitioners are therefore calling for a comprehensive overhaul of the employment insurance system. Specifically the petitioners are

calling for a standardized 360 hours to qualify, an increased benefit period of at least 50 weeks, the elimination of the two week waiting period, benefits at 60% of normal earnings based on the best 12 weeks and a bigger investment in training and retraining.

To that end, they call upon the government to respect the will of Parliament and act immediately on the comprehensive NDP motion, which was passed in the House of Commons, to restore the integrity of the employment insurance system.

These petitioners are keenly aware that successive Liberal and Conservative governments diverted \$54 billion of worker and employer contributions to EI and used that money to pay down the debt and deficit, instead of using it to provide help for the involuntarily unemployed during economic downturns. That misappropriation only heightens the moral obligation for the government to restore the integrity of the EI system.

While I know it is against the rules of this chamber for members of Parliament to endorse a petition, I very much welcome the opportunity to present this petition on behalf of the over 300,000 newly unemployed Canadians since the last election.

[Translation]

## FIRST NATIONS

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to present a petition. We have with us today in the House several members of the first nations.

I am tabling a petition signed by 22,731 members of the first nations who absolutely want post-secondary education to be a government priority. These petitioners call on the government to address this critical issue and to honour its responsibility to provide adequate funding with respect to the right of first nations to post-secondary education, by taking immediate steps to follow up on the recommendations contained in the report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development published in February 2007.

[English]

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on EI reforms.

The petitioners call upon the government to amend the Employment Insurance Act to qualify for EI benefits at 360 hours, increase benefit duration to 50 weeks, provide additional benefits if unemployment exceeds 6.5%, eliminate the two-week waiting period, provide benefits at 60% of normal earnings and more innovative use of EI such as work-sharing.

## DARFUR

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition on behalf of my constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country, calling for immediate action to bring peace to Darfur.

The petitioners state that they know the shocking and unbearable situation in Darfur runs counter to Canada's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights as well as Canada's principled position on freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

They ask that we take a bold and urgent stance to use all diplomatic channels and appeal to the international community, especially China and Saudi Arabia, to pressure the Sudanese government to end the destruction in Darfur.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of a significant number of Quebec residents, including those of my own riding of Mount Royal.

The petition expresses its alarm at the escalating state-backed anti-Semitism in Venezuela, including attacks on Jewish persons, property and religious institutions, such as the firebombing of a synagogue in Caracas. It also expresses its alarm that members of the Jewish community in Venezuela fear for their personal safety and their denial of religious freedom.

It acknowledges that the Canadian people, who have the strongest feelings of friendship with the people of Venezuela, regret these recent developments and hold the Venezuelan people in their highest esteem.

It calls upon the Government of Canada to express its outrage at government-sponsored anti-Semitic attacks directly to the government of Venezuela in international fora, to demand an independent investigation of such attacks and to act upon the recent London declaration of the interparliamentary coalition to combat anti-Semitism.

It also calls upon governments to condemn such state-backed anti-Semitism, to work with our international partners to ensure the protection of the Venezuelan Jewish community and to safeguard against further human rights violations, in particular, those that may be authorized by state officials and state actors.

• (1535)

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I have three petitions from constituents from all across Canada. There are hundreds of names on them.

The petitioners are in support of my Bill C-268, mandatory minimums for people who traffic children under the age of 18 years.

They call upon all members to support that bill.

## CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have pages of additional names of Canadians living in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners call upon Parliament to not push any further with the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement until a full and independent human rights impact assessment is done.

Colombia has the highest rate of assassination of human rights defenders and union leaders in the entire world. The petitioners believe this is not the appropriate use of our trade negotiations, to push ahead with an agreement with a country that has such widespread human rights violations.

These pages of petitioners add to the thousands upon thousands of Canadians who have already signed petitions to the government and to Parliament, asking that there be no further push ahead with the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement.

## RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition to protect unborn victims of crime.

The petitioners note that in current federal criminal law, an unborn child is not recognized as a victim with respect to violent crimes. They note that the vast majority of the public supports laws that would protect unborn children from acts of violence against their mothers, which would also injure or kill the child in her womb. They believe that forcing upon a pregnant woman the death or injury of her unborn child is a violation of a woman's right to give life to her child and protect her child.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to enact legislation that would recognize unborn children as separate victims when they are injured or killed during the commission of an offence against their mothers, allowing two charges to be laid in a case like that, instead of one.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I also rise, like my colleague from Mount Royal, to present this petition, which deals with escalating attacks on Jewish communal institutions in Venezuela.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to redouble its efforts to ensure the protection of human rights in Venezuela in general and, in particular, to express its outrage at government-sponsored anti-Semitic attacks directly to the government Venezuela and in international fora, to demand an independent investigation of the attacks on the Jewish community and to act upon the London declaration of the interparliamentary coalition to combat anti-Semitism.

They call for government response to violations, such as those that have occurred under the leadership of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. They also call upon the government to work with our international partners to ensure the protection of the Venezuela Jewish community and to safeguard against further human rights violations, in particular, those authorized by the state or state actors.

## HEALTH

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month, a month dedicated to fight cancer. On this first day of April, it is my honour to present a very extensive petition from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

*Points of Order*

The petitioners are extremely concerned that pesticides are associated with brain cancer, birth defects and childhood leukemia, that pesticide exposure is associated with cancer risks for adults and children and that people can be exposed to pesticides by absorption through the skin, through inhalation, breathing into the lungs, swallowing, by eating residues on vegetables and fruits, drinking or touching hands to mouth. They state that leading health organizations have urged a ban on non-essential pesticides and that organic lawn products without pesticides also produce beautiful properties and lawns.

Therefore, they call upon the government to ban non-essential pesticides across Canada.

• (1540)

CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to present a petition calling for a halt to negotiations on the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement. There are numerous petitioners, as the member for Burnaby—New Westminster pointed out.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to halt the current Colombia free trade negotiations until such time that the human rights impact assessment is developed and that the agreement be renegotiated along the principles of fair trade, which would take into account the full environmental, social and human impact and sincerely respect labour rights and the rights of all parties affected.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 14 and 61 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 14—**Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With respect to gas and diesel prices: (a) is the government planning to implement the Energy Cost Benefit program, announced in October 2005; (b) what measures is the government implementing to build a greener economy, promote transparency in markets, promote alternative energy sources and improve fuel economy; (c) what steps will the government take to greater transparency in markets, fuel efficiency improvements and fuel alternatives; (d) is the government planning to index both the old age security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement payments to offset the increasing gas prices; and (e) what is the government's specific plan with respect to research investments to develop renewable and alternative fuels, such as cellulose-based ethanol and hydrogen-based fuels, to reduce Canadians' reliance on global fuel markets?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 61—**Ms. Olivia Chow:**

With respect to the Toronto Port Authority, will the government order the release of the hospitality and travel expenses incurred in the last two years (2007, 2008) by its former CEO and, if so, what were those expenses?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I ask all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Notices of Motions for the Production of Papers Nos. P-3 and P-4 in the name of the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Motion P-3

That a humble Address be presented to Her Excellency praying that she will cause to be laid before this House a copy of all agreements reached between Industry Canada and Vale Inco relating to the purchase of Inco.

Motion P-4

That a humble Address be presented to Her Excellency praying that she will cause to be laid before this House a copy of all agreements reached between Industry Canada and Xstrata relating to the purchase of Falconbridge.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, the requested documents may not be disclosed in accordance with the confidentiality provisions in section 36 of the Investment Canada Act. I therefore request that the hon. member withdraw those notices of motions.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is very important for my community. We do not have anything to hide. Obviously the government does. I therefore ask that these be transferred for debate.

**The Speaker:** Motions Nos. P-3 and P-4 are therefore transferred for debate.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

SECOND REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order concerning the report of the Standing Committee on Finance that was tabled just moments ago.

I submit that the report is out of order as it is beyond the mandate of the committee as set out in Standing Order 108.

On Tuesday of this week, a motion was moved at the finance committee regarding funding of the Library of Parliament. The chairman of the finance committee ruled the motion out of order on the grounds that it went beyond the mandate of the finance committee.

Standing Order 108(2), the standing order governing the committee's mandate, clearly states that the Standing Committee on Finance is

empowered to review and report on:

- (a) the statute law relating to the department...;
- (b) the program and policy objectives of the department and its effectiveness in the implementation of same;
- (c) the immediate, medium and long-term expenditure plans and the effectiveness of implementation of same by the department;
- (d) an analysis of the relative success of the department, as measured by the results obtained as compared with its stated objectives; and
- (e) other matters, relating to the mandate, management, organization or operation of the department....

It is therefore clear that the allocation of operating funds to the parliamentary library, an organ of Parliament not of the Department of Finance, is a matter outside the purview of the standing committee's mandate.

Notwithstanding this fact, the opposition overturned the chairman's ruling that the committee's mandate must be respected.

As a consequence of the opposition setting aside the rules of the House, the House is now seized with an invalid report.

While the Speaker often declines to interfere with committee proceedings, he is obliged to intervene when these proceedings go beyond the powers conferred upon committees by the House.

At page 879 of Marleau and Montpetit, it states:

Committees are entitled to report to the House only with respect to matters within their mandate. When reporting to the House, committees must indicate the authority under which the study was done (i.e., the Standing Order or the order of reference). If the committee's report has exceeded or has been outside its order of reference, the Speaker has judged such a report, or the offending section, to be out of order.

Mr. Speaker, you made a ruling on March 14, 2008, regarding the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. You ruled at that time that the report was out of order because it clearly was not within the mandate of the committee as spelled out in Standing Order 108.

At that time, Mr. Speaker, you will remember, many committees were operating outside of the rules and often were overturning decisions of chairmen, as was done at the finance committee on Tuesday. As a result, you took it upon yourself to make a statement in this House. You expressed concerns about procedurally sound decisions by committee chairs being overturned by majorities of committees.

In your March 14, 2008, ruling, you stated:

appeals of decisions by chairs appear to have proliferated, with the result that having decided to ignore our usual procedure and practices, committees have found themselves in situations that verge on anarchy.

I refer to this particular ruling because of what took place in the last Parliament. In that Parliament, many committees of this House became dysfunctional. In fact, the opposition's illegal use of committees to smear the reputations of members and of the public was so widespread that it was one of the reasons the last Parliament was dissolved.

Given that we are in a minority situation again in this Parliament, we must learn from our mistakes of the past.

### *Points of Order*

In a ruling on March 29, 2007, you made a statement in the context of a minority Parliament. You said:

...neither the political realities of the moment nor the sheer force of numbers should force us to set aside the values inherent in the parliamentary conventions and procedures by which we govern our deliberations.

That advice is as valid in this, the 40th Parliament, as it was in the 39th. You need to intervene in this matter because we risk returning to those dysfunctional days of the 39th Parliament. I think we can all agree that the public does not want us to do that.

Thank you for your attention to that, Mr. Speaker, and I would urge you to consider this matter very carefully and give us your considered opinion as soon as possible.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):**

Mr. Speaker, I deplore and regret having to intervene on this matter today. I find it rather ironic that the Conservative party is not supporting a motion to ensure that the parliamentary budget officer has the wherewithal to be as effective as possible. My colleague is claiming that the motion with respect to the parliamentary budget officer passed by the Standing Committee on Finance is beyond the mandate of the committee. I do not agree with this statement.

Before beginning on the procedural aspect of this matter, permit me to remind my colleague of the promises and claims made by his own party regarding the position of parliamentary budget officer. In the 2006 election campaign, the Conservative party complained of the lack of transparency in the budget process. After describing the inaccuracy of the Liberal party's budget forecasts, the Conservatives concluded that it was impossible to demand an accounting from the government if Parliament was unaware of the state of the public finances.

As a solution to this problem, the Conservatives proposed that a Conservative government would create the parliamentary office—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I do not want to hear arguments as to whether these officers should be paid. This is a point of order before us today. I remind the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain of that.

I would like arguments as to whether the position put forward by the parliamentary secretary and the government House leader is correct.

Does this report come under the mandate of the Standing Committee on Finance? That is the only question before us at the moment, and it is on this question I want to hear the member's arguments.

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest:** Mr. Speaker, I was coming to that point. That is what I was saying as a preamble, and I was getting to the procedural matter. The position of parliamentary budget officer was created under the very first bill introduced in the House by the new Conservative government during the 39th Parliament, Bill C-2. Today, however, the Conservative party is waging a procedural debate on the role of the parliamentary budget officer.

### *Government Orders*

Let us be clear. The real problem is not a procedural one. The real problem is as follows. Like many other public officials, the parliamentary budget officer upsets the Conservatives, who find a number of its statements and figures contradicted by this senior official. That is the whole problem.

Every time the parliamentary budget officer intervenes, he contradicts the government. He even told the Standing Committee on Finance that he was to present reports to the standing committee and that, to do so, he needed documents put out by the Department of Finance. He went on to say to the committee that the Department of Finance had not given him all the documents.

Clearly, there is a problem with equity and transparency on the part of the government. It is absolutely essential that the Standing Committee on Finance make a recommendation in that regard. Bill C-2, which established the position of Parliamentary Budget Officer, added to the Parliament of Canada Act section 79.2(b)(ii), which states:

The mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is to

...when requested to do so by any of the following committees, undertake research for that committee into the nation's finances and economy:

...the Standing Committee on Finance of the House of Commons or, in the event that there is not a Standing Committee on Finance, the appropriate committee of the House of Commons—

The finance committee is indeed the one which hears the Parliamentary Budget Officer most often. It is the committee to which he reports. We cannot see how the sales pitch for this point of order could hold. Since the Parliamentary Budget Officer reports to the Standing Committee on Finance and this committee needs the Parliamentary Budget Officer's insight on the budget, we cannot see how it could be unable to ensure that this officer is provided with what he needs to do his job properly.

