



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 145 • NUMBER 057 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, June 7, 2010**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 7, 2010

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[English]

### CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

The House resumed from May 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-475, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (methamphetamine and ecstasy), be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** When the matter was last before the House the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona had the floor. There are three and a half minutes remaining in the time allotted for his remarks. I therefore call upon the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to finish my address to Bill C-475.

Once again, I want to congratulate the member for having gone through a long and torturous experience with this bill. As I indicated before, while this bill probably should have been a government initiative, I am happy that he, as a private member, has been able to take it this far and hopefully finish the process. We should be doing more of this. The role of private members' in this House should be enhanced more so than it is even at this point, but there has been an improvement from what it was 20 or 30 years ago.

Dealing with the whole drug issue in this country, it is really a question of following the money. For too long we have concentrated our efforts on tracking down small time dealers at the street level who sell little bits of drugs here and there. The reality is that the money gets funnelled right back to organized crime in this country.

It was not until the late 1950s that the Mafia was even recognized as such in the United States, and after that the RICO laws came into place. It took many years for the Americans to recognize that the Mafia even existed and had to be controlled. The U.S. brought in the RICO laws and have had some success in dismantling organized crime groups.

We have to concentrate on dealing with issues like the proceeds from criminal activities. We have to seize the proceeds from crime so we can take away the incentive for criminal organizations to be

involved in crime. I pointed out in the past that today's type of organized criminal is not the biker guy out for a Sunday drive. Normally these people are living in million dollar houses and do not even drive a bike in many cases. We have to concentrate on making tough laws against white collar criminals and concentrate on these organized criminals.

One other point I want to mention once again is in regard to the pill making machines. The United States has told us that it is concerned that a lot of the methamphetamine traffic is now headquartered in Canada because we do not regulate pill making machines. We should be following the American example and require these pill making machines to be registered and tracked when any repairs are made. This is just one more way that we could control this issue.

The member for Halifax mentioned the other day that the Americans are controlling the supply of things to make methamphetamine. An individual can only buy a certain amount of supplies and he or she must have a reason for buying any large quantity of supplies. That is what we need to look at.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate. There being no further members rising, I will give the floor to the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country for his five minute right of reply.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise on third reading of a bill that represents an idea whose time has come.

Bill C-475, which deals the growing problem of crystal meth and ecstasy, is reaching the last lap of its marathon race, thanks to the unanimous support of all members of this House and of many Canadians from coast to coast.

It is often said that it is the journey and not the destination that is important. The destination remains critical, protecting Canadians from the aggressive assault on our society of highly addictive and increasingly accessible methamphetamine drugs, but the journey has also been important, a journey which began with the work of my colleague, the MP from Peace River, continued with the expert advice of senior law enforcement officials, gained momentum with contributions from each of the justice critics of the other three parties, and continued with wind under our wings with the support of all parties. When our Parliament manages to achieve this kind of consensus, Canadians smile, and the institution to which we members belong rises in their respect. The destination is important but the journey has been important too.

*Government Orders*

The change proposed in this bill addresses a lack of restrictions in the law against the gathering of precursors for two dangerous drugs: crystal meth and ecstasy. The bill strikes a major blow against their production. Throughout the journey of this bill, I have met many who have been working to help those who suffer from the plight of crystal meth and ecstasy. Each one of these persons gives cause for this bill to target directly the producers of these drugs and not just the users, and while the bill is certainly a step in the right direction, clearly more measures are necessary than any government could ever provide.

In the journey that I have taken with this bill, former and recovering addicts in treatment facilities with whom I have met have advocated the approach that we are adopting in this House. Last month, I visited the Orchard Recovery Centre on Bowen Island in the riding I represent, a marvellous place that gives hope and practical help to recovering addicts. I ran into a person, whom we will call Mary, who had a few comments to make about her education in the field of drugs. "Not even once" was the slogan that she recommends to anyone who even considers trying these drugs. Mary noted that it is hard to understand the real grip of addiction until one is actually there. The best way to avoid the addiction, she emphasized, is never to try the drug.

I have also dealt with a treatment centre in Prince George, B.C., one of the places that is on the front line in the battle against drug addiction.

Members will be asked later to vote on the third reading of this bill. I ask members to continue the unanimous support they have given the bill thus far. I hope they will join me once again in supporting Bill C-475, an idea whose time has come. We must send a strong message to our friends in the Senate to ensure its quick passage there.

I would like to offer my special thanks to all the people who made it possible for us to come this far in enacting a law that will save untold numbers of Canadians from the plague of crystal meth and ecstasy. I thank the member for Peace River, my Conservative colleagues, especially the justice minister, who helped me design the bill, and also the justice critics. I thank members of all parties who looked beyond their party loyalties to support a bill for the good of all Canadians.

I thank the endorsers who span our great country in their reach, endorsers such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of B.C. Police Chiefs, and various towns and cities in the riding I represent.

I thank the recovery centres, such as the Baldy Hughes Addiction Treatment Centre in Prince George and the Orchard Recovery Centre on Bowen Island, which I mentioned.

Finally, I thank the victims of crystal meth, ecstasy and of other drugs. Not one of them wants to be addicted. This is not a choice anyone freely makes. I thank them for the fight many of them are waging to free themselves of their addictions.

For now, I ask all members of this House to rise and join me in a special tribute to any Canadians struggling with any addiction. We want them to know that we stand with them in their battle and can

only hope that our efforts as legislators will translate into practical help for them, their families and their friends.

● (1110)

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 9, 2010, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House will now suspend until 12 noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:15 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-2, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Colombia, the Agreement on the Environment between Canada and the Republic of Colombia and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Colombia, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

● (1200)

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are three motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-2. Motions Nos. 1 to 3 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 3 to the House.

*Government Orders*

[English]

## MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-2 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-2 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-2 be amended by deleting Clause 48.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the report stage amendments but I must say that these are the most egregious circumstances imaginable.

As we well know, the trade committee, which was supposed to vet and hold, as the Liberal Party promised, full and comprehensive hearings on Bill C-2, did not do that. The Liberals and Conservatives combined to shut down the hearings. It is for that reason the NDP is bringing forward these report stage amendments.

The Liberal and Conservative majority on the trade committee refused to hear from the Canadian Labour Congress and some of the largest trade unions in the country, such as the National Union of Public and General Employees and the Public Service Alliance of Canada. As we know, these are labour activists, people simply trying to improve the working conditions of themselves and their co-workers.

More trade union activists are killed in Colombia than anywhere else on earth. One would expect that the promise by the Liberal Party to have full and comprehensive hearings would have come to pass, but that was absolutely betrayed.

The Liberals not only refused to hear from the Canadian Labour Congress and labour activists from some of Canada's largest unions, they also refused to hear from any members of the labour movement from Colombia. These are people who often give their lives trying to improve working conditions in Colombia because of the immense brutality of the paramilitary organizations that are affiliated with the Colombia government. They refused to hear from any of the non-government activists affiliated with the labour movement.

Labour activists in Colombia, who often do their work as volunteers with threats to their lives and those of their families, simply wanted to go before the trade committee and give their points of view on 90% of the remaining labour movement in Colombia, not the government-affiliated labour movement but trade union activists who comprise 90% of the labour movement there. The Liberals and Conservatives said no to hearing from those labour activists. They said no to hearing from Afro-Colombians, individuals suffering the brunt of the brutal government-linked paramilitary groups that, there is no other way to put it, brutally slaughter hundreds of activists every year.

Rather than the trade committee hearing from African Colombians, aboriginal Colombians, the free labour movement in Colombia, not the government-sponsored part of the labour movement, rather than hearing from Canada's largest unions and labour activists from the Canadian Labour Congress, it closed out debate on Bill C-2. Through a pretty thuggish process, it simply shut out all of those groups and many civil society organizations and individuals,

all of whom had written to members of the trade committee to appear before the committee. Then, in the space of just a few minutes per clause, it moved to rubber stamp this trade bill.

As we know, there is the so-called Liberal amendment that requires nothing more or less than the Colombian government to report on itself annually. I guess one of the reasons the Liberals moved closure on this issue before committee was that the witnesses who came forward were very clear about the fact that this amendment, which would force the Colombian government to report on itself, is simply not credible given its lies and deception.

What the committee heard from the CCIC, no less, was that there could be a historic precedent to put in place some independent and impartial human rights monitoring and evaluation both prior to and during this process. Quoting from the organization's testimony before the committee, it stated, "...the damage from a non-credible process is high...".

What we have are no full and comprehensive hearings and a non-credible process that has been added in allowing the Colombian government to report on itself. The Liberals and Conservatives rammed this bill through without the due and appropriate consideration, without even hearing from the folks who the trade committee is bound to hear from. It is absolutely outrageous.

● (1205)

Our report stage amendments endeavour to tackle these issues: the lack of credibility and lack of process around this; and the fact that the Liberal Party has completely betrayed its past. I think it is fair to say that in the past, under previous leaders, the Liberal Party did have some legitimate connection to human rights. When we look at the history of the Liberal Party, there were times when the Liberal Party stood up for human rights issues. However, that is not the case today under the current leader. I believe profoundly that is one of the reasons that the Liberal Party is in such difficulty in the polls. People in this country want to choose between something more than far right to extreme right points of view.

In the Colombian trade deal, we have a government that, through its secret police, through its military and through its affiliated paramilitary organizations, has been nothing less than brutal with dissidents, the people who stand up for labour rights and human rights.

The NDP offered about 100 amendments to this trade agreement. What we talked about and what we put forward at committee stage was the very clear desire from the labour movement and human rights organizations across this country and in Colombia to have an independent and impartial human rights assessment prior to any implementation of this trade deal.

*Government Orders*

Given the fact that there are more serious human rights violations around labour activists in Colombia than anywhere else in the world and that, according to many sources, there are more forced and violent displacements and thefts of land in Colombia than anywhere else in the world, most of it done through organizations affiliated with the Colombia government, as well as human rights violations by the guerrillas operating in Colombia, no one is proposing offering a reward for those human rights violations. We, in this corner of the House, steadfastly resist offering a reward to the Colombian government for repeatedly bad behaviour.

The Colombian government might have a slick public relations firm but, quite frankly, the violations and the many reports speak for themselves. The fact is that we had more witnesses asking to come before committee than the trade committee has seen since I have been in Parliament in the last six years, and yet there was a closing off and refusal to hear systematically from human rights organizations, from activists involved in human rights work, work with the aboriginal community and work with the African-Colombian community, and labour activists.

Our many amendments that were brought forward called for an independent and partial human rights assessment, among many other things, prior to this bill being implemented and also to put in place a system so that if the Colombian government did not keep its commitments the trade agreement could be abrogated.

All of those amendments were refused despite the fact that two years ago, when the trade committee actually went down to Colombia, we had a unanimous recommendation that the Conservative government not proceed any further with this trade agreement until an independent and impartial human rights evaluation could be undertaken to determine to what extent this would have a negative impact on human rights.

Although that was unanimously agreed to at the time, the Conservatives stepped back within 24 hours and tried to, under pressure, I imagine, from the PMO, distance themselves from the report. However, it passed unanimously at committee. It is only the change in Liberal leadership that has led to the Liberal Party completely betraying its tradition of standing up on human rights.

The fact that we brought forward these amendments, that we were very clear about the importance of rebuilding the bill with a human rights focus and that so many organizations throughout the country said that they wanted to step forward and speak to this issue, I think attests to the fact that Canadians are profoundly concerned about the direction this Parliament is taking.

• (1210)

I have had the privilege of speaking at a number of public events throughout this country. I have been speaking about this issue at public events in Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes and western Canada. Canadians are very concerned about this issue.

To close, I will give one example in the riding of Davenport where 200 people came out to speak to the issue of concerns about the Liberal Party's stand on human rights and this pushing forward of the Colombian trade deal. People in Davenport and so many other ridings across the country want to see this bill receive the sober second thought these report stage amendments are designed—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Niagara West—Glanbrook.

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster talked about the fact that there has not been ample discussion. I assure him there have been over 38 full speeches in opposition to the bill and currently there are only 36 NDP members. I am assuming my hon. colleague has probably spoken a couple of times, and maybe more than that. There have been at least three full speeches by the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. There have been over 31 committee meetings. Over 98 different individuals have testified on the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement. Over 18 of those witnesses have actually testified more than two times.

What new information does my colleague from the New Democratic Party think we are going to receive? We have been studying this bill for a couple of years. I appreciate his concerns, but I am not sure exactly what new revelations we hope to find on the bill.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I like the member as an individual, but I profoundly disagree with him on this question.

Two years ago we had hearings and it was a unanimous committee recommendation not to proceed any further with implementing the Canada-Colombia trade deal. Just a few weeks later the government gave the back of its hand to members of Parliament from all four parties who said at that time that we should not proceed and it moved to sign a trade agreement with Colombia.

Since that time we have had a first series of hearings. Those hearings were comprehensive. There were people heard from all sides. All members of Parliament realized this was the wrong road to take, all members of Parliament from all four parties. At the time, the Liberals had a very progressive leader and that consensus was very clear. We fast forward to the committee hearings over the last few months, particularly last fall. We heard without exception from only one side. Before the bill had even been debated and passed by the House, we heard from pro-government witnesses, from only one side. Only one side was heard. It is very clear that when the labour movement both in Colombia and Canada wants to come forward, and civil society activists want to come forward, the promise the Liberal Party made for full and comprehensive hearings should have been kept. It was not.

• (1215)

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his work on the bill. It has exposed a serious misgiving we have with regard to trade. We have to keep in mind that we are not talking about ending trade with Colombia. We are talking about providing it with a privileged trading relationship. Instead of getting tough on crime, we are rewarding those who abuse and kill other people. We are going to reward them with a privileged trading agreement that we do not even provide other countries that have better human rights records. I would like to ask my colleague about the irony of that.