It is totally absurd to oppose a motion passed by the Standing Committee on Finance, arguing that it is normal, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer provides us with information, which means that this absolutely has to be the committee reviewing the needs of that officer. As I said earlier, the last time he appeared before the committee, the Parliamentary Budget Officer told us that the Department of Finance had not been transparent, in that it failed to provide him with all to the documents he needed.

● (1550)

[*English*]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I am truly sorry that we have to waste Parliament's time listening to such a frivolous argument.

The point is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, and you identified it yourself. The report and the actions by the finance committee, particularly the opposition members in overturning the Chair's ruling, are clearly outside the mandate of the committee.

The budget officer is not responsible to the Department of Finance. He reports to the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament. Unfortunately, my hon. friend has either deliberately ignored that premise or he is trying to cause some concerns within the government ranks with respect to the budget officer.

Mr. Speaker, you have ruled effectively before in this area. I would with great respect ask you to do so again, as quickly as possible, if not immediately.

**The Speaker:** I will take the matter under advisement.

[*Translation*]

I will get back to the House, hopefully tomorrow, with a ruling on the point of order by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and on the suggestions by the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT

The House resumed from March 30 consideration of the motion that Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to participate in the debate on Bill S-3, a bill that would amend the Energy Efficiency Act.

The basic premise of this bill is to broaden the scope of the government's ability to regulate energy-using consumer products. We can all think of a whole range of consumer products that people have in their homes, whether it be washing machines, dryers, fridges or so many others. The government already does regulate many of these under the existing act, through standards, through labelling, and through the promotion of energy-efficient products.

Indeed, this is something that needs to be broadened, because there are so many new appliances and new electronic gadgets these days.

So many of us in this House, of course, use the BlackBerry, which is a great Canadian-made product from my wife's home area of Kitchener—Waterloo. I must say, of course, that I am proud that Research in Motion also has a building in my riding of Halifax West. That is an interesting connection that my wife and I have with our hometowns.

There are so many items we have in our homes that use power, and there are programs when one is shopping for these things. One can look for the EnerGuide label or the Energy Star label to find out how, for example, one fridge compares to other fridges in its energy consumption, or whether a computer monitor falls within the group that is low enough in terms of energy use to have received the Energy Star. Those are good programs that have been around for a while.

The issue of standby power is an important one. That is one of the things this bill purports to regulate. That is to say, we all know of things in our homes that use power all the time. It may be only a little power, but they are still using power. Anything that has a light on all the time is using power. Often our televisions, even though they are turned off, are still using some power unless they are unplugged.

*Government Orders*

I can think of things like the new digital video recorders that use quite a bit of power, I gather, particularly if they are recording. Even if they are not recording, there is still a light on. The VCR has a light on, the stereo system has a little light on, and all these things use power.

Even an intercom system is often on all the time. These things are using power.

What this bill will allow the government to do by regulation is limit the amount of standby power that these products can use. Many of these products today use in the range of six to eight watts. At the same time, some of the new products are able to use as little as one watt of power per product. That would be a much better standard to apply to all of them. In fact, that is part of the plan, from what I hear of the government, and that is a good thing.

There are so many things: computers, battery chargers, adapters, stereos, TVs, and microwaves. If a charger for a cellphone is left plugged into the wall, it will become warm. The adapter will become warm. It becomes warm for a reason. That is because it is using power.

One thing that is worthwhile to mention during the debate on this bill is that it is a good opportunity to remind people to unplug these things. It is costing money and it is using power unnecessarily. We all know there are many good reasons not to do that, notably to save money and to help the environment.

In fact, Natural Resources Canada has an office of energy efficiency that has looked into this. They say that as much as 10% of household electrical consumption in Canada comes from this standby power issue. In other words, we could each theoretically reduce as much as 10% of our electrical bills by unplugging these things.

They say that if we did this and dealt with this issue, it could be the equivalent of turning off the power in 300,000 homes. In other words, 300,000 homes worth of electricity per year could be saved across the country. When we are looking at issues like blackouts in Ontario and problems when there are peak energy uses in the summer in particular, we can all see the importance of having that kind of room in the electrical grid.

• (1555)

However, as many have pointed out before, it is not simply what is in this bill that is of concern here and that we ought to be looking at. In fact, what is not in the bill is of major concern.

The measures in this bill were originally in Bill C-30 in the previous Parliament, the government's so-called clean air act which purported to deal with climate change. A special committee of the House was set aside to deal with the bill. Once it actually got hold of it and made a variety of amendments, it did become what could realistically be called a clean air act, but it certainly was not that when it was proposed by the government. It was the opposition amendments that put it in a form that would have actually achieved something.

What did we see? Did that bill go forward? No, it did not go forward. In fact, the Prime Minister prorogued Parliament and called an election. We have not seen the bill come back from the

government. We have had lots of comments from the government about dealing with climate change which that bill purported to do, but no action.

In June 2005 the previous government actually listed in the *Canada Gazette* the six major greenhouse gases. That is the beginning of the 18 month process of regulating those greenhouse gases.

There is no reason why the following Conservative government that took over in February 2006 could not have regulated to limit the production, the emission, of those various greenhouse gases within that 18 month period.

Now it is more than three and a half years since those were listed, and we still see no regulations from the government in relation to the limiting of greenhouse gases. We have heard the government talk about cap and trade, we heard that it has a so called "Turning the Corner" plan, but we do not see any corner being turned. We do not see any actual regulations, any real action to deal with greenhouse gases or climate change. That is a concern.

The total lack of trust Canadians have in the government is also a concern. The kind of thing I have talked about is one of the reasons they have so little trust in the government. When it actually comes to bringing forth regulations to ensure the impact of amendments outlined in this bill are actually felt, we do not know what the government will do. This bill does allow the government to regulate in a whole variety of areas.

One of the questions we have heard during debate, both in the Senate and here, is this question of whether or not this bill could be used, this law could be used, to regulate automobile emissions. Well, the wording is very broad. I had a look at the law that exists now and it says in section 200, the definition section, "energy-using product" means a prescribed product".

Actually, that means that the government can set out in regulation what products are included as energy using products that fall within the scope of this bill. In other words, it could certainly regulate automobiles, as they do use an energy product: gasoline obviously, ethanol, even hydrogen these days or electricity. All these things are using energy. In theory, then, the government could certainly regulate automobiles through this bill, although we would expect it to use other legislation that is on the books to do that. It is interesting that that is one of the options.

The point I am making is that we do not know what the government will do with these regulations. We do not know if it will take any action at all. Its record so far in regulating on the environment is so weak that it is hard for Canadians to have any confidence that this bill will actually be used to do anything worthwhile.

The idea of the bill is a fine idea, but it is how it is used. The bill is all about giving that power to regulate to the government. That is an important point.

*Government Orders*

There are also concerns about the Conservative government's complete failure to understand that energy efficiency is a fundamental issue not just for the environment but for the economy. Dealing with these things is important in terms of where we go in the economy. What was lacking, for example, in the budget was an understanding of the importance of that.

In the U.S. we have seen the Obama administration's package for economic stimulus. We have seen six times as much spending per capita on the energy efficiency side of things and renewable energies as here in the Conservative government package. That was disappointing. I think the government ought to consider that, reconsider its position, and recognize that it is important for the economy that we become efficient. It can save us in many ways. It can help us with the strains in terms of our electrical grids and in many other areas.

● (1600)

I suspect that the fact that many government members are still climate change deniers is a factor here. I have witnessed that in this House. I witnessed it on Monday during debate on this same bill. My colleague from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca was speaking. He was talking about Antarctica and how we have seen ice shelves, such as the Larsen ice shelf, collapse there and what a concern that is for situations like that around the globe. He gave examples of global warming, examples that are alarming scientists around the globe, and some of the reasons why scientists tell us the evidence is overwhelming that climate change is happening and that it is caused by human activity.

However, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt was in the chamber and he said that Antarctica is growing. I do not know what planet he is talking about. Maybe there is another Antarctica on another planet somewhere that is growing, but I think it is pretty clear that the opposite is happening here.

In fact we understand, and I think most people do, that the ice in Antarctica does not just freeze every winter. With the ice in Antarctica, or on the Greenland glacier or Arctic ice cap, we are talking primarily about ice that has been formed with snow falling and then more the following year and so much over centuries that it pushes down, compacts and turns into very hard and very old ice.

When we see something that is thousands of years old collapse and fall into the ocean, and a colleague thinks that Antarctica is actually growing, I think he ought to give his head a shake.

It is a bit like those who suggest that there is no link between HIV and AIDS. All the science is in the other direction. It is overwhelmingly clear that there is a link between HIV and AIDS. Or it is like the techniques that were used for years by those people who said there was no link between tobacco and cancer. We hear the same kinds of things from the other side.

It seems to me the Conservatives have not gotten the message. It seems to me that they forget the poll that came out in January 2007 which said that the number one concern of Canadians was the environment. This was about six or eight months after Al Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* came into the theatres and people started to become much more concerned about these issues. The media started to talk about this. People got more and more

concerned, but it was only after that, that the government suddenly and totally changed direction and started to admit that there was a concern about climate change, or at least it wanted us to believe that it was reformed, that it actually had bought into the idea that this was a real problem.

Yet, it seems that many members on that side did not get the memo, that they have not gotten the message that in fact they are supposed to believe now in climate change, because we hear them say things like the notion that Antarctica is still growing. We hear them say things that are utterly ridiculous and that fly in the face of the overwhelming science that tells us that climate change is real and is the result of human activity.

Maybe they should work on their messaging over there and get the message out. Maybe they need another memo for more of the members on that side to get this clear. Most of them do not say very much normally without the office of the Prime Minister giving the approval, so one would think that maybe they need clearer direction from the PMO on that. Perhaps it is the fact that they are climate change deniers that accounts for their dismal failure to grasp what really are the larger implications that are at play with this bill and the issues of climate change, to which Bill C-30 in the last Parliament was tied.

When this bill was debated in the other place, that red chamber down the hall on the east side of this building, my colleague from Alberta, Senator Grant Mitchell, raised many important questions about this bill. In fact, while this bill was introduced in the Senate by the government leader there, it was Senator Mitchell who has been the driving force behind this idea for some time, pushing for energy efficiency improvements and pushing for changes, so that the government can regulate classes of products, not just certain products. That is a good thing, there is no question.

● (1605)

He was right, in the Senate, when he noted that perhaps one of the biggest questions was the lack of trust Canadians have that the Conservative government will do anything it promises. I have heard from many Canadians that they do not trust the government. They simply do not trust the government to actually implement this or any significant environmental policy because its record is so dismal.

While the Liberal Party supports a broadening of the government's ability to regulate products that use energy, this does not disguise the fact that these changes are in isolation to create the false impression the Conservatives are actually doing something on this file.

Well, they are not, really. We know that. That is why Canadians do not trust the Prime Minister or the government on the environment any more than they trust them to properly manage our country's finances or our economy.

This is the same government that told us last fall that there were no problems. The Prime Minister said that if it was going to get bad, it would already have been bad. We heard that during the election: if the economy is going to be in recession, we would have already had it here.

*Government Orders*

Well, things got a lot worse. In September he said it was good time to buy stocks. Not only was that insensitive but it was incredibly bad advice, when we consider what has happened since. For a guy who claims to be an economist, that is a pretty scary bit of prognostication. I think most people would have to recognize that.

Why the lack of trust? That is the result when the Conservatives deny climate change in the face of the kind of overwhelming scientific evidence that exists, or when they deny there is a recession in the midst of a global economic meltdown as we have been seeing over the past number of months, or when they say they will balance the books when they have been in deficit for months, as we heard last fall in the fiscal update, which was clearly absolute nonsense and from which the government retreated.

That is the question. Will the Conservatives actually implement these amendments in this bill and act on the regulatory power that this gives them?

We all saw what the Conservatives did with the Kyoto protocol. We saw an announcement related to cap and trade two years ago, and nothing has happened. We saw what they did with Bill C-30 in a previous Parliament, which is where this initiative first saw the light of day.

And did we not have a bill related to fixed term elections? That seems to be something I can recall; something that evaporated in the mind of the Prime Minister around about last September.

Did we not have a promise not to tax income trusts? Did we not have a signed offshore accord with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador that the Prime Minister said would not be abandoned? I think we did.

On the environment, in general, the trust factor is non-existent for the Conservative government. It announced a \$1 billion clean energy fund, which sounded great. But how much of that is going toward things like solar power, wind power, tidal power or geothermal power? When the deputy minister appeared before the natural resources committee, she was asked about this fund and she told the committee that \$850 million was targeted toward carbon capture and sequestration. Now, that is an important technology and it is of great concern to the oil sands, certainly. However, it is not the only issue. What is concerning is that the Conservatives want to give the impression they have this wonderful clean energy fund for a whole range of clean energies. We really see it is almost all going to one particular area.

Aside from this fundamental issue of trust, there are also concerns of what is not in the bill that raises other questions. For instance, what kind of consultation took place in relation to the second section which talks about interprovincial trade? Did the government consult the provinces? We do not know.

There are a variety of other concerns. The questions and comments that I hope will follow will give me an opportunity to talk about them more.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to bring up something from the past and ask my colleague who just spoke for his opinion on this.

The first legislation on energy efficiency was passed in Quebec in 1982. In 1992, the Conservatives passed the existing Energy Efficiency Act.

It is a fact that the new Conservatives, the more Reform Alliance members, have been dragging their feet for three years. I hasten to add the Liberals could have amended this piece of legislation in 2002. In 2000, they were in power, but they did not do it. They dragged their feet too.

Why does the hon. member think that, as mentioned in clause 6, we should consider American and Mexican legislation on energy efficiency, when they do not set good comparable standards? Does he not think the standards to compare our own with are the ones found in the Nordic countries?

• (1615)

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague. His question on the Nordic countries' standards is interesting. There is no reason why the government and parliamentarians should not examine and compare our systems and situations with the energy efficiency standards in those countries. But we live in North American, and our major trade partners are the United States and Mexico. It is important to be competitive with them.

I certainly appreciate this comment because Nordic standards are indeed excellent. We should examine this issue more closely.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, does the member think that Bill S-3 includes or should include autos, buses, planes, et cetera?

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, the member asks an interesting question. Where should the emissions of cars, planes, trains and even ships, for that matter, be regulated? Should they be in legislation that is designed for appliances and electronics or ought they to be in another area?

I am open to arguments in relation to whether this is the best legislation, but I would think there could be legislation better targeted toward those kinds of major machines that we use in our society, such as trucks, backhoes and so on. How should we deal with the emissions of those kinds of heavy machines that are an important part of the equation of climate change and greenhouse gases? Does it make sense to have them regulated under this legislation?

Clearly the government could do that. In my view, the regulatory power is given by this bill to regulate anything that uses energy and they do use energy.

However, if we were to look at this more closely, I think we would probably find reasons why it make sense to have legislation specifically designed for that purpose.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent speech.

We know that the Conservative government has cut the program to encourage the use of more fuel-efficient cars. This program allowed new car buyers to purchase more energy-efficient cars and get a tax credit for doing so. The Conservatives have felt that offering the program for just two years would be enough for people to convert to such cars.

I think it should have continued to make programs and incentives available to allow people to purchase more fuel-efficient and environmentally cleaner cars and save on gas.

Does the hon. member think that the program to encourage people to buy smaller, more economical, more fuel-efficient and more environmentally friendly cars should have been maintained?

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche for his excellent question.

That is somewhat strange indeed. That was a successful program. That is why the government has decided to cancel it. In fact, the government said that it was too successful, that too many people took advantage of the program to buy more energy-efficient cars. I agree with my colleague that the success of a program is not a good argument for terminating it.

Personally, I drive a hybrid car, a Prius, which I really like. It is an excellent car, easy to use and similar to other cars in terms of driving. I encourage everyone to consider buying a hybrid car or any other low-emission car, or else—I do not know if that is an option in my colleague's riding—to use trains and buses. That is not always an option, but many Canadians can travel by train or by bus, or carpool to commute to work.

• (1620)

[English]

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I sometimes find it difficult to sit in the House and listen to members opposite talk about anything to do with the environment. Prior to being elected here, I was chief of staff to Ontario's first commissioner of alternative energy. At one point, we came through with a very extensive, all party report with over 130 recommendations with respect to clean energy, hydrogen, solar, wind and energy conservation.

The Liberals were in power at that time and to get them to move on any of those recommendations that were brought forward was impossible, even with all party support in the Ontario legislature. We know they broke their word with respect to Kyoto. I wonder if the member is not continuing the Liberal legacy of saying one thing but doing another. They signed the Kyoto protocol but we know they did absolutely nothing to meet our targets. In fact, they brought no money and no initiatives forward.

Now, here the government stands actually doing something. The Prime Minister came to my riding to announce funds for the Nature Conservancy of Canada so that we could bring some of our natural

heritage under the protection of the government. We are investing in chemical waste management.

I wonder if the hon. member could explain to the House why, when the Liberals were in government, they failed Canadians on the environment so often.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, for someone who was thoroughly involved in matters related to the environment, one would think he would know the history a little better. He would know, for example, that the Kyoto protocol did not actually come into effect until 2005. I wonder if he knows that because I do not hear that in what he is saying.

He also should know that the Liberal government of Mr. Martin did bring in a range of measures in its green plan to deal with climate change and other environmental matters. However, it was the member's party, along with other parties, that defeated the previous Liberal government when it was bringing forward spending plans and other measures that would have taken effect.

If he had been listening, I already mentioned in my speech that in June 2005, we listed the six greenhouse gases and started the process of regulating those greenhouse gases. In spite of promises from the Conservative government to regulate them, we have seen no action.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Airport Security; the hon. member for Mississauga South, Health.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

• (1625)

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to discuss Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act, which is intended to expand the regulatory parameters of the present act.

The essence of this bill is laudable. The present act dates from 1992. With all the technological innovations, it is thus extremely urgent that we take another look at this act. I can see how often we are late to take action. My 15-year-old son is constantly reminding me that we have to pay attention to the environment, use recycling bins and save energy. So I will be pleased to be able to tell him on the weekend that we are working to make things better.

*Government Orders*

The amendments proposed in this energy efficiency bill are going in the right direction, for they target non-regulated products and raise the standards for other products. However, we have to determine whether this bill is not simply an update of the standards of the Office of Energy Efficiency. In this regard we must display a real will to improve the energy efficiency of certain energy-using products with the aim of improving our energy efficiency and not with the aim of permitting the federal government to say that it is looking after the environment. We must admit that this initiative offers very little in the face of the problems of climate change, our spiraling consumption of fossil fuels and this government's lack of will to act to protect the environment. All the same, this bill is a start, and however little this government is doing for the environment, we must nonetheless consider the improvements being made to the present legislation.

The amendments made by this bill are thus intended to consider the advancement of knowledge about energy efficiency, to broaden the minister's regulatory authority, to introduce the concept of classes instead of considering each product individually, to strengthen the minister's powers over the labelling of energy-using products, to standardize procedures, and to increase responsibilities for reporting to the House of Commons. These objectives, I repeat, are entirely laudable. The extent to which they will be applied remains to be seen.

For example, the amendments proposed in this bill would permit the establishment of strict vehicle emission standards and improve the energy efficiency of vehicles, since they have an impact on energy consumption. The bill would also permit, as proposed many times by the Bloc Québécois, the standardization of energy efficiency regulations in classes of products, thereby introducing mandatory vehicle eco-labelling, a measure that has existed in Switzerland since 2002.

In this way we could send a clear message to consumers who wish to use energy more responsibly, by directing them to a class of vehicles classified as "green", instead of certain very specific vehicles.

There are a number of worthwhile amendments in this bill, including the following. Classifying energy-using products as proposed will mean that they can be grouped based on a single, common energy-consuming characteristic and the intended use of the products. The second amendment is the power of the governor in council, which will cover a class of products and not just one product. Extending the regulatory power will mean that the act provides better coverage of a whole range of products in terms of energy efficiency. This bill also provides for new or additional standards to be established for industrial and consumer products and goods, such as commercial washing machines, dishwashers, fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs, battery chargers, and many others.

This bill means that standby mode can be taken into account, and that is a good proposal, because of the proliferation in recent years of energy-using products that consume energy even when they are turned off. The new types of televisions, DVD players, household appliances and a host of other products consume energy constantly even when they are not in use. These items are equipped with an internal memory that can be affected by simply unplugging them.

● (1630)

In this regard, the Office of Energy Efficiency estimates that if all of these products used minimum energy in standby mode, a typical household would save \$35 a year in electricity. That does not seem like much, but an energy saving like that all across Canada amounts to the energy used by about 300,000 households in a year, and so it is a considerable amount. What this bill does in this regard is really very important. The number and variety of appliances that use standby mode will undoubtedly continue to grow in the years to come. That is why it is important to think about regulating energy use in sleep mode for these kinds of items.

Requiring that the minister table reports in the House of Commons is an important amendment, and one that I think is desirable. Once every three years, the Minister of Natural Resources will have to compare the standards here with those in the United States and Mexico, to determine whether they are in step. Because many household appliances come from those countries under free trade, standardization is important. This approach, by standardizing labelling and energy efficiency criteria, may eventually facilitate the creation of a carbon market in the future.

Obviously, that must be done willingly and competently. On these two points, allow me to question the Conservative government's intent to really protect the environment. The Conservative record does not lead us to believe that the environment is a priority for this government. I will explain. This bill has a number of qualities, including that of considering the standby mode, essential to the operation of a number of devices today, in setting energy efficiency standards.

However, the government is bragging that, with these amendments proposed for the Energy Efficiency Act, it is implementing its nebulous green plan. This green plan is turning brown. I realize that strengthening laws on the energy efficiency of televisions, DVD players, household appliances and other energy-using consumer products is a good thing. However, strong and integrated measures are needed to achieve real results. We have waited too long.

The government's regulatory framework to fight greenhouse gases is biased at its source. It is based on reductions in emission intensity for individual product units instead of on an absolute greenhouse gas emission target. There is, however, a consensus in Quebec and elsewhere in the world advocating the absolute reduction approach, which will lead to the establishment of a carbon market and a carbon exchange in Montreal.

This government's approach is unfair to Quebec, which has made a huge effort since 1990 to genuinely and absolutely reduce its GHG emissions. However, businesses in Quebec cannot benefit from nearly 20 years' efforts. It is our duty to prevent these efforts from being swept under the carpet because of the neoconservative ideology that goes to any length to put the environment and the economy at odds.

*Government Orders*

For example, a Quebec aluminum company that has already reduced its GHG emissions by 15% in 1990 terms will have to agree to the same reduction in emission intensity as a company operating in the oil sands in Alberta, whose GHG emissions have doubled since 1990. Our manufacturing industry will be penalized once again because it will not benefit financially from its efforts as it could have under an absolute target reduction plan.

In Quebec, we reject this outdated view. The economy and the environment work in tandem, and our businesses are often among the most productive in the world in environmental terms. Quebec's economy is separate from Canada's. By applying this standard approach to all businesses, the government is leaving no room for a real territorial approach that would allow Quebec to act according to its own interests and peculiarities.

This is why we are saying that the government's green plan, which gave rise to this bill, is ineffective.

•(1635)

Climate change represents one of the biggest challenges we have to deal with.

As scientific evidence piles up and we see just how staggering the extent of the consequences is, it becomes imperative to act without delay, and in an efficient and fair manner.

This bill represents a step in the right direction, but there is still a very long way to go, and this government totally lacks the desire to go the rest of the way with Quebec. The Bloc Québécois is calling for a Kyoto implementation plan, namely an average greenhouse gas reduction of 6% below the 1990 level for the period 2008-12.

The inaction of the Liberals and the ideological pig-headedness of the Conservatives are doing nothing to help us deal with the problem.

The plan proposed by the Bloc Québécois is based on establishing reduction targets in the short and medium term, that is between 2012 and 2020, with 1990 as the reference year; the use of a territorial approach; establishing a carbon exchange in Montreal; and federal measures that the government can implement in its own areas of jurisdiction.

In closing, Bill S-3 is, as I have said, a step in the right direction but there is still a very long way to go. We are in favour of the essence of this bill, but with this government we have doubts about its sincerity as far as environmental protection and energy conservation are concerned.

The Conservative government ought to stop handing over millions of dollars to the oil industry and stop encouraging tar sands development. Instead it ought to be decreasing our oil dependency, and allowing the development of renewable energies, encouraging environmental research and the growth of the green economy, which is the economy of the future, rather than making this bill, which is limited though laudable, the foundation of its rather murky green plan.

[English]

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the government passes bills such as the one that set the date for the next election, which was to be in October of this year, by

the way. Then only months later it pulled the plug itself, causing an unnecessary election. It did not even wait to be defeated in a vote in the House.

We are still waiting for the all-inclusive airline pricing that was included in a bill passed two and a half years ago. It still has not been implemented.

There is a lot of posturing and public relations in bills like this one. Does the member not agree with that?

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. It is often hard to make sure that the government puts its money where its mouth is. There is a lot of talk but it is sometimes hard to see any action happening when it comes to regulations. Despite the bill's laudable goals, the government is already way behind and there is a dreadful lack of vision.

Consider, among other things, the implementation of stricter vehicle emissions standards. If that had been done years ago, we would be in a much better position today because the effects of pollution would be less noticeable in our cities and we would have fewer health problems. It is a shame that the vision is just not there.

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent presentation on a relatively weak bill. I appreciate her moderate approach, which I find quite fair.

I would like to call on her considerable parliamentary experience—she is also the natural resources critic—and ask her what she thinks of a clause that I do not think is particularly relevant when it comes to overseeing labelling of all energy-using products. It is the same thing. Almost everything consumes energy. My suit consumes energy. A drinking glass consumes energy. Everything consumes energy.

In the context of this bill, is it realistic to think that the committee will be able to specify things to such a degree that we will know where the government is headed?

**Ms. Paule Brunelle:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It may seem difficult to apply. The intention is to provide limits and a framework. The fact that products have been placed in categories may simplify the task. However, I agree with him: it will be truly difficult to reach a consensus in committee on these materials and on their energy consumption. It is a challenge but it is a first step.

•(1640)

[English]

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act. Earlier, my colleague from Halifax West spoke extensively on the bill and made a number of valid points on energy efficiency. I would refer people to those comments. He talked especially about wasted energy. When politicians are out on a political campaign, we walk into houses and see little lights flashing here and there, on VCRs, computers and telephones that are not in use. All those units are using energy unnecessarily. It is a lot of wasted energy.