Once again, we are not talking about ending relations with Colombia. We are talking about giving it a privileged status and rewarding its behaviour.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question. Over the last few weeks we have seen even more revelations of the bad behaviour of the Colombian government. I talked about the human rights violations, the labour rights violations, the forced and violent displacement from land. Those are all a matter of public record. There is no doubt that had those witnesses from the free Colombian labour movement, not the government-sponsored part, that little 10% part, been allowed to come before the committee, those voices would have been heard.

Recently we have heard even more revelations of the involvement of the secret police, the DAS in Colombia, in the systematic killings of labour activists. The DAS passed on that information to paramilitary organizations. It went around the world. All members of Parliament have to take that into consideration. There were revelations a few days ago just before closure was brought in that President Uribe's brother was actively involved in the paramilitary killings that were taking place. Those allegations came forward and now we have another reason for members of Parliament of all parties to say, "Whoa, there is a fundamental problem here".

We are seeing members of the president's family involved in human rights abuses. Those allegations need to be investigated. On the secret police involvement, very clearly we should not be rewarding bad behaviour. That is a repudiation of a fundamental Canadian value.

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to speak to Bill C-2.

I want to speak to the point that my friend from Windsor West raised in terms of trade. We need to make it very clear. Canada already does trade with Colombia. There is some \$1.3 billion in two-way trade right now, with \$602 million in Canadian exports and \$734 million in imports.

It is important to understand that the purpose of the free trade agreement is to institute some rules-based trading. To say that there is no trading going on right now would be disingenuous and quite frankly misleading. There is trade right now. We are trying to make sure it is rules based so that we can move forward on a stronger footing.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to talk about the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement because it is an important agreement for Canada. It has been the subject of extensive debate and study by the House and the Standing Committee on International Trade.

At the standing committee alone there has been over 35 hours of witness testimony on the free trade agreement. In the House, opposition members have spoken 99 times to Bill C-23 which was in a previous Parliament, as well as Bill C-2.

The New Democratic Party members have made it clear that they are opposed to free trade. As a matter of fact, they have never met a free trade deal they did not oppose. They have spoken 40 times to these bills despite only having 36 members. We can do the math on that one.

### *Government Orders*

The committee has heard from over 90 witnesses who have shared their knowledge and views on this agreement. Some organizations have appeared more than once. This is in addition to the visit by the standing committee to Colombia to study Canada's commercial relationship with Colombia. During this visit alone, members of Parliament were able to meet with over 50 Colombian stakeholders.

What have members of the House and members of the committee heard time and time again during their discussions on the free trade agreement? They have heard that this is a strong commercial agreement for Canada and for Colombia.

Certainly no one is saying that Colombia is a country that has fixed all its problems. While we were in Colombia listening to testimony, people talked openly. The government talked openly of the struggles the country has had in terms of civil unrest and civil war over the years. We would be hard pressed to find anyone with the government or civil society who has not said that conditions have improved.

That is one of the things we are talking about here today. As we heard from SNC-Lavalin when it appeared before committee, more and more engagement of Canadian companies and good Canadian values are more likely to help the situation than to make it worse.

We must move forward now with the passage of this free trade agreement. Canadian business is looking to Parliament to do everything we can to open doors for Canadians, to create new commercial opportunities around the world and to work with our partners to help our citizens succeed.

To allow this to happen, Canadian companies need improved access to markets in order to compete. That is why this free trade agreement is such an important accomplishment. Trade between our countries is significant.

In 2009, as I mentioned when I started my speech, our two-way trade in merchandise totalled \$1.3 billion. Key Canadian products such as pulse crops, paper, wheat, barley, machinery and motor vehicles are exported to Colombia. Canadian companies and producers of these products are counting on the passage of the free trade agreement. Colombia is a vibrant and dynamic market for Canadian exporters and foreign investors. It is a growing market of 48 million people.

As soon as the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement comes into effect, exporters and investors in Canada will enjoy lower trade and investment barriers in the Colombia market.

Colombia will eliminate tariffs on nearly all current Canadian exports, including wheat, pulses and mining equipment. The competitive advantage that will be provided for Canadians with the removal of these tariffs is significant. The removal will help Canadian workers, farmers and businesses stay ahead of their global competitors.

*Government Orders*

Canadian exporters, particularly of the commodities, are already at a disadvantage compared to their U.S. counterparts due to higher transportation costs. These disadvantages could become even worse if the U.S.-Colombia agreement comes into force. As well, Colombia has been aggressively expanding its commercial relations with other countries, having recently concluded negotiations on a free trade agreement with the European Union and it is currently in negotiations with Panama and South Korea. If we wait to implement our agreement, we risk seeing Canadian exporters further disadvantaged in this important market.

• (1220)

Colombia maintains tariffs averaging 17% on agricultural products, with tariffs ranging from 15% to as high as 108% for some pork products, 80% for some beef products and 60% for certain beans. Indeed, agriculture was a key driver for these free trade agreement negotiations, and a successful outcome of agriculture was absolutely critical.

Tariffs on 86% of Canadian agricultural exports will be eliminated immediately when the free trade agreement comes into force. That translates into about \$25 million in annual duty savings in sectors such as wheat, barley, lentils, beans and beef. Clearly, this is a significant amount and will certainly provide additional incentive for Colombian companies to buy Canadian goods.

During one of its appearances before the standing committee, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association was quite candid with its views:

I'm interested in making the lives of Canadian beef producers better. I think this agreement and other trade agreements do that.

This government echoes these remarks. We are working on trying to support Canadian farmers and to make the lives of Canadians better by creating jobs and ensuring the long-term competitiveness of this country.

The benefits of this trade agreement extend beyond agriculture. By creating new market opportunities for Canadian exporters, this agreement is also expected to have a positive impact on the Canadian manufacturing sector, growth that can be achieved in Colombia. Off-road dump trucks, auto parts and machinery are some of Canada's leading exports to Colombia. These products will benefit from increased market access through this agreement.

We need to listen to Canadian businesses and help them expand their reach into this exciting market. The time for Canada to act is now. Our trade with Colombia is complementary. Both countries have a lot to gain.

It has been mentioned by members on the opposite side that there is a number of issues facing Colombia. They talk about the paramilitary, the FARC. One of the things they forget to factor into the equation is the extensive illegal drug market in Colombia. What this deal does is it helps Colombians rely less on drugs and more on trade.

This is trying to provide opportunities for Colombians so that they do not need to rely solely on the illegal drug market that has plagued Colombia. This is about trying to create additional opportunities. When we say we will not provide opportunities or will not give them an opportunity to trade, we remove the chance for

them to be able to transfer out of the illegal activities into legal activities where they could make sustainable long-term differences.

Colombia is making significant advances to ensure it becomes a stable democracy. However, one cannot have a democratic and secure nation without jobs and opportunities. Colombia is working to create opportunities for its people, and the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement will assist in those efforts.

Our businesses can compete with the best in the world. It is certainly time we listened to our Canadian companies and worked to ensure that they maintain their competitiveness in this market and have the chance to pursue new opportunities.

I would also mention the fact that during the polling that has been going on with the presidential elections coming, of all the parties that are running there is only one party that opposes free trade. Let us think about that. There is only one party out of all the parties that are running for re-election and to run the country that actually opposes free trade. Ninety-six per cent of those parties support free trade. That is what the polls show.

We talk about what is not good for Colombia. I think Colombians understand what is important for Colombia. If there was such an opposition to free trade, do members not think that would become an issue during the campaign? Do members think any political party in Colombia would be supporting free trade if they believed this was going to hurt their chances of winning? That bears out in the results of the polls which show that only one party, which actually has less than 4%, opposes free trade.

It is for this reason and the many benefits to our Colombian partners that this agreement brings that I ask all members to support the passage of this free trade agreement.

• (1225)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, like all members, I, too, have received many communications from constituents and others.

I have a two items to mention today.

First, there was a proposed amendment to the bill, which would require an assessment being done of the impact of trade on the human rights situation in Colombia. Could the member advise the House when that would happen and what the process would be in terms of making that assessment? Is any funding provided for such an activity in Colombia and/or Canada?

Finally, could the member identify whether the United States has decided to move forward at this time with its free trade deal with Colombia?

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Mississauga South has raised a number of important questions.

We have parallel agreements in the free trade deal about labour co-operation and the environment. This is one of several instruments that the Government of Canada has been able to develop in terms of working through some of these free trade deals, which are among some of the strongest in the world.



*Government Orders*

The Liberal member for Kings—Hants put forward a motion at committee to strengthen that. We look forward to having separate human rights agreements dealt with on a yearly basis.

These two factors will strengthen this deal and make it work for the Colombian people. The motion passed through committee and it was brought forward in the House.

• (1230)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned a fairly laughable pretension, that somehow the Colombian elections, which were fraught with a whole variety of issues raised by election observers, were somehow only focused on an agreement with Canada, that every Colombian voted on that basis despite paramilitary involvement.

We have seen a meltdown in the Mexican rural economy as a result of the final corn tariffs being taken off because of NAFTA. NAFTA was the same kind of spin, that somehow it would help rural Mexicans. Rather than helping or strengthening the Mexican economy in rural areas, the NAFTA agreement has done exactly the opposite. It has led to the colombianization of rural Mexico and an explosion of the drug trade.

Could he comment on that? We are hearing the same old bromides that this agreement will help Colombians when there has been absolutely no due diligence, no impartial human rights assessment. Neither the Conservatives or Liberals, who are cheerleading this agreement, can say that.

I have a final question around trade strategy. We have signed bilateral agreements and our trade has actually gone down in places like Costa Rica, Israel and Chile. We sign these bilaterals and our exports to those markets go down. What is wrong with the government's trade strategy?

**Mr. Dean Allison:** Mr. Speaker, as we look at the situation as it evolved in Colombia, we see that things are definitely better now eight years later than they were when President Uribe started.

The member talks about the challenges with which Colombia still has to deal. I do not think anyone in the House would disagree that there are still challenges with which the Colombian government needs to deal. If we look at just one story, anecdotally, that was written in the newspaper some time ago, when the troops showed at the border of Venezuela and the U.S. asked President Uribe if he needed some military support, he said no. He said that he needed a free trade agreement with the U.S. He said that this was not the way he wanted to do business as a country as it move forward. He realized that Colombia had issues with drugs and with productivity.

Colombia has signed a number of trade agreements. It believes that this agreement will help it move out of its current situation.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, throughout the debate on the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement, I have said that we cannot let ourselves be blinded by ideologies that assume all free trade agreements are good, or on the other side, that all free trade agreements are bad. Instead we must judge each agreement, and in this case, the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement, in terms of how it will really affect in the long term the people of Canada and Colombia.

In Canada, farmers, factory workers, small businesses and families across the country will benefit from increased trade with one of Latin America's fastest growing economies. In Colombia, thousands of lives have been destroyed by decades of civil war and narcoterrorism. The decent, hard-working people of Colombia deserve a better future, a future driven by legitimate opportunities from trade and investment, which can help free Colombians from the violence and human rights abuses fuelled by the drug trade.

Colombia has made significant progress over the last decade. Security has strengthened and human rights abuses have declined. Earlier this year, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, tabled her annual report on Colombia. In her report, she recognized the "significant progress Colombia has made in human rights". President Obama has also recognized the progress that has been made.

The foundation of this progress is Colombia's strong, independent judiciary. President Uribe's acceptance of the Supreme Court decision, which limited his presidency to two terms, as well as the vibrant presidential election that is now taking place, also help to underscore and demonstrate Colombia's democracy and respect for the rule of law.

However, Colombia's social progress remains fragile and incomplete. Much more needs to be done. Poverty, unemployment and lack of legitimate economic opportunity force too many Colombians to turn to the violent life of the drug trade. For too many Colombians, it is the only way they can make a living and provide for their families, but we can help. In fact, we have a responsibility to help.

Canada has a moral obligation to help Colombia build its legitimate economy, and we have a long history of providing foreign aid to Colombia. These Canadian aid dollars have helped in building vital social infrastructure in Colombia. We have helped protect vulnerable Colombians by improving security programs for women and children. We have helped Colombia with foreign aid to help train labour inspectors, to strengthen the enforcement labour laws and the respect of human rights. Canada has helped in the area of resource development. We are helping to strengthen environmental protection and improving community engagement.

These are a few examples of how Canada and Colombia are working together now, but aid dollars are not enough. Foreign aid does not provide the economic levers that a developing country needs to become self-sufficient. For that we need trade. We must encourage investment that is socially and environmentally responsible, investment that provides economic opportunities for all Colombians, including the most vulnerable, while respecting and strengthening human rights.

A free trade agreement with Colombia can create real jobs and real opportunity for Colombians. The agreements on the environment and labour co-operation will help ensure that our trade is conducted in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

*Government Orders*

As Liberals, we recognize and have a history of understanding that economic engagement can help strengthen human rights engagement. Prime Minister Trudeau was certainly no slouch when it came to human rights, but he was also the first western leader to engage post-revolutionary China, even before President Nixon.

Throughout our discussions on free trade with Colombia, the Liberal Party focused on the human rights situation. For us, it is vital that free trade with Colombia strengthens and improves the protection of human rights for all Colombians, including the most vulnerable. The Liberal Party listened to the concerns of Canadians and Colombians and we acted. We insisted on a human rights amendment to this free trade agreement. That is why we now have a binding treaty on human rights, a treaty that was signed by both the Canadian and Colombian governments last month. That is why the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement is now the first trade agreement in the world to include an ongoing human rights impact assessment.

Under this agreement, Canada must measure and analyze the effect of the FTA on human rights in both countries. In fact, both Canada and Colombia must table annual reports in their Parliaments, analyzing the impact of this FTA on human rights. When these reports are tabled in Parliament, they will be public. These reports will be examined in committee, where civil society organizations and other expert witnesses from both Canada and Colombia will be heard.

● (1235)

This will ensure that we do not stop focusing on human rights when this FTA goes into effect. It will ensure that, on an ongoing basis, we will have constructive engagement on human rights for years, perhaps decades to come.