*Government Orders*

The bill makes a series of changes to the Energy Efficiency Act to broaden the scope of the government's ability to regulate consumer products that use energy. We can certainly go the regulatory way with encouragement in that area, but as citizens of the country, we also need to do a lot of individual things to save energy in terms of shutting down computers and so on when we may be gone for more than a day. There are all kinds of things we could do.

The bill is rooted in old Bill C-30 from a former Parliament, which was a plan to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Bill S-3 goes back to some of those points that were made in Bill C-30. After the House committee made wholesale amendments to the climate change provisions in Bill C-30, the government chose not to bring the bill back to the House for further debate. When the first session of the 39th Parliament prorogued, Bill C-30 died. Instead of bringing back the bill in its entirety, the government decided instead to carve off the Energy Efficiency Act provisions and introduce them as a separate bill in the Senate. The bill did not receive second reading in the Senate before the election was called in August, 2008.

The provisions of the bill are not controversial. In fact, it is widely expected that most MPs and most parties will support the bill in the House of Commons because the spirit and the intent of former Bill C-30, what opposition parties mainly drove for, is encompassed in this bill.

An effective regulation of energy-using products is one of a suite of tools the government will have to fight global warming. As my colleague said earlier, there are a lot of global warming deniers on the government side of the House. A lot of points have been raised by previous speakers as to that being the fact. Through this bill we hope the Conservatives will take, not a big challenge, but a small challenge to do a number of small things that can make a difference in terms of energy use itself.

On this point, Canadians know what we should be doing each and every day to improve energy efficiency in many small ways, but sometimes it takes a little encouragement. Although none of us really likes regulations, sometimes it takes a little push with regulations to encourage us to do the right thing on the environment.

• (1645)

Another important area for us to do the right things on the environment and to increase our energy efficiency is a stronger education process. Sometimes we do not realize how the small points on energy efficiency can add up in the global context to big savings on energy.

Let us look at what little things can do. We can go back to Christmastime, when many people light up their houses with Christmas light bulbs and so on. In my province, Christmas was the peak energy period of the year because of the lights on Christmas trees, houses, floodlights and so on. When the LED lights came in, they created such energy efficiencies that the energy use at that time went down substantially.

Therefore, it shows what can be done by both an education campaign and any regulatory campaign. It is one example of many.

It is unbelievable the gains in energy efficiency that have been made in the agricultural industry over the last 15 to 20 years, and

there is a lot more we can do. There is a lot more the government can do to assist us in getting there.

It would be really helpful if the government, in its programming, used some of its available resources. We know it has clearly failed the agricultural industry to date, especially the primary producers, but it is not that difficult for it to develop the programs. Whether it is through tax incentives, grants, regional development agencies, Industry Canada or Environment Canada could come up with funding programs that would assist primary producers in purchasing equipment and technology that would reduce the amount of energy used on primary production units on our farms.

Although the government fails to admit it, we know that the agriculture, fisheries, mining and forestry sectors in rural Canada are the generators of economic wealth in the country. Anything that can be done to assist those hard pressed industries in this time of recession would be valuable in moving our country forward.

There is an opportunity, at a time when a so-called economic stimulus is being made available, if the Government of Canada would develop the programming to assist all those industries in reducing their energy use and improving their bottom line. The government seems to have failed to seize that opportunity.

I want to provide some examples in the farming sector. On the equipment side, the tractors we use today are much more energy efficient. Cultivators do a better job with less use of energy on a per acre basis. One of the big areas is the use of GPS equipment, whether it is on equipment used for cultivating potatoes and row crops or whether it is on sprayers where one can do a better job of going over the ground just once. Instead of going over a field or a crop two or three times, one can go over it with a single pass, saving a tremendous amount of energy and greater efficiency. Therefore, less greenhouse gases are put into air for each production unit that is produced on farms.

• (1650)

Many Canadians, especially people who live in urban centres who do not understand the farm community that well, have a strange picture or perception of farmers. Primary producers, farmers, have always been at the cutting edge of technological change. Whether it is energy efficiency, more production per acre, whatever it may be, they have always been at that edge of technological change. This is a great opportunity where we could assist the farm community in making its operations more efficient.

Another example that I could give would be dairy operations. I was a dairy producer, and I have been on many of these operations. More people should see this efficient use of energy. It is an area where expenditures could be made to get more producers on those kinds of efficient uses of energy systems.

*Government Orders*

To draw a picture, when milk is produced, it is a warm product that has to be cooled by what almost looks like the old type of radiators. The milk is produced by the cows, comes out of the milking system and goes through that radiator unit. The heat is taken out and used to heat water for sanitizing and cleaning up the system and, in some cases, for heating barns. There is great efficiency.

Instead of losing the heat and putting it into a cooler that expends energy to cool the milk so it keeps and can be trucked to the processing plant in a high quality state, the new systems are used to take the heat out of the milk and use it for other purposes, whether it is heating water for sanitizing or whatever. The temperature of that milk is reduced and then when it gets into the cooler, it is already partially cooled. Therefore, it takes less energy to cool the milk product to the proper temperature so it stores safely until it can be shipped to a processing plant for bottling, or for cheese or for whatever its use may be.

From my own experience in the past, I know that originally there were grants from provincial governments at that time to encourage people to move into the earlier concept of bulk milk coolers. This is an area that the government could be assisting the production sector, with stimulus packages and creating energy efficiency as well. I know that goes beyond the concept of this bill, but it is an example of where government action, beyond the regulatory regime, could be a huge help to the farming community.

The same applies in the design of farms. Rather than using the fans, which are used in so many places, there are new concepts where we use natural movement of air.

As another example, this morning I had a great meeting with the greenhouse industry. The Canadian greenhouse industry is one of the most innovative industries in our country. In Ontario alone there are about 1,800 acres under glass. In B.C. there are about 700 acres. I believe it is something like 60 acres or 80 acres in Quebec.

● (1655)

I was in one operation that had 52 acres of tomato and cucumber plants under glass, growing year round. One of the highest costs is the use of hydro. Therefore, farmers have been moving to new concepts. Again, it is an area where the government could assist. In fact, I believe it costs close to \$6 million to put the new system in for one of these operations.

Beyond the solar efforts of the sun, using natural gas to heat that generates a byproduct containing CO<sub>2</sub>, which plants need to produce the cucumbers and tomatoes. A recycling effect is created and it will pay off over the long term tremendously. Again, it is another case of using greater energy efficiency to have greater economic and energy efficiencies in the operation and less greenhouse gases as a result at the end of the day.

There are so many opportunities available to us in terms of energy efficiency. This bill will move us a little farther along that line. It significantly broadens the government's ability to regulate products that affect the use of energy and we support that. It does not have to be an obtrusive regulation. As I mentioned in the very beginning, to a great extent, it can be more of an education campaign to have people understand what is available out there. The regulations can encourage better use of products, whether it is shutting down

equipment or buying more efficient equipment or machinery on the industrial operations, on farms, on fishing boats, in the forestry industry or whatever.

We support these amendments, since they are substantially identical to the proposed amendments to the clean air act, Bill C-30, which the Liberal Party supported. For some reason the Government of Canada wanted to make that disappear. Maybe it was too forward-looking a bill for the current government to grasp, take hold of and put Canada in the lead in terms of environmental change.

If we had moved forward with that act, instead of being a follower, we would have been a leader. In this recession, we see more followers than leaders from the government side. Maybe that makes the point as to why the government abandoned the clean air act. Now we have to at least try to encourage it to move a little step forward with the Energy Efficiency Act.

We look forward to seeing regulations, but it will be necessary to ensure that the impact of these amendments are fully felt in Canadian society.

I want to make one quick point about my own province. One initiative of Premier Robert Ghiz and the Liberal government in P.E. I. is on energy. We are increasingly using wind energy to meet our energy needs. The province has laid out a master plan of how we can use the production of energy and hydro from windmills to meet a greater and greater share of the electricity needs of Prince Edward Island. The Canadian wind test site is on Prince Edward Island. I think it shows that a little province is leading the way in this country in terms of using wind energy to meet Canadians' needs and reduce greenhouse gases.

● (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague has just given a long speech about Bill S-3. I would like to remind him that energy efficiency is changing at such a pace that the law will have to be revised every five years. That is not currently happening. When the Liberals were in power, they never changed it. This law has not changed since 1992.

Although the Liberals did nothing when in power, are they now prepared to accept that the law include a clause providing for its statutory review every five years? This bill requires reports every three years and requires the minister to report to the House every four years. But there is nothing about revising the law every five years. I would like to hear my colleague's opinion about that.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Madam Speaker, the first point I have to make is that I just cannot understand where the member is coming from when he claims that the Liberal government did nothing when it was in power. Where has he been? It was the Liberal government that turned this country around and put it on the road to economic success, which has now been virtually destroyed by the Conservative government. It was the Liberal government that increased research and development in this country to make some of the new energy efficiencies possible.

I referred to the example in terms of wind energy in Prince Edward Island coming from windmills. Our former minister of the environment, the former leader of the opposition, signed an agreement with the previous Conservative government in Prince Edward Island for a \$30 million cable so that energy produced with wind on P.E.I. to reduce greenhouse gases in the country could be shipped into the export market. What was the first thing the Conservatives did when they came to power? They cancelled that signed \$30 million agreement that would have gone a long way to increasing economic opportunities in Prince Edward Island and reducing greenhouse gases through the use of windmills.

I can clearly show that when the Liberal government was in power, it was moving this country ahead. It is too bad that the current government has put us in a hole again.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, first I want to commend the member for making a very interesting speech.

Manitoba Hydro has had an extremely effective energy-saving program, called Power Smart, for some years now. Consumers receive incentives to purchase energy efficient appliances, and the reduced energy consumption leads to the extra power being sold on the export market into the United States at very healthy pricing. This keeps Manitoba hydro rates low for Manitoba. As a matter of fact, we have the lowest hydro rates in North America.

Would the member support the expansion of programs such as this one across the country to other utilities?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Madam Speaker, there is no question that we would support the expansion of those types of programs across the country because they only make sense.

There is no question that the government could learn a lot from the Government of Manitoba. I know it is an NDP government, but the premier has done a remarkable job of managing the affairs of that province and putting it on the road to future success.

With the hydro development that the member talked about and the energy advantage that Manitobans have, whether it is heating their homes or doing industrial business, it goes a long way in terms of enhancing that economic prosperity.

It is just too bad that the government across the way and the Prime Minister could not get the message and understand that governments play a very important role in Canadian society. It is sad to say that we have no national leadership at the moment and no vision in terms of where this country is going either on energy or the economy.

● (1705)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to help my hon. friend understand, because in response to a question from a Bloc member, he said he did not understand. I guess where the Bloc is coming from is that when the Liberals were in power, they actually signed the Kyoto protocol in 1998, yet under their watch, greenhouse gas emissions increased by 26%, and under their watch, Canada became the worst per capita user of energy in the world.

He talked about their record with respect to the economy. The reality is it was a previous Conservative government that brought in the economic policies that allowed that Liberal government to balance the books later. It really was not that government that balanced the books, it was Conservative provincial governments across this country that balanced the federal budget when the Liberals took \$25 billion out of the provinces unilaterally without asking them. That is the record of the Liberal Party: increased greenhouse gas emissions and nothing to address the financial situation.

We have a government now that has brought forward an economic action plan supported by the member opposite that is going to address Canada's economic difficulties. It is investing in people, roads, bridges, sewers and highways. It is doing everything it needs to do to keep Canada as the most prosperous nation in the world.

I say those comments so that the hon. member can understand where the member from the Bloc was coming from when he made his comments.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Madam Speaker, I would love to answer that question.

What we see in this House during question period every day is the Conservative government giving misinformation, more misinformation and more misinformation when ministers respond to questions. It seems that they misinform the public three or four times in the hope that the misinformation will become the truth. Well, it will not.

The fact of the matter is when we took over government, we were facing a \$42 billion annual deficit which was left to us by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

If the hon. member wants to talk about the provinces, then let us talk about the provinces. The man who currently sits in the finance minister's chair, who is now driving this country into deficit, did the same when he was minister of finance in Ontario. Now for the province of Ontario, yes, it is going into deficit again, but the mess that was left because of that Minister of Finance right there in terms of managing the affairs of the province of Ontario drove the province pretty near into bankruptcy. It is too bad. One would think the current Minister of Finance would have learned a lesson from his mistakes in Ontario, but now he is trying to impose the same pain on all of Canada.

The other point I would make is that when the Liberal Party was in power, Canada was the envy of the industrialized world in terms of its fiscal capacity and in terms of the management of its financial affairs.

*Government Orders*

The biggest joke that I see on the international scene these days is the Prime Minister parading around the world talking about our wonderful banks, how good it is that they have been regulated and that they are in much better shape than anywhere else. That Prime Minister, when he was in the opposition, opposed that move. I sat in the committee that was looking at those banks and it was during a Liberal government. We convinced the then finance minister, Paul Martin, that we should not go the way others have gone in allowing foreign ownership and deregulation of the banks. The current Prime Minister opposed that move.

It is thanks to the former Liberal government that we have the banking system that we do in this country, thank you very much.

• (1710)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill S-3 and take part in this debate.

It is always instructive to see the Liberal member for Malpeque grilling the Conservatives for having plunged Canada into a deficit when the Liberal Party of Canada supported them no less than 62 times in this descent into hell with the creation of a Canadian deficit. I find it hard to understand, although that is not the only incongruity in this Parliament. This kind of thing is why politicians are always second last on the list of people Canadians trust. I will not say who is last. Members take positions in the House that are totally contrary to what they say in their speeches. That is the Liberal reality and it is why they have almost no credibility in Quebec.

Bill S-3 was introduced yesterday and is an act to amend the Energy Efficiency Act. I want to say right away that the Bloc Québécois is in favour of the principle of this bill. Environmental groups and people who take some interest in the environment are not easily fooled, but when the Conservative government introduces a bill on energy efficiency, it is at least a step. We should study it therefore in committee, improve it, and see how open-minded the Conservatives are about analyzing it. This bill is not a panacea for all our energy problems, far from it, but my colleague from Trois-Rivières did a good job of presenting the Bloc's position. When the government takes a little step, we should all go along, while remaining very realistic about the likely results.

There are eight clauses in Bill S-3. I will summarize them for the benefit of the men and women watching.

Clause 1 creates section 2.1 in the definitions in the Energy Efficiency Act. Its purpose is to specify the meaning of the word "class". A class of energy-using products can be defined according to common energy-consuming characteristics of the products, their intended use, or the conditions under which the products are normally used.

Clause 2 is about interprovincial trade and importation. In the current act, paragraph 4.1(b) forbids dealers from shipping an energy-using product that does not comply with certain requirements from the province in which it was manufactured to another province for the purpose of sale or lease. Clause 2 changes this provision by replacing the last part with the following: "from one province to another province" for the purpose of sale or lease. In addition,

paragraph 4.1(b) in the current English version requiring that a label be attached to the product or package is changed to require a label "in accordance with the regulations". This is a welcome clarification because they are talking about appliances in this bill and all energy-using household equipment is included.

As we know, many of our citizens still have appliances that consume a lot of energy. In Quebec, Hydro-Québec is paying \$60 to anyone who gets a new fridge. Hydro-Québec will even come and take away the old one. That is one way of getting rid of appliances that consume too much energy. If we want to use a bill to prohibit interprovincial transportation of equipment, we are talking about importers, retailers and suppliers. The equipment is not always new. There is business in second hand equipment. We do not want such equipment to be transported between the provinces, or even sold in any province.

Clause 3 adds a clarification to the information that a dealer must communicate to the minister.

• (1715)

From now on, prescribed information must include information about the shipping or importation of the material in question.

Clause 3 amends section 5 of the Energy Efficiency Act, which requires that dealers who ship or import energy-using products shall file a report with the prescribed information. Under the current subsection 5(1), the "dealer...shall file with the Minister...a report setting out prescribed information respecting the energy efficiency of those products." The bill changes the wording to require the dealer to "provide the Minister...with" the prescribed information, so it is not a matter of merely filing a report, but rather being obliged to provide the information concerning those products, including their energy efficiency, their shipment or their importation.

This is important because, at the end of the day, this bill attacks the very foundation of the distribution chain. This affects dealers and importers. This is unfortunate because we have heard members, both Liberals and Conservatives, pointing out whose record was worst or best. But one thing is certain: we must target importers, because there is almost no more manufacturing of such products here, simply because these sectors have been abandoned and left to emerging countries.

So now that we have virtually stopped manufacturing these products, we must ensure that the products we are sold respect the environment, and that is where the problem often lies.

During the holiday season, there is the issue of all the toys that contain lead and all the problems Canada has because it has not passed strict enough regulations and has allowed countries to produce goods that we would never dare produce here. We let them produce such goods, then we buy them. We also let these people distribute equipment produced in other countries that is no longer in keeping with how we see the environment and how we consume goods and services.

*Government Orders*

Similar technical changes—still with reference to clause 3—are proposed for subsections 5(2)(a) and 5(2)(b) and subsection 5(1). In addition, this clause allows in certain circumstances for an exemption from the requirement to provide information related to the energy efficiency of energy-using products, while leaving in place the requirement for shipment and importation information.

It is a bit complicated, and I would say that that is unintentional, at least I hope so. In any case, I have confidence in my colleague from Trois-Rivières, who, in committee, will be able to ask the witnesses the necessary questions to ensure that these requirements are really intended to facilitate information sharing.

So once we know that all or nearly all consumer products and equipment come from other countries and we realize that some products and equipment do not comply with our energy efficiency standards, we need to make sure with this bill that there are no loopholes. The Conservatives like to try to introduce a bill and allow, say, the oil industry to get off scot-free. It is a bit like when they talk about their carbon exchange and use 2010 as the reference year.

Members will recall that the Kyoto protocol sets 1992 as the reference year. This means that all the industries in Quebec—the aluminum smelters and paper plants—that reduced their greenhouse gas emissions in relation to 1992 levels and succeeded in meeting the Kyoto targets will have to do so all over again in relation to the Conservative government's proposed new reference year of 2010 or 2012, even though they had achieved what no company in Canada had managed to do.

That is why, day in and day out, week after week, we in the Bloc Québécois rise in this House to make it loud and clear to all the other parties that they must not forget that the effort has already been made in Quebec. In Quebec, the large manufacturing companies have made efforts and are prepared to comply with Kyoto, but it is a different story in the other Canadian provinces, especially with oil companies and tar sands. In a way, it is sad to always have to stand up for the people of Quebec.

• (1720)

We too would like all the members of this House to understand what manufacturing industries and other industries in Quebec—the logging, aluminum and paper manufacturing companies that have made efforts to achieve the Kyoto objectives—are going through. If an international carbon exchange was established, they would be ready to sell their credits because they have exceeded the objectives of the Kyoto protocol. They could be making money as we speak. The environment is no longer only costing money; it has become a source of income, an area of economic interest. Now, the environment is a money maker, provided one puts in the necessary effort.

After all the efforts that have been made in Quebec, the Conservatives are suggesting that the clock be reset, proposing a new reference date of 2010 or 2012. We will start over, and the industries with emissions lower than at the reference date will be allowed to issue emission credits. We can imagine what this means for the logging, aluminum and manufacturing companies which have already made the necessary efforts. They are being asked to make an additional effort. That is why we are saying that the government has to provide compensation to those who have done better than everyone else and are being penalized.

As I mentioned earlier, when the Conservatives introduce a bill, they once again cater to polluters. They are going to warn oil companies that the year 2010 or 2012 will be the starting point, and that they will have to reduce their emissions. If the companies do that, they will be eligible for those credits. They will not even have to buy them, because they will be in a position to sell them. For those who are following this issue, it just does not make any sense.

However, this is not funny for aluminum plants, for paper mills and for all the companies that anticipated this move. The companies that wanted to sell a product abroad told themselves that they would make an effort and be conscientious. They had decided to comply with the world target set in the Kyoto protocol, with 1992 as the reference date. However, because of a decision made by the Conservative government, these people will forever pay a price, this in an already difficult economic context. Once again, the Bloc Québécois has no choice but to rise day in and day out in this House to condemn the Conservatives' way of doing things.

So, this bill seeks to amend the Energy Efficiency Act, and it is meant to be an environmental act. The Conservative Party even claims that it is part of its green plan. The nice Tory green plan that will save the environment. Still, it is a first step and it means that the government is doing something. Indeed, there are problems with electric household appliances. We import a lot of those appliances. We buy them from countries that do not have the same environmental standards, and it is only normal to impose labelling provisions. Things must be clear when these appliances arrive in Canada. We must know about their energy consumption. If they do not comply with the standards, they should simply be sent back, or they should not be bought. This is more or less what this bill seeks to do. If it does not do so in its present form, we can trust the hon. member for Trois-Rivières that it will once the committee will have dealt with it. That is the objective. This legislation will help us make progress regarding the environment. Hon. members can trust the Bloc Québécois to achieve the objective set in this bill. We are going to make sure that the process is free of “Conservative” diversion or secrecy.

Clause 4 makes several technical wording changes dealing with the records and documents that dealers must keep. In the current section 7, the documents and records must enable the minister to verify the accuracy and completeness of the information. Under this bill, they must be sufficient for the Minister to do the verification.

I agree with my colleagues who spoke before me about this bill or asked questions. This bill ought to have been amended and there should be adjustments to the legislation every five years. Industrial changes happen very quickly. The government therefore needs to be sure it can monitor the situation in order to have the legislation tailored to technological developments in the industry.

*Government Orders*

• (1725)

This should be done automatically. The minister wants to change the definition through clause 4 by adding the term “sufficient” relating to the documents and records the industry needs to provide. He has noticed that he was not getting what he needed to support an informed decision. So, as I said earlier, clause 4 targets the dealers, all the importing dealers who purchase products or have them manufactured offshore, very often in developing countries not required to respect the environmental standards we have set for ourselves. So if we do not have all the details we need about the manufacturing process, content or energy efficiency, it becomes rather difficult to know if the product complies with our standards and conditions.

It is therefore normal to want to cast some light on this clause. It is a matter of semantics, but does add a bit more rigour to this legislation, which probably ought to have been amended very promptly five years ago and so is likely to be totally out of date. Once again, I rely on my colleague from Trois-Rivières and my fellow members of the Bloc Québécois who will sit on the committee to ensure that this bill develops along the right lines and is adjusted as developments in the industry take place.

Clause 5 broadens regulatory powers, one of the main amendments that Bill S-3 would make to the Energy Efficiency Act. This clause amends the Governor in Council's regulatory power. The Governor in Council will now be able to implement regulations that target categories of products, not just individual products; products that control energy consumption; and products that affect energy consumption. It also amends the English version of the Act.

With respect to labelling, Part III will give the Governor in Council broader, stronger regulatory powers over all of the information included with energy-using products. Previously, the Governor in Council could regulate only information about energy efficiency. Once again, the definition has to be broadened to make it stronger. Labels will now include all of the details.

These measures were deemed necessary because it is clear that the industry, importers and dealers have done everything in their power to not reveal true energy consumption numbers so that they can sell products that cost less to produce. They did everything they could to claim that their products complied with the law even though they did not. That is one of the advantages of this bill.

However, the Conservative government must not try to use distractions to pull a fast one on us. Once again, I am counting on my colleague from Trois-Rivières and other Bloc Québécois members who will ensure that the right questions get asked in committee. Clause 5 will also make some changes.

Clause 6 is about the report to Parliament. The second major amendment relates to the minister's responsibility to report to the House of Commons. Usually, the minister has to report on the implementation and enforcement of the bill once a year. Clause 6 adds a provision requiring the minister to compare Canada's energy efficiency standards to those of the United States and Mexico every three years. The purpose of the comparison is to demonstrate the extent to which the stringency of Canadian standards matches that of

the other jurisdictions. I think that is a good idea. As I said earlier, things are changing quickly in the industry.

Since I see that I have only a minute left, I will close by saying that people can count on the Bloc Québécois members, who will work hard in committee to promote the idea of a potential obligation to review the legislation every five years. This situation is very important, and it is being submitted to our colleagues so that we can guarantee our citizens that what happened in the past will never happen again. People are trying once again to conceal information and use labels that do not meet standards, in order to achieve their own goals. I can assure you, Madam Speaker, of our full support for Bill S-3, but with the improvements that the Bloc Québécois will propose in committee.

• (1730)

[English]

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc member indicated that his party will attempt to improve the bill at committee. I wonder what sort of amendments he was contemplating. Will he look at the scope of the bill to include cars, buses, farm machinery, planes, boats and other motorized equipment of that type?

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Madam Speaker, as we know, our work in committee is constantly evolving. The problem with the NDP is that they always want to achieve their own objectives and present their own opinions, without looking at all possible situations, while the Bloc Québécois' goal is to hear all the witnesses and move forward on the issue. What our NDP colleague is suggesting is not out of the question, nor is it out of the question that we would make such an amendment or support the NDP, but I do not wish to make any assumptions before the debate.

As we all know, the Bloc Québécois has always been responsible. We do not vote against a budget without seeing it. That is just one way we conduct ourselves. We do not vote against a budget without making some proposals, which is what we have always done. When budget time comes, the Bloc Québécois makes its proposals three or four weeks in advance, in order to make its position clear to the government. We always act responsibly and many parties would do well to follow the Bloc Québécois' example in this House.

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for his excellent presentation. My question will not be like that of the member for Malpeque, who went into a partisan tirade, so that I can at least have an answer.

He spoke several times about improving the bill in committee and I agree completely with him. I wonder if he would agree that this bill, in its present form, is very weak when it comes to buildings?

The energy consumption of buildings represents 47% of all energy consumed in Canada. Should we not establish energy efficiency targets for buildings or review building codes? Is this something that should be examined by the committee when it studies this bill?

**Mr. Mario Laframboise:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Brome—Missisquoi, who is a hard-working member. I have the good fortune of working with him and he is very passionate about the environment. That is an important asset. My colleague raises an excellent point. In fact, the objective of a committee is to contribute new ideas. First, the Conservatives need them because their ideas are fairly passé. Thus, new ideas may just do the trick. Those are the kinds of ideas that my colleague contributes.

It is known that I have a municipal background. The building code has not changed much. We should be able to exert pressure and to push a great deal more for change especially in the building sector, which is protectionist and, again, I would say very conservative. We will try to open it up a bit and to give it some flavour from Quebec. That is the best way to open them up to the world.

I thank my colleague for the suggestion.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche will have about five minutes.

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, with only five minutes, it will be hard for me to do justice to such an important issue, so I will concentrate on certain specific elements.

This bill deals with energy conservation and energy efficiency. People who live in a rural area as I do definitely understand the importance of energy efficiency. All members who live in rural areas do. We understand the importance of our wealth of natural resources. Often, people will tell themselves that it is just wood or mines or fish. In fact, a natural resource is a treasure. We understand that it is important to take care of our treasures. Sometimes, people who live in other areas may have a hard time understanding that. That is why this big country has representatives of urban and rural regions. That gives us an opportunity to explain our reality, the reality of the rural environment.