This Liberal amendment and the treaty on human rights and free trade has received support in Canada and Colombia and around the world. Dr. James Harrison, a professor at the University of Warwick told our trade committee that:

—the Canadian proposal is exciting and could become a model in this area, because no other country has yet included this within the scope of a trade agreement...I think the idea of a human rights... assessment is a great endeavour to be embarking on...

Mr. Gaétan Lavertu, a former deputy minister for Foreign Affairs for Canada and a former Canadian Ambassador to Colombia spoke about this human rights agreement. He said:

I think it's great that we have an opportunity to review the impact of the agreement. We should probably do that for all agreements. It's not enough to just sign agreements; we have to see once in a while what the implications have been, what the results have been, and I think that will be very useful. It will provide us with an opportunity to discuss human rights not only multilaterally but also bilaterally on a much more extensive basis.

Another former Canadian deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter Harder, called the Liberal amendment a:

—significant innovation in free trade agreements in that it provides both the Colombian and Canadian legislatures the opportunity to annually review and assess the human rights implications of the agreement. I expect that future parliaments will build on this precedent when they consider proposed free trade agreements.

Colombians have also expressed support for this human rights treaty. For example, Dr. Leon Valencia, executive director of Arco Iris, a human rights organization, has stated:

I think it is interesting and useful...This will provide an important yearly forum to discuss the situation in Colombia, and will give Canadian citizens the opportunity to monitor human rights violations in our country.

Dr. Gerardo Sánchez Zapata, president of Colombia's textile and apparel industry trade union spoke on behalf of several Colombian unions, private sector unions, when he said:

This procedure is welcomed by Colombian workers and we are thankful...it helps strengthen a mechanism already in place that monitors and evaluates the progress in matters of human rights and freedom of association in our country...

Our Parliament has discussed this free trade agreement at length. Since 2008, free trade with Colombia has been the subject of well over 100 hours of debate at second reading and testimony at committee. In fact, the House of Commons has devoted more time to the Colombia-Canada FTA at second reading and committee than it did to each of the federal budgets since 2008.

Many witnesses on this FTA have appeared before committee two or three times already. The discussions that have taken place have been extensive and nobody can say that the ratification of this agreement has been rushed. Democracy requires a fulsome debate that makes every reasonable effort to ensure that all views can be heard, but this debate must be followed by a vote. It is time for that vote to take place.

It is clear that a majority of Colombians support this free trade agreement. Of all the Colombians mainstream political parties, only one opposes these free trade agreements, whether it is with the U.S., the E.U. or with Canada, the Polo Democrático Alternativo. In the congressional elections of May 14, the Polo Party garnered a paltry 6% of the vote. In the most recent presidential elections, the Polo candidate, Petro, won only 9% of the vote.

All of the other parties in Colombia, the Green Party, the Party of the U and all the others support free trade agreements. If there is to be sustainable progress, the people of Colombia know that they need legitimate economic opportunities to unshackle them from the violent narco-economy. This trade agreement, in combination with the Liberal amendment and the binding treaty on human rights, offers Colombia economic progress as well as human rights progress.

This agreement represents hope and opportunity for Colombians to have a better way of life. It also offers Canadians the opportunities to be a partner in progress with the people of Colombia in that progress. For these reasons, the Liberal Party is proud to support this amended FTA and its accompanying treaty on human rights.

● (1240)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kings—Hants for his support of the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement. I certainly thank him for his intervention on behalf of human rights in Colombia, because it has allowed this bill, quite frankly, to move forward.

*Government Orders*

I know that the hon. member was in the House when the NDP member was speaking. Beyond the fact that the NDP has never supported a free trade agreement at any time, in the current Parliament or in any other Parliament, part of what really bothers me about the NDP approach to this particular piece of legislation is that there has been some fundamental testimony at committee that has misled the committee.

I have one example. The hon. member was there, and I would ask him to recall it.

The NDP member in this place came into committee and said that there had been a massacre of 12 Awa citizens, indigenous people in Colombia, who had been murdered by the government. We later found out that they had not been murdered by the government. They had been murdered by the FARC, the socialist insurrection in the jungle. We still have not had that corrected. It has not been corrected at committee, nor has it been apologized for.

That is the type of opposition we have. I wonder if he would want to draw some comparisons from that.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I have been disturbed by the amount of misinformation that has permeated and dominated the important and legitimate debate on this issue. I have repeatedly corrected the NDP member of the trade committee when he has made incorrect and false testimony.

At the time of the murder of 12 members of the Awa nation, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster actually accused the Uribe government of conducting the murders. Then, because the murders occurred when the hon. member for Toronto Centre and I were in Colombia, we were accused of condoning murder. That was the deeply personal and grossly biased and inaccurate type of argument made.

As it turns out, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that the murders of the 12 members of the Awa nation were committed by FARC, because they were living on grounds contiguous with a FARC drug operation. It was not the Uribe government, so I think that the hon. member from the New Democrats should apologize to me and to the Uribe government.

• (1245)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am appalled at the ignorance of the members who are not aware that there have been systematic massacres not only of members of the Awa nation in Colombia but of other aboriginal nations. Indeed, the government and paramilitary and military forces have been involved. It is a matter of public record.

I will turn to other issues, because it is obvious that there is not a very high level of understanding of the human rights situation in Colombia. How could there be? Liberals and Conservatives shut off debate on Bill C-2. They refused to hear from human rights organizations in Colombia who asked to come forward. They refused to hear from the Canadian Labour Congress, which asked to come forward. They refused to hear from some of the largest labour activist unions in Canada, which asked to come forward. They refused to hear from the free and democratic labour movement, which is over 90% of the labour movement in Colombia. The Liberals and Conservatives said that they did not want to hear from

those organizations. If they had heard from those organizations rather than having cut off debate, their level of ignorance would have been improved.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I am not certain that the constructive intervention from the hon. member has contributed something new to the debate, but I would like to help him with an intervention from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who recognized:

[T]he significant progress made in terms of a drastic reduction in the number of complaints of extrajudicial executions and the continuous prosecution of members of Congress and public officials for alleged links with paramilitary organizations.

She is saying that there has been significant progress. She also said that they recognized:

[T]he [Uribe] Government's openness to international scrutiny...[and] the spirit of cooperation that exists between the Government and OHCHR-Colombia and the commitment of the Government to address human rights challenges.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is June 2010. Exactly two years ago, in June 2008, the Standing Committee on International Trade published a report entitled "Human Rights, the Environment and Free Trade with Colombia".

All parliamentarians probably received a letter today from Canada's National Director of the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union. This represents a fair number of Canadians who are against the free trade agreement with Colombia. I will quote Canada's National Director of that union, Ken Neumann:

The United Steelworkers continues to support the 2008 recommendation of the Standing Committee on International Trade for an independent, impartial, third party assessment of human rights in Colombia before this legislation is signed, sealed and delivered to the Colombian regime.

This position reflects one of the main recommendations in the 2008 report, which stated that we would go along with a free trade agreement, provided that Colombia could show continued and stable improvement in the human rights situation.

Now we have a proposal from the Liberals, who are putting the cart before the horse. They claim to agree with the Conservatives that a human rights assessment should be done after the free trade agreement is signed with Colombia.

I remind my colleagues of some comments made in the dissenting opinion of the Liberal Party in June 2008:

A trade agreement with Colombia should be contingent on an independent human rights assessment which clearly demonstrates the progress of the Colombian Government on these important issues...It has long been the position of the Liberal Party that trade and human rights should not be done in isolation.

As it turns out, the Liberal Party is doing exactly the opposite of what it said. This change happened when the current Liberal Party leader took over and the agenda changed. We must not forget that even the United States has refused to sign a free trade agreement with Colombia and that it is still waiting for significant improvement in the human rights situation there.

*Government Orders*

It is clear that the government does not respect the will of parliamentarians as expressed in the report. Had we already begun the analysis and assessment process with independent human rights groups, we would already be in a position to describe with absolute certainty what has really been going on in Colombia for the past two years.

Have things improved? Are all of the necessary systems in place to foster continuous improvement? Given an opportunity to study a report produced by an independent group appointed to carry out the assessment, the majority of the House would already be prepared to support the agreement. However, I must repeat the following, just as I do every time I speak to the Colombia free trade agreement bill.

● (1250)

During the time that I was a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade, I never once saw a report that offered a credible assessment of the impact on Canada and Quebec's economy or that of the partner country, which in this case is Colombia.

We are all well aware and should not have to be reminded of what happened in Colombia. In terms of human rights, it was the world's worst offender. It may no longer be the worst, but it is probably close. The people are against this agreement because of the human rights situation in that country.

The committee listed a number of recommendations in its report to the Government of Canada. Clearly, the Conservative government did not respect the will of parliamentarians. The Canadian government flat out rejected some of the recommendations and made decisions based on ideology without taking into account the will of those who represent the people of Quebec and Canada.

I want to point out that the Bloc Québécois wrote a dissenting opinion. We confirmed our strong opposition to the signing and ratification of such a free trade agreement. We believe that the committee's report was misguided and biased and did not reflect the committee's opinion.

We disagree with this bill for several reasons. First, it is bad trade policy. The free trade agreement with Colombia has almost nothing to do with trade. It is mainly about investment. The investment agreement with Colombia looks strangely like the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. The government is trying to promote and protect investment.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of protecting domestic and foreign investments, but we know Canada is involved in developing Colombia's greatest resource: minerals. As an aside, the government says Canada needs to do business abroad and that since we began studying this report on the free trade agreement, trade with Colombia has changed for the better.

It is clear to us that trade between Canada and Colombia is limited. The agreement will therefore have limited benefits. This agreement is not about trade, as I said earlier. It is about investments in the Canadian mining sector.

When it comes to free trade agreements and especially the agreement with Colombia, the Conservative government has a deplorable attitude, like the one we saw too often in the early days of this vast world development. Companies went abroad and set up

shop in the name of globalization. Multinationals tried to take advantage of poor working conditions, pitiful human rights recognition and weak environmental regulations. They wanted to make the most of the often negative discrepancies that leave countries' populations and economies unprotected.

Armed groups forced the displacement of huge segments of the population. More than three million people were displaced. Rebel forces stole people's land and took ownership of it. If the Colombian government wanted to put things right and restore land to the people who were displaced, the Canadian companies that bought that land would prevent the government from improving the human rights situation.

● (1255)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed the speech by the member for Sherbrooke. He knows a great deal about these issues and this free trade agreement with Colombia. He did a great job as a member of the Standing Committee on International Trade.

As the member is well aware, representatives were sent to Colombia and when they came back, all of the members from the four parties agreed that we should not enter into a free trade agreement with Colombia given the human rights situation in that country. That was two years ago. Then, the Conservative government decided to simply ignore the information that the committee presented here. Now, we are in a situation where the Liberals and Conservatives refuse even to hear witnesses from the Canadian labour movement, the Colombian free labour movement, Afro-Colombians, aboriginals and all of the other civil society groups that asked the Standing Committee on International Trade to listen to their testimony on these issues.

I would like to hear what the member for Sherbrooke thinks about this. What has changed in the past two years, from the time when the Liberal Party recognized the human rights situation to present day, when it no longer recognizes the human rights violations? Is it because there is a new Liberal Party leader?

**Mr. Serge Cardin:** Mr. Speaker, the dates do in fact seem to coincide. The new Liberal leader's attitude seems oddly similar to that of the Conservative government, particularly that of its leader and perhaps even the Reform ideology that permeates the Conservative Party.

I will never forget the support and backing we had from the Liberal Party in committee when we presented the report and the recommendations. We must be honest and transparent, and admit that the Bloc had the support of both the Liberal Party and the NDP. The Liberal Party supported several of the recommendations. Furthermore, regarding the main recommendation—calling on the government to ask a third party to assess the human rights situation and examine any positive changes—of course the Liberal Party supported us in that regard. Now it is doing the opposite. It wants Canada to sign the report and worry about the rest later.

*Government Orders*

• (1300)

[English]

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the member's comments on the remarks made by the hon. member for Kings—Hants who in the very beginning, and if one did not listen very closely one would have missed it because he kind of skated over it, mentioned that this trade agreement really honours the government's support for balancing the environment, development and sustainability.

I would have liked the opportunity to ask him a question about that but I did not have the chance. However, I am sure the hon. member was listening to what he had to say in the ongoing debate about these trade agreements, these free trade as opposed to fair trade agreements.

As I mentioned before in the House, I had the honour of being the first head of law and enforcement for the NAFTA Environment Commission. There was a lot of concern that even that side agreement to the NAFTA agreement was not binding, the same way that the actual NAFTA agreement was binding, but still provided for a full-time secretariat. It provided for a council of all the environment ministers, as there should be for Colombia and the environment if this is truly a sustainable—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will have to stop the hon. member there. There are only 40 seconds left for the hon. member for Sherbrooke.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cardin:** Mr. Speaker, if we look at this in terms of geometry, we all know that parallel lines never meet. They are always the same distance apart. Indeed, parallel agreements associated with a free trade agreement rarely merge with the main point of that free trade agreement.

Furthermore, for all practical purposes, we should have taken the time to negotiate with the Uribe government, the government of Colombia, in order to send a clear message that we would be willing to sign a free trade agreement if the situation improves in terms of both human rights and of course environmental rights. We know very well how some mining companies conduct themselves here, so we can only imagine what they might do to the environment in a country like Colombia.

[English]

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this piece of legislation again. Having been involved in not quite all of the hearings of this committee, which have been fairly extensive with over 130 representations by around 100 witnesses, the international trade committee has studied the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement in a very thorough and solid way.

This trade agreement is good for Canada and that is the predominant reason why we as members of Parliament should vote to support this trade agreement. In particular, this trade agreement is really good for agriculture, an industry that is of prime importance to my province of Saskatchewan. The way that this free trade agreement is structured there will be an immediate elimination of certain tariffs on certain agricultural products that come from Canada. This would affect our lentils industry, barley, wheat, oats,

grains which are predominantly not produced in Colombia, but grains that we compete against other countries such as Argentina, Brazil and the United States in exporting to Colombia.