As for the issue of natural resources, as I said earlier, we often have to make sure we have good energy efficiency. We live in remote areas where we have to travel greater distances, which means much higher costs. These are also areas where people earn their living from the land and from nature's bounty.

In Madawaska—Restigouche, where I live, the forest provides an extremely strong economic base. People have to protect the environment so that the forest will still be there in the future and our children and grandchildren can continue working in forestry, which is their own natural resource. People often ask those of us who live in rural regions what the environment means to us. The environment is everything, because it is what enables us to create jobs where we live. If we take care of our environment, then we will also take care of our treasure, which is the natural resource.

Energy efficiency affects us every day. We therefore need to keep abreast of developments and give more thought to how we can improve the future of our environment, which surrounds us every day. In this connection, I had the chance just now to question one of my colleagues from the Halifax region of Nova Scotia. I asked him whether the Conservative government had made the right decision when it cancelled the financial assistance program for the purchase of more energy efficient vehicles. That program was working very

well, though there were some shortcomings. The government was extremely slow in sending payments to people who made such purchases. We will put that aside, however, and not be too negative; the program itself was extremely positive. The government was negative, but not the program; it was positive.

After barely two years, however, it has suddenly been announced that the program is going to disappear because it is not important. In today's reality, with the importance of energy efficiency, we need to make sure our citizens are provided with tools, with incentives. That is done all the time, through tax credits and other means. We do these things to encourage people to take positive actions. In this case, it was to encourage the purchase of more energy efficient vehicles.

People in our rural regions have to travel long distances to get to work. This means they need to spend more than other people on gas, which makes energy efficient transportation extremely important. We know that energy efficient vehicles cost more as well. This is a parallel with what I was saying before: those of us in rural regions understand the importance of our environment and of taking care of it. Energy efficient vehicles combine those two aspects and that combination makes it possible for us to help people.

You are about to cut me off already, Madame Speaker, which is regrettable. I will certainly have the opportunity at some other time to revisit this matter.

• (1735)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. member will have 15 minutes remaining when debate resumes.

It being 5:39 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from February 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-268, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate. For members who move motions and introduce bills, it is an important time because we generally do so with a great deal of conviction, and that is certainly the best way to call political attention to an issue that we care about.

*Private members' business*

As my colleagues know, I am a strong proponent of private members' business, and I hope greater importance will be attached to this particular aspect in the near future. I thank all of my Bloc Québécois colleagues who support me in this endeavour to raise the value of what MPs do.

As I think we said during the first hour of debate, the Bloc Québécois will not support this bill. Although we are extremely concerned about the issue of human trafficking and we realize how important this issue is, we have a problem with the proposed remedy.

I was in this House in 2005 when we passed the provisions to be added to the Criminal Code concerning human trafficking, and I was also in this House when my colleague from Québec, who is now deputy leader, led the fight against the exploitation of women in the sex trade.

There are linkages between trafficking in women, exploitation, the sex trade and globalization. It is extremely demoralizing to know that human trafficking, one of the most horrible and atrocious practices, does take place. It is incredible that individuals would organize and carry out the marketing of human beings and that this phenomenon has grown in recent decades on all five continents.

I was reading that a UN agency estimates that between 700,000 and 4 million individuals are victims of human trafficking worldwide. This phenomenon is very disturbing.

Human trafficking represents a loathsome violation of human rights because it is a practice that is incompatible with human dignity. When some individuals assume the right to traffic in human beings, they reduce a human being to a mere object of trade. That is what trafficking in humans represents. The human being is reduced to a slave who is vilely exploited. That is not acceptable. It is carried out with all types of schemes involving trickery, corruption, violence, constraint, confinement, blackmail, deprivation of freedom, and even more troubling, identity theft.

In 2005, the legislators of this Parliament were well advised to include in the Criminal Code a specific offence enabling crown attorneys to bring charges.

I would like to provide a few statistics.

Canada is not untouched by this phenomenon. One would think that this phenomenon does not exist in countries as rich and prosperous as Canada, which operate under the rule of law and where freedoms are protected, and where there are courts of law and charters of human rights to guarantee freedoms. However, that is not the case.

I managed to get some statistics from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We made a conservative estimate, and by "conservative", I mean prudent. I would not want anyone to think that these numbers came from the Conservative Party. These are prudent numbers that prompt us to be particularly circumspect when discussing this phenomenon.

• (1740)

A conservative estimate suggests that every year in Canada, 3,600 people fall prey to human traffickers. This is not a marginal phenomenon. Of those people, 600 are victims of trafficking for

sexual purposes: pornography, prostitution, exotic massage and sex tourism. Another group of people in Canada fall prey to human traffickers in connection with drug trafficking, forced marriage or domestic labour. People are brought to Canada by force, assigned to a residence and denied their freedom. That is also a form of human trafficking. Examples of this have made the headlines in Montreal. This phenomenon exists.

Eight hundred people are victims of human trafficking in connection with drug trafficking, forced marriage, domestic labour, and work in the manufacturing and clothing sectors. More troubling still is the fact that yet another group of people is being bought and sold. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people who are bought and sold pass through Canada. They are brought here to large urban centres, then moved to other destinations where they are to be sold.

There is something wrong with this bill. I believe that the bill's sponsor had good intentions. He has worked very hard on the Standing Committee on Status of Women. However, the Bloc Québécois is not convinced that the Criminal Code provisions that permit charges to be laid need additional listed violations and mandatory minimum sentences.

Parliamentarians here will acknowledge that the Bloc Québécois' positions are consistent. We have never been comfortable with mandatory minimum sentences. There is a lot of literature on the subject, even in the Department of Justice. I have studies conducted by Justice Canada showing that mandatory minimum sentences are not the magical deterrent some people think they are. Not only that, but they can be quite negative when it comes to plea bargaining.

The Bloc Québécois has been a leader in the fight against organized crime. I am not the sort of person who likes to blow his own horn, but when I have to, I will. I introduced the first anti-gang bill in this House in 1995. The former member for Charlesbourg, Richard Marceau, a bright light, an enlightened jurist and a great man who served the people of Charlesbourg well, recommended that the \$1,000 bill be removed from circulation and, in the dying days of the Martin government, got a bill passed to reverse the onus of proof for proceeds of crime.

The Bloc Québécois is uncomfortable with mandatory minimum sentences, because we believe that they needlessly tie the hands of the people who administer justice, such as judges and all those involved in a trial. This is not the way to achieve our objective.

It is not that the Bloc Québécois is not sensitive to human trafficking. In 2005, the Bloc Québécois supported the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code. We therefore will not support the bill, and I am certain that our constituents understand our rationale, as I have explained it.

*Private members' business*

•(1750)

[English]

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am indeed pleased that the issue of human trafficking has come back to the House. I am concerned, however, that my colleague from across the floor has introduced a bill that deals only superficially with the issues of human trafficking. It, unfortunately, neither addresses the causes of human trafficking nor looks at ways to prevent it. Bill C-268 is ineffectual and needs desperately to be amended.

We studied this issue of trafficking human beings at great length in the status of women committee. The member opposite was, at that time, a vice-chair, so she should be well-versed in the multiple issues that sadly have been omitted from her bill.

The committee found, in its 2007 report, that the issue of human trafficking is complex and many steps need to be taken to address this horrendous crime against vulnerable people.

I want to touch on a few of the key recommendations left out of this bill. However, first, I would like to point out that this bill is very restrictive because it only covers minors. I am not sure why the member added in that restriction because many adults are also victims and need to be protected. It is not just children under the age of 18 who fall victim.

The key to addressing human trafficking in Canada is prevention. As we heard from a number of witnesses, addressing poverty is the first and best prevention. In Canada, those most vulnerable to human trafficking are first nations people. We have national trafficking of Canadian women, especially in the aboriginal communities. In the prairie provinces, there is a lot of activity going on. Girls are being recruited on reserve and brought into the big urban centres, like Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton and Calgary, to work in prostitution. Erin Wolski of the Native Women's Association of Canada told the status of women committee that aboriginal females were extremely vulnerable. I am very disappointed that this bill does nothing to address this.

As the committee heard, we need funding for education, decent housing, safe water and anti-violence programs to address poverty in our first nations communities. We need to work with organizations, such as the AFN and the Native Women's Association of Canada, to develop programs to help women who are vulnerable to trafficking and create awareness about the dangers.

Additionally, we need sensitivity training for police on the issue as many first nations women do not feel comfortable, nor safe, in approaching police for assistance. The bill before us does not address the need for prevention and awareness or support programs.

The committee also recommended that an awareness program was necessary for minors about the risks of prostitution and trafficking. The modelling industry was singled out as particularly dangerous because it remains unregulated and promises of a glamorous job can be used to lure a young girl or a young woman.

The bill also fails to address the issues surrounding women who are trafficked into Canada from other countries. It can be more difficult for women to immigrate to Canada because there are so

many more barriers for them, such as the need for money and education, and many of the women who wish to immigrate have no access to these.

Immigration laws need to be changed to allow more women to immigrate on their own and not through the very means that leaves them vulnerable to human trafficking. The temporary resident permit process needs to be reviewed and victims who have been trafficked should be sheltered for 180 days and allowed to work. The government should ensure their basic needs are met during this period.

The immigration and refugee protection regulations need to be reviewed and amended. In particular, section 245(f), a particularly odious section, states that a victim, having been under control or influence of traffickers, is more likely to require detention. This section needs to be eliminated entirely.

Many trafficked victims are threatened with criminal or immigration exposure by their traffickers; thus, preventing them from seeking help. Section 245(f) assumes that these people are criminals and forgets that they are victims. This simply reinforces the power that traffickers have over these vulnerable women.

•(1755)

Steps need to be taken to help victims of trafficking instead of treating them like criminals. Initiatives, such as a 1-800 number, access to the witness protection program, safe interim housing, counseling and legal advice would all benefit trafficking victims and help reintegrate them back into society.

It should also be noted that traffic victims are often sent home to their country of origin to face the same criminals who trafficked them in the first place. Imagine being so vulnerable and being deported back to the place where the predators are waiting.

The bill before us only addresses the need to target people who purchase sexual services. This requires an increase in funding for provinces and territories for training and education for officers, judges and lawyers. Those funds are missing from the legislation.

We also need a national data collection and tracking system that will protect the integrity of police information and the integrity of the victim.

The committee on the status of women also recommended more training for law enforcement officers to identify someone who has been trafficked. There needs to be dedicated, multi-jurisdictional units to investigate trafficking in Canada.

*Private members' business*

Women become trapped in the sex trade after being lured to cities with false promises. We can imagine individuals being beaten, forced into sex work, and told they will be killed if they try to escape. The constant threat of violence means they are too scared to go to the authorities, but even if they did, there is little chance of retribution for their attacker.

This might sound like something that would happen in a third world country or an era of bygone history, but it is not. It is happening right now in Canada and is a reality for the many victims of human trafficking.

Experts agree that the problem is escalating. With the Olympics in 2010, that could just be the catalyst for a massive boom in the trafficking of women into the city sex trade from outside and within Canada. Despite numerous convictions of people involved in running human trafficking rings in other countries, including the U.S. and the U.K., Canada has yet to prosecute a single person for this crime. The bill will do very little to change that.

Although Canada's very first human trafficking charges were laid against a Vancouver man in 2004, Michael Ng, who ran an east Vancouver massage parlour, they were dismissed by B.C. Provincial Court Judge Malcolm MacLean in 2007, after a year of testimony from two women who claimed Ng had lured them to Canada from China with the promise of jobs as waitresses. Judge MacLean said the offence of human trafficking had not been proved beyond a reasonable doubt, although there must be real action and real laws to deal with trafficking.

Vancouver activist, Benjamin Perrin, has complained about this. He said:

I can't understand why Canada hasn't successfully prosecuted a single person for human trafficking when you look at other countries like the U.S., Australia, and the U.K. We've made the same commitments and been to the same conferences, but Canada has been all talk and no action. We're just beginning to turn the corner; we're where other countries...were 10 years ago. We've had a decade of inaction on this—

It is time that changed. It is time that traffickers were stopped and this very risky business was put to an end.

There are victims that I would like to name before I conclude: a young woman by the name of Marta. Her dream was to be a Hollywood actress and to live in a mansion, so she saved up the money and went to an overseas modelling job. When she arrived, her visa and passport were taken away. She was locked in a hotel, and was beaten and burned with cigarettes until she submitted to her attacker.

This is a complex issue, as we can see. It needs a multi-faceted approach to even begin to address the problem. The bill falls far short of addressing the real issues behind human trafficking in Canada and abroad. If the government were serious about human trafficking, we would have a comprehensive government bill.

• (1800)

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to join in the second reading debate on private member's bill C-268, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years).

I am pleased to speak to this bill today and I sincerely thank the member for Kildonan—St. Paul for her many years of tireless work on this, her passion for protecting the young and vulnerable people in this country and around the world, and her dedicated effort to combat human trafficking, not just in Canada but internationally.

Bill C-268 proposes to build upon our existing Criminal Code protections by specifically recognizing that the trafficking of children is a crime that must be treated very seriously by the justice system. It would do this by creating a new offence of trafficking a person under the age of 18 years. The mandatory minimum penalty would apply to cases where there is a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment but not for the more serious offence punishable by life imprisonment where it involves aggravating circumstances.

This offence would mirror the existing offence of trafficking in persons, section 279.01 now in place, which protects all persons, both adults and children, and provides for maximum penalties of 14 years or, in aggravated cases, a maximum of life imprisonment.

The Criminal Code currently contains three specific offences that target human trafficking. These offences were created and enacted in November 2005, just a short while ago. Sadly, however, they have not dealt with the current reality we are facing on the globe today.

Section 279.01 prohibits anyone from engaging in specific forms of conduct for the purpose of exploiting or facilitating the exploitation of another person. Specifically, the offence identifies the acts in question as either recruiting, transporting, referring, receiving, transferring, holding, concealing or harbouring a person or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of another person. This offence applies to both adult and child victims. It carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment if it involves the kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated sexual assault or death of the victim. In all other cases, the maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment.

Second, the Criminal Code contains an indictable offence that specifically targets those who seek to profit from the trafficking and exploitation of others, even if they do not engage directly in trafficking people. The existing section 279.02 specifically prohibits any person from receiving a financial or other material benefit knowing that it results from the commission of the trafficking of another person. This offence carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

The third existing human trafficking offence responds to a common method that traffickers use to control their victims. It prohibits anyone from either concealing, removing, withholding or destroying another person's travel identification or immigration documents for the purpose of committing or facilitating the commission of the trafficking of that person. This offence carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

Of course, these specific trafficking-in-persons offences supplement other offences that can be used to address related conduct, such as kidnapping, forcible confinement, assault and the prostitution or procuring offences, which criminalize the many different aspects of trafficking. Canada's criminal law provides a comprehensive criminal justice response to this serious crime.

Bill C-268 addresses a particularly reprehensible form of criminal conduct that profits from the exploitation of the most vulnerable.

In contrast with what the previous speaker said, there are existing laws for existing offences but we need a specific offence to address the young and those who are most vulnerable. The widespread nature of this crime, sadly, is evident in the global revenues that are generated by it. They are estimated to be as much as \$10 billion U.S. per year and the crime is estimated to be in the top three money-makers for organized crime. Further, we know that this crime disproportionately affects children. UNICEF's estimates indicate that as many as 1.2 million children are trafficked globally each year.

The United States' state department's 2008 annual report on human trafficking estimates that 800,000 persons are trafficked around the world each year, with 80% of those transnational victims being women and, sadly, up to 50% of all victims being children.

•(1805)

As I have said, Bill C-268 seeks to amend the main trafficking in persons offence, which was enacted in 2005. This raises the question: Do we know how our existing Criminal Code responses are working in practice? As mentioned earlier, the specific trafficking offences in the Criminal Code supplement existing offences and this means that traffickers may be charged with a number of offences, depending on the circumstances of the case.

In contrast to the statement that was made previously that in Canada there have not been any convictions, there have. There have been three convictions to date for the specific offence of trafficking in persons, all of which resulted from guilty pleas and involved women and child victims who were sexually exploited. One of these cases was in Montreal where an accused pleaded guilty to trafficking in persons under sections 279.01 and 279.02 and procuring under section 212, and received two years for each charge, once again, regrettably, to be served concurrently.

A number of investigations and court cases are ongoing. As these cases demonstrate, while the offences in the Criminal Code are relatively new, law enforcement officials across the country are using them where appropriate.

Human traffickers prey upon the most vulnerable. Their targets are often children and young women. Victims may be kidnapped, abducted or lured by false promises of legitimate employment as, for example, domestic servants, models or factory or farm workers. Victims are then subjected to exploitation in the sex trade or other forms of forced labour.

Trafficking victims suffer physical, sexual and emotional abuse, including threats of violence or actual harm to their loved ones. This abuse is compounded by their living and working conditions. There is an existence that is difficult, if not almost impossible, to comprehend.

#### *Private members' business*

With that in mind, it is clear that strong responses are required to address this horrific crime of exploitation and abuse. I am sure we can all agree that human trafficking is a horrible crime which inflicts serious damage on its victims. That is undeniable. I am also sure that we can all agree that we should ensure that our criminal law responds appropriately and strongly denounces this conduct.

Hon. members should recall that in 2006 the House unanimously supported Motion No. 153, which was also introduced, I am proud to say, by the member for Kildonan—St. Paul. It condemned the crime of trafficking in persons and called for a national strategy to combat the trafficking in persons worldwide. The unanimous support that motion received truly reflected the shared support by all members to ensure that we continue to strongly condemn and act to combat trafficking in persons.

I believe that further consideration of this bill will no doubt help us assess the adequacy of these responses. I was honoured and privileged to be able to second the bill. A couple of years ago I spoke at the Asia-Pacific forum regarding Canada's position on human trafficking. The evidence given during that period was most alarming.

Thankfully, many other countries have already adopted the measures that we are proposing today and they have encouraged Canada to do so. I am delighted that the member for Kildonan—St. Paul has recognized that reality and responded accordingly.

A number of years ago I served in the judicial field where I saw firsthand on many occasions the exploitation of our young people. I saw young girls aged 10, 11 and 12 years old being pimped and prostituted, sometimes even by their own relatives. This is an intolerable situation.

There are some situations where we need to be considerate and try to find a balance but there is no balance to a human life that has been absolutely betrayed. This is where we need to stand for all humanity, particularly for the citizens of Canada, and stand up for what we believe is right, which is that young people have a right to live a normal life without being preyed upon by the most insidious criminals. The law must prevail for that.

I am proud and pleased to support the member for Kildonan—St. Paul and I thank her for bringing this valuable legislation to the fore.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I share the sentiments of the last speaker in terms of the work done by the member for Kildonan—St. Paul in bringing forth this issue. It is greatly to her credit that she has over a number of years gathered the information and pressed this issue forward. I know she does not want me to say this but it seems at times that she has done this in spite of her own government and political party.

However, as my colleague from London—Fanshawe said, much more needs to be done. The amendments we passed to the Criminal Code back in 2005 met our requirements of an international protocol but we have seen very little enforcement in that regard.

*Private members' business*

I want to spend most of my time in this debate on the international situation because it tells us something about what we should be doing in Canada, specifically with regard to this bill. We also need much more activity on the part of the government in other areas, not just under the Criminal Code and in the criminal justice system.

I am referring to a report that came out from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in February. It began looking at human trafficking fairly recently, I would say, starting back about 2003. It wrote a significant report in 2006, three years ago this month, and then this report in February of this year. The executive director has a cover sheet on it and I want to refer to several points that she raised.

The first point is that the number of countries that have been moving to implement the protocol has grown quite substantially. She obviously sees that as a major and positive development. She points out that a number of countries have not, particularly on the continent of Africa where a lot of work needs to be done.

She also raises a point that we need to take some cognizance of. She said that although the number of convictions under the various criminal legislations passed around the world have been increasing, the convictions are mostly taking place in a very small number of countries. Canada falls into those areas of the larger group where we are getting very few convictions because we are getting very few charges.

She points out that in two out of every five countries that have signed onto the protocol, they have not had a single conviction. Again, although we do not fall into that category, we are not much out of it, given the few convictions we have had since we passed the law back in 2005.

She goes on to make a third point that I want to draw to the House's attention. She says that, by far, sexual exploitation is the most commonly identified human trafficking. That was at 79% in the study, followed distantly by forced labour at 18%. She then goes on to say that it is probably not an accurate reflection of what is going on when we take into account a number of other forced labour situations, including youth being used as soldiers in warfare, children begging, put into domestic servitude, forced into marriage and even having organs removed. In the covering letter, she makes the point very strongly that we do not have, as we do in other areas of criminal activity, accurate documentation.

• (1810)

The fourth point is one about which I am most concerned. With regard to this legislation and the role of the legislation already on the books, the majority of people being convicted of crimes of human trafficking are women, not men. This came out for the first time in the report. My initial reaction is okay, if they commit the crime, they should be convicted. However, what it really says is in many countries the crime is being used in a targeted way against women. She makes the point in the report that almost always the women who are convicted were themselves victims of human trafficking initially. They were brought in almost always by organized crime syndicates, moved up the ladder of the organization to a low level of management and forced to recruit other women and children into the sex trade and other forms of human trafficking.

What then happens is they are the ones who get caught in large numbers, so we end up with this figure that more than half of the convicted offenders are women. The reality is they continue to be victimized. They were victims initially when they were dragged or forced into whatever the conduct is in trafficking and then forced to take part in the crime itself on an ongoing basis. They are the ones who are being convicted in the largest numbers. When we look at the bill before us, we have to be cognizant of that fact.

The final point she makes in the summary of the report is that most of the trafficking, with the exception of a few countries, are internal to the country, and my colleague from London—Fanshawe pointed this out. In our country it has been shown very glaringly to be women and children recruited off our first nations reserves. They are probably the single largest group that suffer from this crime. If we continue with the pattern and if we do not broaden the scope of our approach to deal with this horrendous crime, inevitably we will also find that over a period of time they will show up more and more in statistics as being the convicted offenders.

Again, I want to be very clear on the significance of this point. In the vast majority of crime, and I am talking close to 90% of all crimes, violent and non-violent, it is males who are convicted. That is the ratio in most countries. It certainly is the ratio in Canada. It runs about 85% male and 15% female in Canada currently. However, in this crime we see almost a reversal of that, where well over 50% of those convicted are women. They are not the major perpetrators. It is organized crime in the vast majority of cases, almost without exception. The members who are at the senior levels of organized crime are male, not female, so there is a major problem.

I want to go to the bill itself. I am concerned that if this pattern shows up here, the bill may end up victimizing the victims once again. We have to be very careful about who is going to end up being the target of this legislation. I told the author of the bill that I was working to perhaps clarify and tighten up the language in the second clause of the bill. Some terminology around recruits and exploitation needs some clarification in those circumstances.

In particular I am concerned with the third clause because it takes away judicial discretion. I am not sure if this was intended by the author or not, but by making the maximum sentence 10 years, it prevents conditional sentences being used. There are certainly going to be times, and again I am thinking specifically of women who are charged with this, where it would be appropriate to use conditional sentences, to impose conditions on them of counselling and so on, so they could be brought back into society.

• (1815)

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I had not intended to participate in the debate, but I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

There is no doubt that this issue is a priority for all. The member opposite referenced the amendments made to the Criminal Code by my colleague, the member from Mount Royal, in 2005, which brought severe penalties to this issue.

This is a pernicious crime. It is in fact modern day global slave trade and a comprehensive strategy is undoubtedly needed to address it.

We have heard much discussion on this and we have heard discussion over the year on the need for a comprehensive strategy. I was part of a discussion earlier today with my colleague who again identified it as the four Ps: the need to protect, prosecute, pursue and ensure that the perpetrators are attended.

This past week I had the opportunity to attend the Summit on Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympics and Beyond in Vancouver. Probably 150 or so attend it. There was a multifaceted complex discussion. We heard from those who had been victims of trafficking, both internationally and internally within Canada. We heard about the realities of their lives and the poverty and the circumstances which drove them into that situation.

I have before me the declaration that was signed by 23 groups that attended the summit. I suspect more signed onto it. It is a comprehensive declaration, which in fact is a comprehensive strategy. The preamble identifies human trafficking sex slavery. It talks about the links to prostitution. It talks about the importance of governments and community groups working together. It says quite powerfully, "Whereas one victim of human trafficking sex slavery is one victim too many". I do not think there is anybody in the House who would disagree with that.

When they moved forward with their declaration, there was no reference in it to the matters referred to in this bill. What they talked about was the effective prosecution of human traffickers, the creation of a crown counsel dedicated to human trafficking, the importance of increased judicial education, more accountability from all police forces and the Criminal Code reflect that the crime of human trafficking carry meaningful penalties. Then they put a significant emphasis on the protection from human trafficking. As legislators, as governments, we have to put more emphasis on the area of protection and prevention.

They advocate an enforceable commitment of a code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation. They demand an improvement in the federal government's response for the effective services for trafficked women and prostitutes, particularly in the areas of health care, legal aid, temporary residence permits, sanctuary and opportunities for citizenship if they have come from abroad. Also, they demand financial resources for women's groups.

They talk about the effective prevention of human trafficking. I will not go through all the components of it, but a big component is education at many levels. It reiterates, in very strong language, that their demands are serious and should be taken seriously.

• (1820)

The groups present at the summit ran the gamut of community representatives. They included the Committee for Racial Justice, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Fiji Canada, the Catholic Women's League of Canada, MOSAIC, the Canadian Muslim Federation, Richmond Addiction Services, Salvation Army, UBC Faculty of Law, and the list goes on. They spoke with one voice on the need for a comprehensive strategy.

#### *Private members' business*

While there is an initiative in place today, we need a comprehensive strategy that will deal with all of the components of human trafficking. Punishment in itself is simply not enough. We have to look at prevention and all the components and social determinants of what results when young women, wherever they live, are induced into prostitution and trafficking. We also need to look at protection.

Therefore, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House this powerful declaration, signed last week in Vancouver. I hope the House, at some time, will move forward with a much more comprehensive enforceable strategy to deal with the issue of human trafficking.

• (1825)

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-268 is about human trafficking and acknowledging the fact that human trafficking is a vicious crime that must be stopped.

Bill C-268 was drafted to accomplish one thing: to ensure the sentences of the traffickers of children reflect the gravity of the crime. With the first two sentences in Canada resulting in approximately one to two years served for trafficking children, traffickers are currently able to continue making hundreds of thousands of dollars from the exploitation and rape of children without much threat of serious sanction.