This is very important because it deals with one of the criticisms that opponents have made against the agreement, that it will somehow devastate small Colombian farmers. To those critics I should point out that under the structure of the small Colombian farm, the predominant crop is beans. Under this agreement the Colombian government rather prudently protects its small one, two, three acre farmers with a much slower 20-year reduction of the tariffs on beans. Since Canada does not export great amounts of beans to Colombia, it is not of major importance to us.

This agreement is also good for Canada because it helps our manufacturing industry. While we do not always think of ourselves as being in head-to-head competition with the United States when we export Ford, GM or Chrysler products, in the situation with Colombia we right now face the same tariff, but that tariff would be eliminated. So car dealers and car manufacturers from southern Ontario will be able to export and the 35% tariff would be eliminated, so they can then export directly into the Colombian market. This will give them a massive advantage over United States exporters who wish to follow up, particularly as the United States Congress is dragging its feet when it comes to the implementation of its free trade agreement.

One of the advantages that has not be noted too often in this debate is the advantage that Canada will incur under this agreement in the area of services. Services as investments are important engines of the Canadian economy. For example, the service sector contributes to 71% of Canadian GDP and three out of four jobs. There will be opportunities in Colombia for Canadian companies in areas such as financial services, legal services, engineering, architecture and high technology. Canadian service providers are already providing services to help develop the Colombian economy, estimated to be about \$80 million to \$85 million per year.

This is important in areas such as engineering. Colombia is a country that has had severe civil wars over the last many decades, but it is starting to rebuild its infrastructure. If anyone has been there recently there are highway construction projects. The building of infrastructure in Colombia is very important and Canadian engineering firms can be a part of that development. Therefore, being able to recognize credentials back and forth would save both Canadian and Colombian providers time and of course money.

This agreement removes barriers to entry at the border such as quotas and labour market evaluations which makes the entry of investor service providers and traders into both countries easier. With the ability to move key personnel to different positions with reasonable timeframes, businesses can operate more successfully.

*Government Orders*

We already know that this agreement gives Canadian service providers greater access to the Colombian marketplace than ever before. It is therefore now time to ensure that Canadian service providers can take advantage of these opportunities and remain competitive in the Colombian market by passing this agreement.

● (1305)

At the end of 2009 the stock of Canadian direct investment in Colombia was \$773 million and this trade agreement will establish a stable legal framework for Canadian investors in Colombia. Strong obligations will ensure the free transfer of capital and protect against expropriation without prompt and adequate compensation.

Another element of this free trade agreement is the recognition of the role of governments to promote corporate social responsibility principles with investors. We had the privilege in committee of listening to corporations, including the largest mining company in the country of Colombia, and what it is doing to promote education and social well-being in and around the regions where it works. It was encouraging to hear about the development, to hear that Colombian enterprises, on average, re-invest 3% of their sales into corporate social responsibility compared to 1.5% in Europe, for example.

Overall, investment links mean business to global value chains, and to the technology and expertise they need to forge a wide range of commercial links with our partners around the world. Investment with our partners, inwardly and outwardly, is incredibly important and that is certainly the case with Colombia.

Over the last few years we have seen increases in the security and stability of Colombia, and that has been important. These are some of the factors that are helping to drive Canadian investment in this new frontier market with new opportunities.

Canadian investments in Colombia are expected to grow, particularly in the oil and gas and mining sectors, and Canada has significant interest and expertise to offer our Colombian partners going forward. For Canadians and Colombians alike, the free trade agreement offers an unprecedented level of stability, predictability, and production to assist in taking our investment relationship to a new level in the years ahead.

Since the beginning of the global economic downturn, this government has been very clear that trade and investment hold the key to world economic recovery. That is why the government is continuing to move forward with aggressive free trade agendas around the world that put a focus on creating new partnerships with key nations around the world.

To create new commercial opportunities around the world, we need to do everything we can to open the door for Canadians and that includes promoting free trade agreements, not just with our traditional partners in Europe and the United States but everywhere around the world.

I would like to deal with some of the criticisms that have been addressed in regard to this agreement. While I believe that the predominant purpose of the House is to vote according to the interests of Canadians, the arguments against this legislation have been based on the fact that it is a bad deal for Colombians.

Having watched the results of the first round of the presidential election and the elections for congress earlier this year, I am a little puzzled as to why critics continue to say that because the Colombian people have overwhelmingly voted for parties and candidates who are favourable to this agreement. In fact, the two candidates in the runoff for the presidency, Mr. Mockus of the Green Party and Mr. Santos of the La U Party, are both supporters of this agreement. They both see this as enhancing the prosperity of Colombia.

Critics have said there are supporters of this agreement who have abused human rights, but I would also note that there are opponents of this agreement who have abused human rights. To argue that this is the major basis to vote for or against it is stretching logic as to why we should be for or against it. We should be in favour of this agreement because not only does it enhance the economics of Canada but also job creation for our country. It does the same in Colombia.

It makes a better life for average Canadians and Colombians. Undoubtedly, this agreement will have a greater impact on Colombia than it will on Canada, but it is a positive agreement that will help our farmers, manufacturers and service industries.

I ask all members to vote for this agreement, an agreement which respects human rights and builds the economy in both countries.

● (1310)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that there is not much disagreement that bilateral trade is a good thing intrinsically. The member is aware that the concerns are with regard to what happens to the people. Specifically, the information that has come out is that much of the proposed activity would involve the significant displacement of persons.

I wonder if the member would care to comment on how we would ensure that the people who would be displaced by some of the aspects of the trade arrangements would be taken care of.

**Mr. Brad Trost:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question goes to something that has been a mischaracterization of elements in this trade agreement.

The critics of this agreement have made two allegations in regard to what the hon. member is alluding to: one, that there will be major displacement caused by Canadian mining companies going in; and, two, that commercial large-scale agriculture will be put into place and will cause displacement.

With regard to the hon. member's question about displacement, when it comes to agriculture, this agreement should not have any effect in causing those displacements. Why is that? Because of the nature of Canadian agriculture exports to Colombia, we will not be displacing the small-scale farmers. The Colombian government has set up tariffs to protect those small-scale farmers. They will not be displaced by crops coming into the markets to compete directly with them.

*Government Orders*

The second thing is in regard to mining operations that, it has often been said, displace persons. I invite the hon. member to read some of the testimony we have had from one of the mining companies in Colombia. The witness was a Colombian citizen who dealt with social responsibility and discussed the ways that he helped to build the country. I would also invite the hon. member to directly contact some of the mining companies that are working in the social responsibility areas.

• (1315)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member referenced the Colombian elections. He should be aware, even though the committee did not have the full and comprehensive hearings into this bill that the Liberal Party had promised, that impartial election observers had flagged widespread fear among the Colombian population around the elections. They said that a number of factors impede free and fair elections, such as vote-buying and selling, the misuse of identity documents, illegal possession of identity documents, coercion and intimidation of voters and fraud committed by polling officers. I could go on and on.

To say, on the one hand, that these elections did not have problems would be inappropriate, but to say, on the other hand, that somehow, as we have heard in a couple of interventions, the few Colombian voters who did make it to the polls around this issue were only voting on the Canada trade deal, is absolutely bizarre. It is absurd. It is kooky. However, if that is all they have, it shows the paucity of the arguments from the other side.

I will not go into the human rights issues. I will just go into the issue of the failure of the government on trade issues. Every bilateral trade agreement that we have signed, we have actually seen a reduction in exports to those markets after signature, and that has been systematic and, in some cases, taking years to get back to the point of departure.

Why does the hon. member think the Conservative government has failed on this? Why do our exports consistently go down when we sign these bilateral trade agreements?

**Mr. Brad Trost:** Mr. Speaker, I will first deal with the hon. member's assertions about the elections.

The Organization of American States sent 80-some observers down there and they said that the elections were substantively free and fair. An independent electoral monitoring organization, with 2,400 electoral monitors in Colombia, stated that the elections were much better than the congressional elections. They said that there was a considerably lower level of shenanigans, which I think would be the proper way to describe the overall description of the way Colombian elections have been handled in the past. In fact, the number of cases that the prosecutors were looking at and charges being laid for election fraud, misrepresentation, et cetera, were considerably lower than normal. Even the presidential candidate who was trailing the Green Party was not alleging electoral fraud by the winners.

The hon. member has made some allegations without having the facts to back them up.

In respect to the hon. member's cherry-picking—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I will have to stop the hon. member for Saskatoon—Humboldt. The time has expired for questions and comments.

We will resume debate with the hon. member for Mississauga South.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide a few comments on Bill C-2.

It is interesting that this is the first bill the government brought to Parliament. We have been on quite a journey with this bill and it bears some reflection on where we came from.

First, I want to indicate that there is no question that rules-based bilateral trade deals are intrinsically a good thing. When we enter into these arrangements, as we have with a number of countries, it is a win-win situation. There are synergies and things that happen that make value come between the economic inputs that each can bring.

In fact, I was much swayed by the argument that other countries that are doing this will have the benefit of the tariff arrangement that would be entered into and that if Canada does not do this, then our businesses that want to do business in Colombia will be impaired. It is an interesting argument. I do not think I have heard the answer to the question on whether we should proceed at this time or whether there is a point at which current bilateral trade with Colombia might be impaired because of that.

I was also intrigued that the standing committee looking at this in the first instance came back to the House with a recommendation that the first thing that should happen is an independent human rights assessment. That was the starting point and all the parties said that but it did not happen. Canadians probably want to know why. I do know that I had read where Amnesty International was reluctant to participate or to conduct such an independent assessment. I do not know why.

We have had a number of debates on this matter for some time and the issue of human rights has often been raised. I gave a speech at second reading after doing some work. I was looking at what was happening in the United States, which was also working on this. I was looking at some of the reports out of Colombia that talked about judicial corruption. I was talking about some of the reports from Colombia that showed that the number of prosecutions and convictions of those who had participated in human rights abuses and murders was almost nothing.

I could not understand how, if we had a situation that was improving, we could have circumstances where the judiciary was corrupt, where prosecutions were not being followed through on and where people were being disrupted and displaced from their homes. This is part of the partner with which we are looking at in terms of doing trade.

*Government Orders*

If I am not on the committee, when I look at any bill I have to depend on the committee to provide that information. I can only do so much research myself. I do know I still have questions about the agreement to have Colombia do an assessment on human rights as a consequence of the trade that would happen as a result of Bill C-2; the incremental or the specific impact of additional trade on human rights in Colombia. We would hope that it would improve it. However, from the standpoint of due diligence and of doing the kind of work that would be necessary to prove it, we need a mechanism. I think one of the Conservative members said that we need a rules-based free trade deal.

I understand, and I stand to be corrected, but the understanding is that the Government of Colombia will do an assessment of its human rights situation and the impact of trade on that, how trade has impacted human rights as a result of this deal, and report to its government.

● (1320)

I think we would get a copy of that, but I am not sure. However, when it was first introduced, it sounded like both governments would do their own independent assessments and report to their Parliaments. The other interpretation was that Canada and Colombia would work together on an assessment and would each report the same report to both Houses. I do not know where that is right now but I do know that it is a big question. I do not know whether there is a mechanism in place that could actually make an assessment of the impacts on human rights.

The fact is that the government wanted to have this amendment to the bill, an amendment that it had not contemplated. If we think about it carefully, it is not just an appeasement. It probably reflects a concern that there will be a major constituency out there concerned about the human rights element here.

As parliamentarians, we have heard from Canadians right across the country about the human rights aspect. I know they are in the same position as many parliamentarians who are not on this committee. They do not have all of the facts. However, when parliamentarians do not have all of the facts and the government says that we should trust it because trade is a good thing and it will deal with this, I am not sure. So, as a parliamentarian, we would look at what other countries are doing.

In the United States, President Obama was very aggressive in saying that getting out of the hole in the United States will be by promoting bilateral trade. I read the article on his speech and he had made a list but he did not mention Colombia, even though his country was working on a free trade deal with Colombia. I then heard congressional leaders saying that they would not go there and that it would be a long time before they looked at it. I do not know the precise reason but my understanding, from the media reports, is that the Americans are not proceeding aggressively with their free trade deal with Colombia.

Again I have some questions and parliamentarians should not be left with questions. We need to have answers. We need to have credible, reliable, verifiable information from all of the stakeholders in this matter and that includes from all the various human rights groups that have expressed concerns and who wanted to appear before the committee.

I understand how committees work and I know that sometimes it is very difficult to hear from everybody, but if there were any issue that we had to identify that was the principal concern that some people have about Bill C-2, it is about human rights. I have not heard many challenges to the benefits of trade, whether it be in agriculture or mining, but there has been some concern about that. I would have thought that the committee would want to ensure that the principal representatives of stakeholders across the country related to human rights issues would have had an opportunity to present their case to the committee so that the committee could ensure that Bill C-2 would contain measures to help mitigate or in fact eliminate the concerns that may have been raised. Those are the questions that as parliamentarians we wish were answered. It is fundamental.

I do not have to stand here and give a technical speech about the bill. The bill is about doing a free trade deal with Colombia. I hope that we can do many free trade deals that are rules-based and that take into account all of the factors that cause certain stakeholder groups concern. However, the fair way to do it is to listen to those stakeholders.

When we start this House, every day we say a prayer in this place before it is open to the public and the last line is that we make good laws and wise decisions. There is still time.

● (1325)

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for my hon. colleague.

First, does he feel that 130 representations on a subject is sufficient? In his experience as a parliamentarian, which predates mine, does he feel that is more than most legislation would receive?

Second, in regard to whether we should go ahead with this agreement, does the hon. member accept that Colombia's elected representatives are the persons, from the Colombian perspective, who should have the final say?

third, does the hon. member also accept that many Colombians who support the agreement are working toward improving human rights and social development in their own country?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that there are good people in Colombia who are working very hard to address a very difficult situation. They have been in an awful situation politically and economically and from the standpoint of justice issues.

However, the member will know that each one of us has a responsibility to at least have some assurance that questions are asked and answers are given and that the members can look at the transcripts of committee meetings and follow the debates in the House, which I have.

When we receive hundreds and hundreds of e-mails from people who are passing on those questions, we want to at least bring them to the House and bring them to wherever we can find those answers. We are still working on it, as far as I am concerned.



*Government Orders*

•(1330)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I admire the member for standing up in the House and saying what he said.

This is extremely important, because as he referenced, there are a whole range of questions that need to be answered.

Before I ask a question of the member for Mississauga South, I have a comment. The comment is very clear, because this has to be on the record. Members of Parliament are citing the recent elections. They have to cite the fact that most Colombians could not vote or did not feel comfortable voting. Most Colombians could not vote or did not feel comfortable voting in those elections. That is a fact that any member of the Conservative side who tries to reference the elections has to take into consideration. Most Colombians were not able to vote in that election.

My question for the member for Mississauga South is very simple. Is his recommendation to the committee that the committee should be hearing from the Canadian Labour Congress, NUPGE, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the Colombian free and democratic labour movement, aboriginal people, and African Colombians?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, in fairness, I do not think that I could do a proper assessment of who we have heard and not heard and who we should hear. The committee members are the ones responsible for that.

Having said that, when it comes right down to it, I really have a problem when there are people who want to appear who are credible and whom we have relied on in the past for their expertise, and for some odd reason, we decide that it is not necessary to hear from them, possibly, again. It might have been that they appeared in previous discussions.

However, the member is asking a question that I cannot answer. The committee has to justify its actions. I only raise the question.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, was the hon. member aware of the agreement tabled in the House recently? It is the binding human rights treaty signed by Colombia and Canada, which states:

[E]ach Party shall provide a report to its national legislature by May 15 in the year after the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Colombia and annually thereafter. These reports will be on the effect of the measures taken under the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Colombia on human rights in the territories of both Canada and the Republic of Colombia.

I just wanted to ask him if he is aware of the nature of that mechanism and the fact that Canada will be writing human rights reports on Colombia. It will not be Colombia reporting on itself.

Second, is the member aware of the support of two former deputy ministers of foreign affairs for this mechanism?

**Mr. Paul Szabo:** Mr. Speaker, I was actually here when the member for Kings—Hants proposed it to the government and I listened to it. I questioned it at the time, because I did not understand it.

I know that it has changed since, so I am glad that I questioned it at the time. I also spoke about it in my speech at second reading.

The question that has been raised, though, is whether the Colombian government can actually objectively assess the impact of trade on its human rights.

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to talk about the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement as a member of the international trade committee and as someone who had the opportunity to travel with the committee just over two years ago. This is a very important initiative for our government and our global commerce strategy.

As a side note, it was two years ago today that then minister of international trade, David Emerson, announced formally that we would be entering into these negotiations. I know for a fact that we have had considerable debate from both sides of the House and through committee. It is time that we move on as a government and as a country to provide opportunities for our businesses. This agreement is a great opportunity for Canadian businesses.

We know that there are challenges within Colombia. We have heard today and through our committees over 130 different testimonies and 98 different witnesses. The fact is that there has been progress over the eight years that President Uribe has been president. We know that there are new leaders coming on stream who support the general principle of trade agreements and of moving forward and fostering opportunities for Colombians as well as Canadians.

Once this free trade agreement is implemented, Canadians will be able to expand their presence in this important market. This is exactly the kind of opportunity Canadian industries across the country have been asking for.

One of those associations was the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, which testified to our committee, "Colombia has the potential to be an important future market for beef exports".

The Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters stated, "Colombia is a very good example of a market that is growing very rapidly where we have been successful in expanding our presence in that market... supplying them with Canadian products and services".

Hon. members of the House should recognize just how important the Colombian market is for the businesses in their regions. As the member of Parliament representing Kelowna—Lake Country and the Okanagan, I know that British Columbia will benefit from this agreement, as will Ontario, Quebec, and all parts of the country. We are looking to expand trade and to yield customers new opportunities. In particular, British Columbia's machinery and paper industries stand to benefit most from this agreement.

We have heard already that Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba will benefit from this agreement. Specifically, the prairies and the agricultural producers are a key building block of our economy. The immediate removal of Colombian tariffs from groups such as wheat, barley, and pulses will make these products from the Canadian prairies even more competitive in the Colombian market.

### *Government Orders*

In addition, Alberta enjoys a significant investment presence in the Colombian market, thanks to oil and gas projects. By providing greater predictability and protection for investors, our free trade agreement with Colombia will help secure Canadian investment in the region. We have heard over and over again that rules-based trading is secure, safe, regulatory protection for investors, which is key to continuing to help grow our markets as well as Colombia's.

These investment provisions will directly benefit those Alberta firms that are investing in Colombia. In Ontario and Quebec, manufacturers need all the opportunities they can get to grow stronger. That means opening doors in new markets, such as Colombia. With this agreement, Colombian tariffs on all machinery and industrial goods will be eliminated. Canadian manufacturers of mining equipment and heavy machinery, concentrated in Ontario and Quebec, will benefit from the immediate elimination of Colombia's 5% to 20% tariffs on products in this sector.

This is a significant opportunity for all Canadians. With over 42 million dollars' worth of vehicles, 15 million dollars' worth of mechanical machinery, and 10 million dollars' worth of electrical equipment exported to Colombia in 2009, companies in Ontario have a lot to gain, as well, from this agreement.

This is a very important agreement for Quebec, as well. Quebecers employed in industries such as paper, paperboard and other forest products, copper, and machinery will clearly benefit from free trade with Colombia. After all, 21.6%, or over one-fifth, of Canada's exports to Colombia last year were from Quebec. That is a significant figure.

In total, Quebec's exports to Colombia amounted to \$130 million in 2009, including \$29 million worth of machinery and \$27 million worth of paper and paperboard.

On the east coast, the provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador exported about \$52.84 million worth of products to Colombia.

• (1335)

By deepening our trade relationships with Colombia, important industries will benefit, such as paper and paperboard and machinery exporters. With these kinds of benefits across Canada, it is no wonder that Canadian businesses, investors, and producers alike have been calling for closer commercial ties with Colombia.

This agreement is a result of this government listening to Canadian businesses and strengthening this country's economy. It is clear that this agreement makes commercial sense, and not just for one specific region or one province; it makes sense for all of Canada. Colombia is a significant trade partner for this country. In 2009, our two-way trade in merchandise was worth over \$1.3 billion. That is right; it was over \$1.3 billion. Over the past five years, Canadian merchandise exports have grown by over 55%.

By eliminating tariffs on a range of products, Canadian exporters and producers will become more competitive with other nations that are also trading with Colombia. This trade agreement will have significant benefits for important sectors of the Canadian economy, such as forestry, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, resources, and mining. These are all areas in which Canada excels, and they are integral to our economy. These sectors are economic drivers of both

small communities and large urban centres across this great nation. In particular, in the agricultural sector, Colombia is an established and growing market for Canadian exporters.

In 2009, Canada exported agriculture and agri-food products to Colombia worth \$247 million. Colombia is the second largest market for Canadian agricultural exports in South America. Key stakeholders in Canada's agricultural sectors have spoken out about how important this deal is for their businesses. Pulse Canada has testified that Colombia is a critical market for Canadian pulses and special crops. The Canadian Pork Council has said, "it would be critical, for us to be a player in the Colombian pork market, to see this great agreement passed".

This government is listening. Once implemented, most Canadian agricultural exports will benefit from immediate duty-free access to Colombia. This includes wheat, barley, and pulses, which in 2009 represented 35% of Canadian merchandise. Exports to Colombia are currently subject to tariffs of up to 60%. Duty-free access to Colombia for these products is an important achievement.

This agreement is also expected to have a positive impact on the Canadian manufacturing sector by creating new market opportunities for Canadian exports of manufactured products.

Canadian companies, in particular the extractive and explorative companies, have made important investments in the Colombian market. As I mentioned, having had the opportunity to travel there, we saw first-hand those investments and the corporate social responsibility leadership those Canadian companies are providing the Colombians.

Canadian companies, with their presence, have created many opportunities for Canadian exporters of equipment and other manufactured products.

One of the leading exports to Colombia in recent years has been off-road dump trucks, for which immediate duty-free access would apply with the implementation of the free trade agreement. Who would have thought; off-road dump trucks? However, it is a great market, and it is an expanding market and opportunity.

Canada has also shipped a substantial quantity of auto parts to Colombia in recent years, which will receive the same tariff treatment as the United States exports, including on remanufactured products. The free trade agreement with Colombia will strengthen these types of linkages by fully eliminating Colombian tariffs on these and many other products.

Colombia is also a strategic destination for Canadian investment, to the point that the stock of Canadian investment in Colombia reached \$773 million in 2009 alone. This agreement establishes a stable, legal framework for Canadian investors in Colombia.

*Government Orders*

The oil and gas and mining sectors will also benefit from provisions, directed by governments, to promote principles of corporate social responsibility in their business communities. The promotion of corporate social responsibility, something that is near and dear to my heart, fosters better relations between companies and local communities and contributes to a stable business environment. Canadian companies have indicated their strong belief that their increased engagement in Colombia, bringing with them good Canadian values, would help advance local conditions with respect to corporate social responsibility. Canadian service providers, in particular for financial, engineering, mining, and petroleum extractive services, will also benefit from more secure, predictable, and equitable treatment in Colombia.

The Standing Committee on International Trade has heard from many companies, associations, and individuals regarding the direct benefits this agreement will have. Without export markets, our industries will be unable to expand, compete, and grow. That is why I ask all hon. members to show their support for Canada's businesses from coast to coast by supporting the passage of the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement.

• (1340)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the hon. member's comments, but I do appreciate them.

My colleague knows that two years ago the trade committee had hearings in Colombia where we heard from the labour movement. The committee was unanimous in its recommendation that the government not proceed with trade negotiations with the Government of Colombia until an independent human rights assessment was done on the impact of the agreement on human rights in Colombia given the egregious constant and ongoing human rights violations taking place there.

The member well knows that we are not talking about 2008. From January 1 to April 30 of this year, 30 trade unionists were massacred. Thirty of them died standing up for better health and safety conditions in their workplace, for better working conditions for Colombian workers. We are not talking about five or six years ago. We are talking about what happened a few weeks ago.

Given that the recommendation of the committee was unanimous and that those people who talked to committee two years ago wanted to come back on Bill C-2, my simple question is: Why do the Conservatives refuse to hear from the free and independent labour movement in Colombia and the labour movement in Canada, as well as the many activists who wanted to come before the committee?

• (1345)

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster for his passion. We have some major differences. He has an ideological position that our government does not agree with. I believe that in the best interests of Canadian businesses we need to continue to provide opportunities to expand our markets. We are a trading nation. Over two-thirds of our market are elsewhere. Our global economic strategy calls to expand these opportunities through the EFTA and numerous other agreements. There are about 11 agreements that we have signed or are working on, including the Colombia free trade agreement.

Specifically to the human rights issue and the situation in Colombia, my heart goes out to those who have lost their lives. It is definitely not a perfect situation there.

This agreement is the first one in the history of trade agreements to include side agreements on labour, the environment and human rights. We are setting a precedent. We want to make sure that we do this right. We are working together. I would like to thank the hon. member for Kings—Hants for his initiative to help bring the issue of human rights forward.

While we were in Colombia, the hon. member heard things firsthand. Do we engage or isolate these individuals? We need to engage them.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country for his hard work on the trade committee and for his support for this piece of legislation.

My question for the hon. member is extremely straightforward.

We heard from dozens of witnesses at committee. When I listened to the member for Burnaby—New Westminster speak, I would swear that no one attended trade committee on this important subject, but that is far from the truth. We have had 31 committee meetings. Nearly 100 individuals have testified. Eighteen of those witnesses have actually testified twice and another seven have testified three times.

I would ask the hon. member if there is any more to the NDP opposition to this bill, or has that party simply taken an ideological position and refused to allow democracy to prevail and vote on this piece of legislation?

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade for his hard work on the trade committee and his dedication in helping to expand market opportunities for Canadian businesses.

Specifically to the question of the NDP and its ideological difference, I believe in free and fair trade but that party has a different definition. It has never supported any trade agreement. No matter how long we went on with this, we would be looking at stalling, delaying, dithering and dodging by the NDP. We need to move forward for Canadian businesses.

We are looking at the human rights issue. We are providing hope, opportunity and jobs for Colombians. I believe from the bottom of my heart that this agreement is in the best interests of Colombians and Canadians as we move forward.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is more one of process. Eighteen months ago, the Conservative government prorogued Parliament so it could recalibrate, to use its term, its legislative program. After a long wait while it recalibrated, we came back and the very first piece of legislation tabled, the top of mind, number one priority for the government was not the global economic crisis. It was not housing or social programs. It was Bill C-2, a free trade agreement with Colombia—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I will have to stop the hon. member there.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country will have a similarly short period of time to reply.

**Mr. Ron Cannan:** Mr. Speaker, we have had ample opportunity to hear from unions. We have heard from people across this country. Ideologically the NDP is opposed to this agreement, but as I said before, it is in the best interests of Colombians to provide hope, opportunities and jobs for the folks of Colombia. As we move forward, we will continue to assess the human rights, look at the environment and labour situation and build a bridge for all of us.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this is the second time I have spoken to Bill C-2, the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement. It was introduced in the second session of this Parliament and then again after prorogation.

The Bloc Québécois will again say no to this bill because certain amendments should have been made. We have difficulty understanding why the Liberals accepted certain amendments in committee. The Liberals have backtracked on their position. We consider the amendments to be cosmetic and not at all relevant to the issues in this matter.