I want to thank the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry who pointed out in the first hour of debate that there is no minimum sentence for aggravated offences under paragraph 279.011(1)(a) of Bill C-268. This paragraph provides for an individual to be sentenced to life imprisonment, which means that he or she will only be eligible for parole after seven years.

However, should this bill go to committee, I have had an amendment drafted that would be within the scope of the bill and that would amend paragraph 279.011(1)(a) to ensure that there is no question that this paragraph also provides for a minimum sentence of five years.

I understand that some hon. members do not feel that mandatory minimums are appropriate in any case.

I want to remind hon. members that according to the Supreme Court of Canada, a mandatory minimum sentence constitutes cruel and unusual punishment only if it is "grossly disproportionate", given the gravity of the offence or the personal circumstances of the offender.

Clearly the trafficking and sexual exploitation of a child demands a sentence that reflects the serious gravity of this egregious offence. Under current legislation, offenders can receive as little as no time in jail.

Countries around the world are beginning to recognize that serious action is required to combat the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. Article 24 of the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings states that child trafficking is an aggravated circumstance that warrants an enhanced penalty.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

It is important to note that Canada remains one of the few developed countries that does not have enhanced penalties for the trafficking of our children.

Mohamed Y. Mattar, executive director of the Protection Project at the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, points out:

Many states have specific provisions in their antitrafficking legislation or criminal codes guaranteeing enhanced penalties in cases of trafficking in persons committed under aggravated circumstances, including a crime committed against a child victim;

Dr. Mattar also states that the Council of Europe framework decision of July 19, 2002, mandates that European countries provide penalties for trafficking of at least eight years imprisonment. This is significant since many European countries follow a civil law model that does not recognize the plea-bargaining system which, in countries like Canada, may result in a shorter sentence.

This framework specifically states that:

Penalties provided for by national legislation must be “effective, proportionate and dissuasive”.

There is also a great concern that more must be done in Canada for victims of human trafficking. I cannot agree more.

The long-term physical and psychological impact on its victims, especially children, is devastating. I have continued to call for a national action plan to combat human trafficking that would provide better coordination between the provinces, territories and federal governments to deliver effective victim services.

Only two years ago, members of this House unanimously supported Motion No. 153 that called for a national action plan.

I strongly believe we need to address the factors that lead to exploitation, such as poverty and marginalization. Our aboriginal women and children are especially vulnerable due to these factors.

These concerns cannot be addressed through a private member's bill. I have put forward Bill C-268 to amend the Criminal Code to address the critical legal aspect of child trafficking and to bring parity between Canada's legislation and that of many other countries.

It is my hope that members of all parties will support this important legislation and soundly denounce the trafficking of children.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, a recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 22, 2009, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Madam Speaker, I believe if you were to seek it, you would find the consent of the House to see the clock at 6:39 p. m.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

### AIRPORT SECURITY

**Hon. Gurbax Malhi (Bramalea—Gore—Malton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think we can all remember where we were on September 11, 2001, when the United States was under attack. As a result of that tragic event, our government acted to ensure that Canadians did not fall victim to similar attacks.

As a result of people's fears, the air travel industry saw a dramatic drop in travel. The Liberal government of the day put in place immediate security measures to protect Canadians and all air travellers. The measures were extensive and were designed to create safer airports, thereby encouraging Canadians to fly again.

Not only did these measures create safer air travel, they also helped to get people flying again and prevented a total collapse of the airlines and businesses that rely on the major air carriers and airports.

The only downside to imposing new security measures was the associated costs that would be incurred by Canada's airports and air carriers. Recognizing this additional financial hardship, the Liberal government decided to offer a subsidy through the airport police assistance program. The subsidy amounted to approximately \$33 million and was disbursed to Canada's major airports to assist in administering these security measures. This funding subsidy was for airports to provide overall security, including for drugs, smuggling and other crimes within the airport property.

Pearson International Airport is in my riding and receives approximately \$3.2 million to offset the costs of the measures that keep Canadian and international travellers safer while passing through Canada's busiest airport.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The Conservatives will say that they are putting a whole lot more money into the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority but CATSA's only mandate is to screen passengers and check for terrorism.

APAP was for airports to provide overall security for drugs, smuggling and other crimes within the airport property. These are not within CATSA's mandate.

The Conservatives also announced \$14 million in 2009-10 to support the implementation of a new security program for cargo that departs from Canadian airports. While this will help, it will not necessarily help with all of the other security needs.

Simply put, by cutting this money, the government is reducing funds for security and policing within airports. Airports will have to absorb the security costs and charge all airport users more. This will have a direct impact on the many businesses, tenants and other services that rely on the airport for their business.

Several weeks ago, I asked the Minister of Transport a question, to which I received a non-response. I will ask it again now.

The Minister of Transport made the decision to cut the \$33 million security subsidy to airports. Why is the Minister of Transport purposely increasing the financial burden on Canadians in the middle of a recession?

• (1835)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the question posed by the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton in February regarding airport funding in Canada. I thank the member for his question and for the opportunity to respond here again. It gives me a chance to remind the member opposite and his party that our government is committed to maintaining a safe and secure transportation system from coast to coast to coast in order to keep Canadians safe.

Yesterday, in her most recent report, the Auditor General highlighted some issues with regard to intelligence and information sharing in air travel. This government, our Prime Minister and Canada's transport minister support the Auditor General's recommendations and agree that we need better tools to help ensure safety and security of air travel. We are concerned that anything might undermine our efforts on that front and we are acting.

In December the Minister of Transport, together with the Minister of Public Safety, announced a five-point plan to give the RCMP the tools it needs to keep Canadian travellers safe.

It stated that we are, first, strengthening the information sharing agreement between Transport Canada and the RCMP; second, exploring legislative initiatives to enhance search and seizure methods; third, reviewing existing security clearances and examining new clearance levels; fourth, revoking any security clearance when the RCMP has provided evidence that a person may pose a security risk; and finally, working toward strengthening legal provisions for organized crime, ensuring that serious offences are met with serious penalties.

I am pleased to report that Transport Canada and the RCMP are working together to strengthen communications and information sharing between them.

The current discussions are very productive. We are very close to concluding a renewed agreement. We can expect an announcement very shortly. Canada's transport minister said yesterday, "If we don't have one within 10 days, I'm going to get our two teams together in my boardroom and am not going to allow them to go out until it is successfully concluded".

Our government is clearly committed to maintaining and enhancing our already high safety and security standards. It is just another example of how this government is getting things done and keeping Canadians safe.

**Hon. Gurbax Malhi:** Madam Speaker, the government claims that the money withdrawn from the Airport Police Assistance Program has all been put into the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. Clearly, it just does not understand. This money was for a different purpose altogether. The government cut \$33 million from APAP and then announced \$14 million for CATSA, saying it was for general security and policing. The fact is that CATSA does not have the mandate to perform the functions of APAP.

How does cutting \$33 million from one security program and putting only \$14 million into another help Canada's airports stay on top of security concerns? The government will be raising the costs to passengers and airlines, and weakening the funding for general airport security, ultimately putting either businesses or air travellers at risk.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member opposite that this government has taken real action to keep Canadians safe. The action we have taken regarding the Auditor General's report and other key pieces of legislation demonstrates that unequivocally.

We will continue to work productively with all stakeholders and federal departments involved in order to keep our safety and security regimes at the high level they are today. We are working to ensure that they are even improved. We are working to ensure that we can respond to the ever-evolving security needs. We are working to keep Canadians safe.

Canada's Ministers of Transport and Public Safety are facilitating productive discussions between their two respective departments and a decision is imminent. This government is getting the job done.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

● (1840)

## HEALTH

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, maternal consumption of alcohol during pregnancy is the leading known cause of mental retardation in Canada. For every 1,000 births in Canada, about 12 children are born with fetal alcohol syndrome or other alcohol related birth defects. Its primary symptoms include growth deficiency before and after birth, central nervous system dysfunction resulting in learning disabilities, and physical malformations in the face and cranial areas. Other alcohol related birth defects include central nervous damage, physical abnormalities and the like.

FAS is incurable. Most victims will usually require special care throughout their lives, depending on the severity. The estimated lifetime costs for the care of an FAS victim ranges from \$3 million to \$6 million.

There are some secondary symptoms that give one an idea of how serious this is. Ninety per cent of these victims have mental health problems. Sixty per cent will be expelled or suspended from school or will drop out. Sixty per cent will get in trouble with the law. Fifty per cent will go to jail or be confined to an institution. Fifty per cent will exhibit inappropriate sexual behaviour. Thirty per cent will abuse drugs or alcohol. Eighty per cent will not be capable of living independently. Eighty per cent will have employment problems.

Harm can occur at any time during the pregnancy, even during the first month when most women do not even know that they are pregnant. Research findings show that it is between days 15 and 22 of pregnancy that the facial and cranial features of a human being are formed. During days 15 to 22, a woman generally does not even know she is pregnant, so it may be too late even after she finds out.

Over 50% of pregnancies are not planned. Therefore, if a woman is sexually active and pregnancy is possible, the best recommendation is to abstain from alcohol. To choose not to abstain is to play Russian roulette with the lifelong health and well-being of the child. There is no recommended safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. The prudent choice is clear.

As a consequence, I rose to ask a question of the Minister of Health. An access to information request showed that over the last three years, one-third of the approved funding, some \$3.3 million a year, lapsed. Over \$1 million was not spent on programs that could have been available to help some of the NGOs and agencies deal with some of the problems associated with fetal alcohol syndrome and be part of the international community in seeking ways in which to remediate the incidence of brain damage in children due to alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

I was very disappointed that the minister simply did not seem to be aware. She sloughed off the question by saying that she would continue to work with our parties. I was hoping to hear her say that I was right. I was hoping to hear her admit that the government had allowed money to lapse in these years, but that she would commit that the government would make sure that the full funding approved by Parliament for her ministry would be dedicated to addressing fetal alcohol syndrome.

I hope that the minister has better information for Canadians now. They are concerned about the victims of fetal alcohol syndrome.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, March 24, my colleagues, the member for St. Paul's and the member for Mississauga South, expressed concerns with regard to the funding of the Public Health Agency of Canada's fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, FASD, initiative. I would like to express my thanks to my fellow members for their questions and commend them for their long-standing commitment to this very important issue.

I would like to reassure my colleagues that the Public Health Agency of Canada remains fully committed to the fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, FASD, initiative. Funding to the program has not been reduced. In fact, the program has already committed all of its 2009-10 funding and will continue to work with partners in the coming fiscal year.

Over 90% of the funds earmarked for FASD projects in communities were spent on the issue. The Treasury Board submission that was referred to in the independent evaluation report included operational funding based on initial forecasts. It cost less than anticipated to effectively manage the program.

The same report showed that overall, the FASD community has evolved in the last five years. PHAC funding and actions were determined to be key contributors to that change by independent consultants. As is the case for most evaluations, the report the members were referring to pointed to a few areas where there could be business improvements. These concerns are presently being addressed.

It should also be noted that the report concludes that the FASD initiative is affordable and provides many examples of projects that demonstrate value for money for Canadians. PHAC's FASD programming is effective and continues to serve the public interest.

PHAC will continue to work with partners to build the evidence base on FASD, develop practical tools and promote awareness of FASD.

In fact, all women are at risk of having a child affected by alcohol. Because of this, PHAC and its partners stress that messages from all sectors of society must be clear and consistent, whether they are from health care providers, friends, or family members. Put simply, there is no known safe threshold for drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

PHAC has led the federal activities on FASD since 1999 and has focused on developing and strengthening the leadership and coordinating functions. This ensures national access to knowledge and evidence, tools, expertise, and resources across this country.

In addition to the federal FASD initiative, the agency is working to prevent FASD through public education. The agency has a guide on healthy pregnancy and has done a social marketing campaign on healthy pregnancy. Both advise parents about the risks posed by consuming alcohol while pregnant.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

PHAC's commitment to preventing and managing the health impacts of FASD is also evident through its support for new publications, websites, tools and resources, and shared awareness efforts spanning multiple jurisdictions.

The government recognizes that FASD is a major public health issue. The Public Health Agency of Canada will continue to work with stakeholders to prevent FASD and to improve the outcomes for those already affected.

I thank the member for Mississauga South for his question and his concern on this very important matter for Canadians.

• (1845)

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Madam Speaker, fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol related birth defects are a reality in our society. The victims suffer a lifetime of tragic symptoms, which rob them of any reasonable quality of life. We have both a social and a moral responsibility to do the best we can to balance the individual's rights during pregnancy with society's responsibility to promote good public health.

The question was with regard to lapsed funding of about \$1 million. That came from an access to information request. The member seemed to indicate that we have booked all the money for 2009. That happened in prior years, it is just that the money did not actually get out. It was booked but never was spent.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary if he would undertake to check the access to information request and the

response given by Health Canada and if that response to the access to information request was in error, that he bring that to the attention of the House.

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate to the member for Mississauga South that the Public Health Agency of Canada's fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, FASD, initiative has not been cut. The evaluation of the FASD initiative was supportive of the government's funding in this very important area. Over 90% of the funds earmarked for projects with stakeholders was expended. As I said in my speech, it cost less than anticipated.

The Public Health Agency of Canada remains fully committed to the fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, FASD, initiative. The evaluation report suggested improvements and they are going to be addressed. The report concludes that the FASD initiative is affordable, effective and demonstrates value for money to Canadians.

PHAC funding and actions were determined as key contributors to the change in maturity of the issue by independent consultants. Since 1999, PHAC has ensured national access to knowledge and evidence, tools, expertise and resources across this country. Its partners stress that messages from—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Order. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:49 p.m.)

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