The compromise is acceptable to the Liberals. They have agreed to let the Colombian government assess the human rights situation. A number of companies will invest or do business with Colombia even though some human rights are not respected there. Given that the Colombian government is being asked to conduct its own assessment of the human rights situation and to report only annually to the Government of Canada, the Bloc Québécois believes that the Colombian government is both judge and judged in this situation.

Some very serious human rights violations take place in Colombia. I will talk about some of them and provide statistics.

After Sudan—where we find Darfur—Colombia has the second largest number of people displaced by threats, reprisals and violence. In addition, 2008 was one of the worst years for this. Since 1986, 2,970 trade unionists have been assassinated. In 2008, crimes committed by paramilitary groups rose by 41%. In 2006, 47% of the population lived below the poverty line and 12% lived in abject poverty. The unemployment rate is one of the highest in Latin America.

The situation in Colombia is thus very disturbing and makes us wonder about the Liberals' support for an amendment that would have the Colombian government perform a self-assessment of the situation.

The Bloc Québécois believes that an impact study should be conducted by an independent international organization, which would give us the straight goods. It would be more likely to provide a critical and pertinent assessment. It would also be more objective because, by report on itself, the Colombian government becomes both judge and judged.

We are left wondering about the position of the Liberal Party, which said it was worried about human rights and, in particular, respect for those rights. We wonder why the Liberals have done such a radical about-face and agreed to these amendments.

The issues in the side agreements are tied to the main agreement on trade. But we have to wonder about the merits of the bill. The Conservative government is keenly interested in investment, which is why they support the agreement and have introduced this bill.

Something does not add up with this bill. The provision on investment protection is modelled on chapter 11 of NAFTA. It will not contribute to improving human rights and general living conditions in Colombia. Allow me to explain. The fact that some aspects of this infamous bill are consistent with chapter 11 of NAFTA means that foreign investors may apply to the international tribunals themselves, bypassing governments.

We are in favour of having investment protection provisions, but not at the expense of the people. The bill could also have some provisions on the environment. Under the agreement, if an investor has put money into a company and that company pollutes or violates human rights, this will not be dealt with between governments. The investors themselves will turn to the courts, where they could seek compensation if their investments stop being profitable enough.

• (1355)

There could also be an inquiry into a lack of return on their investments.

We wonder what the government's intentions are with this bill. We have very little trade with Colombia. We trade much more with other countries. Why are they so absolutely keen on passing this bill?

Canadian investors would be able to take legal action against the Colombian government if it decided to make life better for its citizens or improve its environmental protection regulations. There, too, the investors have a say regarding the suitability of the government's actions.

When President Clinton was in power, the United States renegotiated Chapter 11 of NAFTA. They included the issue of human rights in a side agreement, which is not directly related to trade. Side agreements are ineffective when they are not part of the free trade agreement. We have to wonder why the Liberals did not pick up on this ploy. We know very well that this will not be included in the free trade agreement. They are just side agreements, which will have no direct impact on trade.

The purpose of this bill is simply to open the door to investments. We know that some Canadian mining companies that will go to Colombia could not care less about protecting the environment.

We believe that human rights are non-negotiable. We cannot have an investment free-for-all; we must be vigilant. The Bloc cannot understand why the Liberals are following the lead of the Conservative government on this issue.

We will vote against this bill because it is not in line with the expectations, priorities and values of the Bloc Québécois in terms of human rights.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would comment on the comments made by the previous speaker, to the effect that this free trade agreement with Colombia sets a precedent for future free trade agreements. My recollection is that the NAFTA set the precedent, especially with the rich side agreement which provided for a separate council, a full-time secretariat, the opportunity for citizens to file complaints of failed enforcement and the potential for penalties to be imposed.

What does the hon. member think about the ratcheting back and evisceration of environmental conditions to these trade agreements?

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that this agreement does not meet certain conditions, especially when it comes to the environment. The government could not care less about the environment, as it proved in Copenhagen, where it wilfully ignored numerous environmental issues.

The fact that there is a side agreement that deals directly with human rights indicates that the Conservative government is not committed to dealing with this issue as part of free trade. And it shows in this bill.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

*[English]***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper extended an apology to the victims of the residential school era. He asked for forgiveness—

- (1400)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I would remind the hon. member not to use the names of members but to use their riding or title.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** This weekend is the two-year anniversary of that apology. To mark this historic event, the National Coalition of First Nations, Inuit and Métis will gather to issue a public response.

Aboriginal leaders have planned the national forgiveness summit, which will take place in Ottawa from June 11-13, for a number of years now. The summit will encourage victims of the residential school system to embrace forgiveness and begin a road of healing.

To prepare for the summit, a journey of freedom will take place in aboriginal communities, churches and resource centres throughout the country. Participants will present a charter of forgiveness to the Government of Canada and to the churches of Canada.

I look forward to this monumental event this weekend and believe it will be meaningful for many aboriginal people across this country. Every MP is welcome to attend.

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, worldwide, Polonia celebrated the beatification of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, the Catholic priest who in the 1980s ministered to Solidarity workers at the Huta Warszawa steelworks.

An unassuming pastor, Father Popieluszko did not shirk his responsibility to minister his flock when Polish workers began to organize the Solidarnosc union.

In sermons he defended national and human rights. For this he suffered detentions and interrogations. Finally, in 1984, after leading mass he was kidnapped by Communist secret police and 11 days later his tortured, bound and gagged body was dredged from a reservoir.

Today, along with Polonia, we bow our heads in Solidarnosc, remembering Father Popieluszko and the long list of martyred Catholic clergy: Polish Cardinal Wyszynski, Ukrainian Cardinal Slipyj, Hungarian Cardinal Mindszenty, Croatian Cardinal Stepinac, Czech Cardinal Beran, and Slovak Bishop Gajdic, who suffered torture and even death at the hands of the evil ideology of communism.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***DORIS ST-PIERRE**

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was happy to learn that the Quebec government presented an *Hommage bénévolat-Québec* award to Mr. Doris St-Pierre on April 21. He has sat on the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre's board of directors for 20 years as its non-native representative. He is working to bring Val-d'Or's communities closer together. For Édith Cloutier, executive director of the centre, "Doris is an adopted brother to the Friendship Centre, a man whose commitment goes greatly beyond his active presence at board meetings."

He has played a leading role in a number of important projects, such as the construction of a new building for the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre and the creation of an aboriginal early childhood centre for 80 children. Mr. St-Pierre is also a strong advocate for environmental causes, including, to name a couple, *Action boréale Abitibi-Témiscamingue* and *Organisme de bassin versant Abitibi-Jamésie*, which he helped found in January 2010.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, we thank you and congratulate, Doris.

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*[English]***MY SISTERS' PLACE**

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on June 4, the service providers, clients, board of trustees and the community celebrated the grand opening of the new location of My Sisters' Place in London, Ontario.

*Statements by Members*

My Sisters' Place is a transitional support centre that provides a safe day space, basic needs, assistance, programming and access to community partners for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and individuals who live with the effects of poverty, addiction and mental illness.

The new home for our sisters, purchased and refurbished by the family of Noreen and David Bird, allows fragile and vulnerable women to support each other and build friendships. The sisterhood that is integral to the program's success has quite literally saved lives.

This is a home of love and devotion that enriches the lives of the women involved, and it enriches our entire community.

Tragically and shamefully, the federal funding for My Sisters' Place and all programs of the homelessness strategy ends in March 2011. The government needs to fulfill its obligations to those in such profound need.

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**BREAST CANCER AWARENESS**

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend 96 teams took to Peterborough's Little Lake, paddling to raise close to \$160,000 in the fight against breast cancer.

My wife Kelly and I were proud members of the blisteringly quick Morello's Independent Grocer "Yigomaniac" team that carved its way to a first place finish. Big thanks to team captain Angela Pammet and store owners Dave and Kim Morello for all their efforts and support.

The 2010 event marked the 10th anniversary of the dragon boat festival in Peterborough inspired by Meredith Cosborn and driven by the entire Peterborough survivors abreast team. Their contributions to the Peterborough Regional Health Centre over the past decade are saving lives each and every day.

This coming weekend, Peterborough and the entire electric city region are gearing up to host the 2010 international dragon boat festival following up on previous festivals that have been held in Vancouver and Australia.

The objective of the international festival is to promote breast cancer awareness internationally and to encourage participation from breast cancer survivors.

Survivors Abreast Peterborough is tickled pink to be hosting this year's event and we welcome the world to the electric city for this great cause.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

**JEAN-PIERRE BRABANT**

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I commend the extraordinary courage and bravery shown by a police officer from my riding, LaSalle—Émard.

While on patrol on May 10, 2010, officer Jean-Pierre Brabant of LaSalle's police station 13 dove into the icy waters of the Lachine Canal to save the life of a suspect who jumped into the canal to try to escape during a police chase. The suspect quickly became

hypothermic and lost his strength, and was therefore unable to grab the buoy that was thrown to him. Seeing a human being in distress and acting on instinct alone, officer Brabant dove into the water to save the life of someone he had been pursuing just moments earlier.

Jean-Pierre Brabant's bravery and courage exemplify his heroic spirit and his profound desire to serve his community, even at great risk to his own life. On behalf of the people of LaSalle—Émard, I would like to say thank you and offer my most sincere congratulations on this act of bravery. The LaSalle police can be proud to call a hero like Jean-Pierre Brabant one of their own.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**CANADIAN FORCES**

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on May 28 I attended the combat golf tournament at the Meaford Golf and Country Club. The tournament this year raised a phenomenal \$11,000 for the military family resource centre.

I enjoyed golfing with Deputy Commanding Officer Major Ross Donald, Master Warrant Officer Ian Boyd and Linda Van Aalst. The day started off with a literal blast from a Howitzer for the shotgun start. Military personnel were located at each hole along the course to allow the golfers to learn more about the military.

This past Saturday, I attended Veterans Commemoration Day at the Billy Bishop Museum in Owen Sound and met many local veterans. The Billy Bishop Museum and its staff are great supporters of our veterans. The military family resource centre in Meaford also supports the families of our military while they are deployed around the world.

I want to publicly acknowledge both organizations and the military itself for the great work they provide their community and this country. Thanks and a job well done.

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[*Translation*]

**GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES**

**Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after the government refused to fund the Festival international des rythmes du monde through the marquee tourism events program, claiming that the festival did not meet the eligibility criteria, now we learn that the festival is joining the big leagues as one of a select group of major international events in Quebec.

The reasons for the industry minister's refusal are especially hard to understand considering the scope of the event.

*Statements by Members*

Two months before this important occasion for Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, it is not too late to acknowledge this mistake and reassess the application. The Conservative government has not even spent all the money it allocated to the program, leaving millions of dollars on the table, to the detriment of festival-goers.

By acting in this way, the government made an ideological choice to cut funding not only for the festival, but for hundreds of up-and-coming artists, craftspeople and creators who care about culture.

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**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Leader of the Liberal Party admitted that he would form a coalition government if the opportunity presented itself after the next election.

This reminds us of a statement made not so long ago when the Liberals were trying to form a coalition with the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. The Leader of the Liberal Party said, “I am prepared to form a Coalition government, and to lead that government”.

The Liberal strategy is the same as the last time: run an election campaign telling Quebeckers and Canadians that there will be no coalition. Then, after the election, get together with the NDP and the Bloc Québécois to overturn the results.

The Liberals' plan is still unacceptable to Canadians. It is unacceptable to democracy to ignore the results of an election and to install a party and a leader that were rejected by the voters.

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[English]

**LEN MACDONALD**

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute and to honour the life of Mr. Len Macdonald, a constituent from my riding of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine and a strong advocate for the English-speaking minority communities of Quebec for many years.

Len Macdonald passed away on April 28, 2010, following a heroic battle with cancer. Throughout his life, Len was active in supporting many English-speaking organizations, such as Alliance Quebec.

On behalf of Quebeckers and especially the English-speaking minority community of Quebec, I would like to express my deep sadness for the loss of such an influential and passionate person.

I would also like to extend my most heartfelt condolences to his wife, Kathleen Tansey, and to all his family and friends. Len's passion and dedication to protect fundamental rights will surely be missed by many.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

**FIREARMS REGISTRY**

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week at the public safety committee, the NDP alongside the Liberals and

Bloc Québécois ganged up and passed a motion to try to derail Bill C-391 and keep the long gun registry as is.

The passing of this motion by the opposition parties is further evidence that they are more interested in playing partisan political games with the long gun registry than doing the right thing and speaking on behalf of their hard-working, law-abiding constituents.

On this side of the House, we are committed to ending the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry. We call upon those opposition MPs who voted for Bill C-391 at second reading to vote on behalf of their constituents at home, not on behalf of their weak-kneed, iffy political bosses in Ottawa.

Canadians will not be tricked by these political games. They know that when it comes to the long gun registry, MPs can either vote to keep it or vote to scrap it. It is that simple.

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**HEALTH CARE**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Friends of Medicare is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

For the past three decades, the members of this organization have been central in the struggle to protect public health care in the province of Alberta. They successfully combated extra billing by doctors in the eighties and for the past twenty years have fought against numerous attempts to increase privatization of the health care system.

In April 2000, tens of thousands of Albertans attended rallies held in Edmonton and Calgary to protest the infamous Bill 11, which would have introduced private hospitals in Alberta.

Canadians from all provinces have reasons to be grateful to this grassroots organization. By stopping the scourge of private health care from gaining a foothold in Alberta, they helped to prevent its spread across the country.

I congratulate members of Friends of Medicare for the dedication and passion they bring to the defence of our public health care system that Canadians value so highly.

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**MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we believe that cabinet ministers are responsible for what happens in their names and responsible to Parliament. This is called ministerial responsibility and it is one of the oldest traditions here in our country.

The Liberal leader wants to do away with this tradition. Instead, he wants to import a foreign U.S. committee system that is used as a political weapon to bully, to intimidate, and to humiliate opponents, something that I believe should never happen.

Ministerial accountability is the reason why cabinet ministers answer questions in question period and it is why they appear before committees to answer for their offices.

### Oral Questions

We hope that all opposition committee chairs will follow the rules and procedures, rather than continue to conduct the kangaroo courts that they have been doing.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the largest summit on maternal health in the world is going on in Washington as a prelude to the G20 summit, the Prime Minister did not even bother to respond to the invitation. This is even more disturbing because the Conservative government claims that maternal and child health is one of its priorities for the G20.

When the time comes to lobby for the banks, and strongly speak out against plans to impose a bank tax, the Prime Minister does not hesitate to fly all over the world, but he cannot be bothered to take a short, one-hour plane trip for women.

This is just one of a long series of misogynistic decisions made by this Conservative government: refusing to fund abortions in developing countries; making cuts to funding for women's groups; supporting bills that limit access to abortion.

This Reform-Conservative government, led by the Prime Minister, must stop trying to score political points at the expense of women, and must start promoting a maternal and child health policy that includes abortion.

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[English]

#### G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, whether we are talking about a \$100,000 gazebo, a \$200,000 welcome sign, a \$300,000 toilet, a \$400,000 steamboat refit, \$20 million for fiddlers and flowers, or a sidewalk to nowhere that is 84 kilometres away, the wasteful spending of taxpayers' money by the government for 18 hours of meetings is seemingly endless, but now, la pièce de résistance, there is a \$2 million phony Muskoka lake for journalists.

When will it end?

As Canadians continue to tighten their belts to deal with rising interest rates, as thousands remain unemployed, the Conservative government is blowing money on projects that in most cases have nothing to do with the G8 or G20.

World leaders will not be anywhere near these expensive enhancements in the industry minister's riding, but for goodness' sake, the government's half-baked fake lake takes the cake. What a mistake.

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●(1415)

#### LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal leader admitted that he would form a coalition government. Last time the Liberal strategy was hidden, but now we

know the Liberals will ignore the wishes of Canadians and join forces with the NDP and Bloc Québécois to ignore an election result.

Canadians remember his statement the last time the Liberals tried to form a coalition with the Bloc Québécois and the NDP when the leader said, "I am prepared to form a coalition government and to lead that government".

However, the Liberal leader's plan is not acceptable. If Canadians reject his party, he cannot ignore the election result and install a coalition rejected by the voters. It is not acceptable to give the NDP co-management of the economy. It is not acceptable to share power with a political party committed to the breakup of our country.

Regrettably the coalition plan is more proof that the Liberal leader is not in it for Canadians. He is just in it for himself.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

#### G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have seen a version of the proposed G8 communiqué, but it is void of substance: there is no commitment on maternal health and nothing on climate change or the environment. In fact, it would seem that the meetings in Canada are just a warm-up for the real summit in Korea at the end of the year.

Why have Canadian taxpayers paid so much for so little?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is tremendously proud to be hosting both the G8 and the G20. One of the great priorities this past year has been the economy and to stop an economic decline that began around the world and ended here in Canada. We are excited about the G8 and G20 to welcome the world's leaders to discuss jobs, hope and opportunity.

The G20 has been absolutely essential at getting the world economy on track, so much so that Canada's finance minister has been named Finance Minister of the Year. We are proud of that. We are proud of the jobs that have been created. We are proud to be welcoming these leaders of the world.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned the finance minister, who has just said that the failure to institute global banking reform is adding to global economic uncertainty. The Prime Minister promised action on global financial reform. There has been no action at the G20. It appears that all decisions will actually be made in Korea at the end of the year.

Canadians are asking themselves, we paid for the world's most expensive photo op, we did not even get banking reform. What was the Prime Minister thinking?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, John Kirton, head of the G8 expert group from the University of Toronto said, “The cost for each of the two Canada summits are more or less within range of what G8 and even G20 summits have been costing”.

We are focusing on jobs and the economy. We are pleased to see, because of Canada's economic action plan, more than 300,000 net new jobs created over the past year in our country. We are proud of that.

We are proud to see the beginnings of some positive financial numbers coming out of the United States and out of Europe, but the job is not done. We remain focused on jobs, wealth creation, the economy, ensuring that we pull this world out of the economic recession. We are achieving real results.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is not just the cost of this photo op. It is the content of the photo op that is so empty when we look at the G8 communiqué: no progress on climate change; nothing on the environment; no progress on maternal health, because Conservatives will not defend the rights overseas that they claim to defend at home; no action on banking reform either.

Canadians read the full text of the proposed G8 communiqué and they ask, what did we get for this, what did we get for \$1 billion? What was the Prime Minister thinking?

• (1420)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has a strong commitment to working multilaterally with our partners. Only the leader of the Liberal Party would think it would be a waste of time getting the G8 leaders together and the G20 leaders together to plan what we could do to revive economic growth in this country.

The leaders are going to be coming. They are going to be supported by some 8,000 delegates and 3,000 members of the media from around the world are going to all be focused on Canada. We are proud of our government's efforts to showcase our great country so it can be a magnet for jobs, investment and opportunity.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we now learn that the billion dollar security price tag for the 72 hours of G8 and G20 meetings is just the beginning. For the use of media only, the government is splurging on a \$2 million fake lake in downtown Toronto. Complete with a sprawling dock, bar, canoes and a giant Jumbotron, the government is literally going to flush it down the drain when the 72 hour spendfest is over.

Having run up the biggest deficit in Canadian history, did someone not, anyone in government think that \$2 million, 72 hour fake lake to host a meeting on fiscal restraint was a bad idea?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is very proud of hosting the world. It is a normal practice for the host country of an international summit to use the opportunity to showcase all its country has to offer to the world. That is exactly what we are doing. We are going to be proud to showcase Canada to the world, contrary to what the Liberals want to do.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, is the member really going to defend this? There is nothing normal about it. The government has already blown \$23 million for a media centre in the industry minister's riding, which the media will now never use. Instead, it will be sitting around a fake lake, in Toronto. If that is not enough, the government is blowing a further \$20 million on dancers, singers, fiddlers and flowers.

Instead of hosting world leaders, maybe the government should consider party planning for Lady Gaga.

How can the government look at people whose EI has just run out and justify this billion dollar spendfest?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario have been working very closely together with the business community to capitalize on the exposure that comes from hosting the G8 and the G20 summits.

Over 3,000 international media persons will be in Canada. We will be very proud to showcase Canada to them all.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is planning to use the G8 summit to push its agenda, particularly with respect to the environment. A draft communiqué for the G8 clearly states that fighting climate change must not hurt the economy. The thing is, fighting climate change represents an economic plus for Quebec.

Will the Prime Minister admit that this is further proof that his government is working for western oil companies and against Quebec's interests, even at the G8 summit?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the G8 summit is yet another exceptional opportunity to demonstrate our leadership by boosting tourism and securing commercial investment for all Canadians. We have one of the world's strongest economies. We are a model to the rest of the world. We are going to talk about business opportunities.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. He just said that the G8 summit is a tourist event.

Other countries are moving ahead with greenhouse gas reduction, but Canada is moving backward. Quebec Premier Jean Charest expressed disappointment at Canada's results and pointed out that Quebec's economy is focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Does the Prime Minister realize that his political position is so bad for Quebec that Jean Charest himself was forced to take him to task?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have made global commitments. This is a singular opportunity for us to show leadership. We are an economic model to the rest of the world. We were the last country to experience recession and the first to emerge from it. Our debt-to-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the world. Ridiculing us because we did not do what the Bloc wanted is one thing, but as I said, we transferred \$350 million to the Province of Quebec to help it fight climate change. That was under a Conservative government.

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● (1425)

**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the press has obtained the communiqué that the Conservative government intends to present to the G8 at the end of the month. Abortion will not be one of the options offered to women in developing countries.

Are we to surmise that the government has chosen to ignore recommendations on abortion from public health experts and that it is determined to export its ideological agenda?

*[English]*

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as has been very clear, Canada wants to ensure that its G8 will save the lives of mothers and children. We know what interventions will be effective. In fact, these interventions have been endorsed by the University of Waterloo, John Hopkins University, the micronutrients Initiative. We know what the tools are.

In fact, it also been endorsed by the private sector and the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation. These are experts, these are people, these are organizations seeing real results in saving the lives of mothers and children.

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*[Translation]***BANKS**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the IMF is proposing a coordinated international effort to tap the banks, but the Conservative government is rejecting such a measure out of hand even before discussing its merits at the G8 and G20.

Why is the Prime Minister, the lobbyist for the banks, so bent on going it alone?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, our Minister of Finance and our Prime Minister talk year-round about the economy with the leading countries of the world. We are a world leader, and we will continue acting as a world leader.

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*[English]***G8 AND G20 SUMMITS**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, incredibly, the Prime Minister said that everything at the G8 and G20 was a sideshow if it did not have to do with the economy. It is not a

sideshow to deal with maternal health and well-being. In fact, it deserves a lot better than being relegated to a debate about abortion.

Does he think that the oil spill in the gulf is a sideshow? The fact is that the climate change crisis is one of the most serious crises we have ever faced and the gulf oil spill demonstrates that.

Could the Prime Minister tell us whether he made any progress on these two issues when he was talking to world leaders? It looks like he did not.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shown great leadership, particularly on the issue of maternal health and the health of young children in the developing world. He has had great meetings, as has the Minister of International Cooperation, with our partners in the G8 and the G20. Thanks to that leadership, we hope to see progress made at the upcoming G20 summit.

Obviously, all Canadians, and all citizens of the world, are deeply concerned about what they see going on in the Gulf of Mexico. Thank goodness we have a stronger regulatory regime that does not allow anything like that to happen in Canada.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we are weakening our environmental regulations right here and the vote is coming up later today in this House. It is shameful.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, the G20 summit is turning into a farce. It was supposed to focus on improving maternal health, but the Prime Minister is campaigning to save banks, which do not need our help.

The money could be invested to help women and children, but he is wasting more than \$1 billion on sound cannons and a fake lake. How can the Prime Minister justify that?

*[English]*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case. Those are not the facts.

The Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario have been working with the business community to capitalize on an amazing opportunity to showcase Canada to the world. Some 3,000 world-leading journalists are going to visit Canada.

We have an amazing opportunity to show what a great place Canada is to visit and what a great place Canada is to make investments. We are very proud of that. We will continue to show off this great country both at the G8 and the G20 and to the many thousands of visitors who will see the spotlight on Canada.

*Oral Questions*

●(1430)

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the billion dollar boondoggle is ballooning. The ShamWow minister is out making sure he gets a \$100,000 gazebo for his riding. The government is getting a boat with G20 money, but it will not float for two years, for heaven's sake. Get this. We have a government that has to create an artificial lake when Canada has more lakes than just about any other country in the world. It is the taxpayers who are going to end up at the bottom of the fake lake with a fake Muskoka behind them.

How can the Prime Minister justify wasting taxpayers' dollars this way? It is absurd.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are tremendously proud to be hosting the world at the G8 and the G20. Some 8,000 delegates as well as some 3,000 media from around the world will convene on Muskoka and Toronto. Canada is a major player. We are a world leader. We are proud to welcome these folks.

We also have an amazing opportunity. Television networks from around the world will be focusing on Canada. We want to showcase the very best that this country has to offer, whether it is in the great region of Muskoka or whether it is in a world-class city like Toronto. We are proud of that. We are excited about that. We look forward to welcoming the world to this great country.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry is engaging in fiction when he pretends a steamboat for which he authorized \$400,000 was never meant to be a G8 project. The local municipal council passed a resolution to support the "SS *Bigwin* Steamship Restoration Project as a G8 Summit Project". The website of the boat's builder even says that funds have been requested from "the G8 legacy program".

If hauling out a sunken steamboat can be billed as G8 spending, how much more money is being squandered in this massive Conservative boondoggle?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for a party and a caucus that aspires to be government, it is shocking and shameful how ridiculous that party's research is. That particular project was never approved for G8 funding, never got G8 funding and was not part of the G8 funding. For those members to say otherwise is false and it shows once again why they are not fit to govern.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would be really happy to table all the documents and articles from the minister's local paper.

The minister somehow thinks it is important to state that the steamboat is being restored using a different slush fund, not the G8 one. His riding is awash in excessive spending when neighbouring ridings have trouble affording essential infrastructure.

How much of the G8 boondoggle spending is sucking money from other program spending?

When will the minister come clean on how much money the government is spending to try to get him re-elected?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of summit funding, when the hon. member's predecessors

were in government, they gave money to the *Bluenose* for the Halifax summit.

That is okay, but according to the false logic of members opposite, it is not okay to do something for this summit. That is the tired ridiculous logic of the Liberal Party of Canada, which proves once again why the Liberals are on that side, rather than on this side.

[Translation]

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there was a time when the Conservatives claimed to be good managers. They have now proven that they are spendthrifts and completely incompetent. The worst thing is that they are spending billions on billions of dollars not for Canadians' benefit, but to further their partisan interests.

Why is the Prime Minister using the G8 and G20 meetings just to promote the Conservative Party?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are working to support our regions, to support Canadian tourism, to support many things Canada is known for. That is our goal. We are proud of our country.

[English]

On the other side, the Liberals complain, but when they were in power, they did exactly the same thing.

[Translation]

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is spending \$275,000 on washrooms 20 km from the summit, \$400,000 on a 1910 steamship and \$2 million on an artificial lake in the middle of the city; it makes you think of Gilligan's Island. Meanwhile, the Conservatives have run up the biggest deficit in Canadian history.

Why is the Minister of Industry spending so much of Canadian taxpayers' money just to get re-elected?

●(1435)

[English]

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** As I said already, Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our regions. We are proud of our country. We are showcasing that to the world with the G8 and the G20 summits.

When the Liberals were in power, not only did they fund the *Bluenose* and some other infrastructure projects for Halifax, but they also put in \$3 million extra for Halifax after the summit was over. That is how proud they were of Halifax.

They should not be coming to us when we are spending money for tourism, for business development and for the future of Canadian business. We are proud of that, because that is what good governments do.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***SHELL CANADA**

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Shell Canada clearly has no intention of negotiating the sale of its Montreal East facilities. Under the leadership of the union, two offers were presented to save this refinery. The Government of Quebec has announced its intention to continue putting pressure on Shell.

What does the Minister of Natural Resources intend to do to get Shell to negotiate with serious buyers?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have always supported the union's efforts in this matter. This is sad news, but we understand that work is ongoing. We will monitor the situation closely. We are very sympathetic to the situation the workers are currently experiencing. We will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister seems more determined to defend the interests of the oil sands in the west than to help the workers in Montreal East.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what instructions he has given the Minister of Natural Resources to ensure that Shell acts like a good corporate citizen?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has been involved in the issue from the beginning; no one can deny it. The union said so itself this weekend. I repeat to my colleague that what is happening is serious. We are sympathetic to the workers' cause given this sad situation they are going through. Again, we will continue to monitor this situation very closely.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and many members of the international community are insisting that Israel accept an independent international commission of inquiry into the attack by the Israeli army on a humanitarian aid flotilla. Even in Israel, there are calls for an external investigation so that Israel is not both judge and judged.

Will the government ask Israel to accept an independent international inquiry?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada supports an impartial, credible and transparent inquiry into the incident that occurred last week. However, we will not support a biased process that seeks to have Israel alone bear the blame.

Governments and international organizations, including ourselves, should not make premature judgments before knowing all the facts. Furthermore, the Israel government today announced that it will conduct an investigation.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that Turkey, which had nine citizens killed in the attack, is insisting on an impartial international inquiry.

The UN Security Council has asked that resolutions 1850 and 1860, requiring humanitarian aid and food to be sent to Gaza on a regular basis, be respected.

Will the Conservative government demand that the two UN Security Council resolutions be respected by Israel?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we remain very concerned about the Gaza situation, especially the provision of humanitarian aid to meet basic needs. The Gaza Strip is controlled by Hamas, a terrorist organization. The Government of Canada provides humanitarian assistance to Gaza only through the UN and other international organizations in order to comply with Canadian anti-terrorist legislation.

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● (1440)

**OFFSHORE DRILLING**

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico has already cost BP nearly \$2 billion. On seven different occasions so far the minister has refused to confirm that Canada has a response plan in place should such a disaster happen in Canadian waters.

Can the minister at least tell us if a security deposit is required before drilling is authorized, and if the answer is yes, how much is required?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see my colleague trying to scare Canadians.

We have one of the most rigorous legal systems in the world when it comes to offshore drilling. Furthermore, the oil rigs used by the Canadian offshore drilling industry, as well as the equipment and the training given to employees to use them, must all meet the strictest regulatory standards, which are among the best in the world. That is why offshore drilling companies must have an emergency response plan and contingency plans approved by regulatory authorities before any drilling will be authorized.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, apparently he has no idea what is going on.

*[English]*

Canadians are worried by the government's inability to manage an offshore spill like the one devastating the gulf coast. The minister refused seven requests to provide a plan on how the government would respond to a major spill off our coasts. The best he can come up with are lame PMO talking points and a feeble attempt to shift responsibility.

Could the minister at least assure Canadians that if there is a spill in our waters, the oil companies involved would assume 100% liability for all cleanup costs and all damages?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's regulator has scrutinized each drilling application. Each applicant company must have a safety plan, an environmental protection plan, an emergency response plan and a backup contingency plan.

Canada's regulators may audit the company's safety and emergency management system at any time.

[Translation]

So my colleague should stop trying to discredit a credible, independent organization like the National Energy Board and its 50 years of experience assessing drilling projects.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that the Prime Minister does not want to talk about climate change at the G20.

He promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 52 megatonnes, but only delivered a tenth of that.

He promised to eliminate subsidies for fossil fuels, but when he returned from Pittsburgh, he denied that these subsidies even existed.

Why is he the only G20 representative who still ignores the opinion of the scientific community regarding climate change and its effects?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member would have the temerity to raise the subject of climate change inaction by the government in the House.

In 2008, when the Liberals signed their coalition document, they called upon the government to sign an international agreement to reduce emissions and to work with the United States.

Since that time, we have signed an international agreement, the Copenhagen accord, and we signed the clean energy dialogue with the United States. We have actually reduced our emissions by 2%. We brought in a series of regulatory actions for light vehicles, trucks and heavy trucks. We are working on all sorts of other emissions, doing all of the things that they asked us to do. What is the problem?

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that he sounds like the under undersecretary of the environment in the United States.

Here is what the government's own report confirms. Canada's emissions will continue to rise every year until 2012. Stimulus spending is not expected to result in real or quantifiable reductions. The minister cannot monitor or verify clean air trust fund results despite giving the provinces \$1.5 billion.

The Conservatives do not want climate change on the G20 agenda because, after 52 months and three ministers, there is absolutely nothing to show but failure.

Why will they not just stand up and admit it?

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, who the under, under, undersecretary is. Perhaps my hon. colleague has met that person.

We have negotiated the Copenhagen accord. Over 120 countries internationally have now associated themselves with that accord, accounting for in excess of 90% of the world's emissions. This is the way forward. The international community is now translating that accord into an international treaty.

Here in Canada, we are taking all of the regulatory domestic actions that we need to achieve the North American standards that we have agreed to. All of these are efforts that the former Liberal government never did, never achieved and never could.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

**GULF OF MEXICO**

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried by the situation unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico.

Would the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans inform the House on the latest actions taken by our government to assist our American neighbours?

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and the United States have a proud tradition of helping each other in times of need and the situation in the Gulf of Mexico certainly is one of those times.

Yesterday I was very proud to announce that the Canadian Coast Guard will provide the Americans with 3,000 metres of oil spill containment boom, in addition to the DFO experts already in the field.

Our government will continue to work closely with the United States so that we can ensure and maximize Canada's contribution to the cleanup effort.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we can all understand an occasional impulse buy but the government's decision to rush a multi-billion dollar defence procurement without competitive bidding takes a recent infomercial kick way too far.

The government is essentially handing Lockheed Martin billions of dollars without going through a proper competitive process. Without competitive bidding, taxpayers will be the big losers and so will the Canadian military.

What is the rush? The planes were not planned for purchase until 2017. Is that because the government wants to put this under the G20 security bill as well?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, coming from the NDP that is rich. There are so many inaccuracies in there that I do not even know where to begin.

*Oral Questions*

We do in fact have capabilities with the current fleet of CF18s. In fact, this government has just refurbished that fleet and they will have use well into the 2020 period.

We, of course, will invest in the next generation of fighters. This is something that we are part of with our allies. It will see massive benefits for Canadian aerospace industry over time. Stay tuned.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are not the party of fake lakes. That is that party.

The Auditor General herself said that the advance contract award notices were not a competitive process and that, in fact, they amounted to sole source contracts.

There are lingering questions from the last time the government used this scheme to avoid public tender. It is still not clear that it got very good value for money. Wasted money means less money for the navy, less money for search and rescue and less money for peacekeeping.

Why will the Conservatives not take government spending more seriously?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we do. In fact, this government, I am very proud to say, has made unprecedented investments in the Canadian Forces. I am proud to see many of them here in the House today.

What I do know is that member and members of his party are very good at fake outrage. What they are also very good at is voting against every investment that we have made in the Canadian Forces in the last four years.

Yes, we will refurbish the next generation of fighters, as we have for our navy, army and air force. We are making the necessary investment to support the men and women in uniform.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SECURITIES**

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today Michel Leblanc, president of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, and Martin Salloum, president of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, added their names to the long list of those who are opposed to a single securities commission. They maintain that the federal project would prejudice the financial sectors of Quebec and Alberta and would weaken the foundations of our economy.

Once again, why is the government determined to demolish what the OECD, the IMF and the World Bank consider to be a model for the rest of the world?

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Coincidentally, Mr. Speaker, I just spoke to a banker yesterday who said that he would dare not depend on the system that Quebec is using at this point.

What we are trying to do is ensure there is a system available, which is why we have a voluntary system that Quebec is open to join, if it wishes. That is its choice.

I can also read an incredibly long list that is getting longer by the day of all of those who support the system that we are putting in place, which is a voluntary system all across the country.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to that banker, the government's logic says that Canadian banks were effective during the last crisis and therefore it refuses to change any aspects of bank taxation. It does not want to change what it believes is working very well.

If this logic applies to banks, why does it not apply to securities commissions? Why dismantle something that worked so well during the recent crisis? Unless the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance is using twisted logic, why would the logic that applies to Toronto not apply to Montreal, Calgary, Winnipeg or Edmonton—to his hometown or mine?

● (1450)

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member claims that the system works well. I would suggest that he tell that to Joey Davis, one of the victims of Earl Jones, who stated, "We definitely support [the Canadian securities regulator] initiative. ... Ottawa has been far more responsive to [our] plight....I have more faith in the federal government".

I can quote organization after organization, such as the OECD, the IMF, the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the list goes on. These are the organizations that understand that we need this—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Laval—Les Îles.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL AID**

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government falsely claims to the world to be in favour of basic human rights, like free expression, but its treatment of aid groups and aid workers speaks to a very different reality. The message is clear, "You oppose this government in any form, you get your funding cut", such as the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, KAIROS, Planned Parenthood, Match International.

Why can the government not tolerate dissent? Why the vengeful cuts?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government wants to ensure that public funds are going forward to help reduce poverty and help those people living in developing countries. There is no entitlement.

This government wants to ensure good value for its international assistance. We want results. We want to make a difference to those people, those families and those communities because it is our responsibility to ensure that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative budget cuts to the Canadian Council for International Co-operation prove that the government wants to neutralize all opposition.

*Oral Questions***FIREARMS REGISTRY**

The CCIC has existed almost as long as CIDA and works with groups dedicated to development and humanitarian aid around the world.

These cuts will affect Canadian humanitarian workers in a dozen countries, including members of the Francophonie, such as the Congo and Rwanda.

How can the government justify these cuts?

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are in fact increasing our support to those organizations that work directly in those countries.

We support the Francophonie in the fine work they do in African-Francophone countries. We support the human rights of women and girls. Last week I announced support for UNIFEM, for human rights of women and girls.

We are in fact a leading country in many of the issues, but we can make a difference by supporting those organizations that actually do work in countries where the need is.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as world leaders prepare to come to Canada to discuss strategies to improve maternal health in developing countries, we have a crisis right here at home.

Pregnant Inuit women are flown thousands of kilometres south because of the government's failure to fund birthing centres. The government boasts that money has been budgeted for northern and Inuit maternal and child health, but instead of giving them the services they need, it is shipping them away from their homes, their communities and their families.

Would the minister please explain when these mothers will get the care they deserve?

**Mr. John Duncan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we understand that the non-insured health benefits program is one that needs some review and we are looking into that.

Travel is a big issue when it comes to delivering health benefits. There is a growing awareness and we are looking into it.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, McDonald's massive recall of promotional glasses that contained cadmium was a wake-up call to show that we are still vulnerable to unsafe products. Toys, cribs, children's medication, the list of unsafe products grows.

The government had legislation to address weaknesses of product safety legislation in Canada but it killed it with prorogation.

When will the government reintroduce legislation to protect our children, and why did it take so long?

• (1455)

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is our priority and we will be introducing, in the next few days, new legislation related to consumer product safety in Canada. We will continue to work with industry in the rollout of that.

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, in yet another display of political game-playing, the NDP, Liberal and Bloc coalition joined forces and passed a motion that would keep the wasteful and completely ineffective long gun registry intact.

This motion proves that when it comes to the long gun registry, members of the coalition are more interested in political games than representing their constituents.

Would the Minister of Public Safety please update this House on this important issue?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her hard work on this important file.

In November 2009, 12 NDP and 8 Liberal members, including the member for Malpeque, listened to their constituents and voted in favour of Bill C-391 to scrap the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry.

The choice is now clear, even for the member for Malpeque: members either vote to keep the long gun registry or they vote to scrap the long gun registry. We should have no more political games by members, like the member for Malpeque. The constituents deserve better.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 6, we sent an open letter to the minister asking that individuals living with multiple sclerosis receive diagnosis for blocked veins and treatment if required. We also asked that the government provide a modest \$10 million for research into MS.

Testing and treatment are of the utmost urgency, as many MS patients are experiencing a rapid decline in their health.

Why will the minister not respond and agree to our request?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have responded. Health research on the new techniques, such as this one, is critically important.

*Oral Questions*

That is why we have invested \$120 million for neurological disease, including \$5.3 million for MS. In addition, we invested \$16 million in budget 2010 to CIHR for research. I have also asked Dr. Alain Beaudet, president of CIHR, to provide me with advice on how to advance this important research.

I continue to work with the MS Society and CIHR. We are encouraging MS researchers to put applications forward for this new treatment.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a bailiff has been going to great lengths to find the Prime Minister's director of communications, Dimitri Soudas, who is literally in hiding to avoid testifying before a House committee.

Instead of acting as an accomplice to a fugitive who refuses to come clean before the parliamentary committee, why does the Prime Minister not urge his employee to retrieve his summons?

[English]

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have answered this a number of times.

We on this side of the House believe very strongly in ministerial accountability and responsibility. That is why ministers have been appearing when their staff have been summoned to appear at committees and ministers will be continuing to appear.

The real question is, why are opposition members not on their feet congratulating this government on the outstanding economic performance of Canada right now? Over 300,000 jobs have been produced since last July. We are leading the G7 nations in the recovery and will continue to do so.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SHELL CANADA**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, business people, union leaders and elected officials at all levels are trying to save the Shell refinery. It is vital to Quebec's petrochemical sector and to our energy security. Some 800 direct jobs and 3,500 indirect jobs are at stake. Curiously, Shell lobbyists met with six different Conservative ministers recently. One of the most recent meetings in the lobby registry took place with none other than the Minister of Natural Resources.

The minister says he is monitoring the matter closely. Instead of simply monitoring Shell's lobbyists, could he not take the lead in this important file?

● (1500)

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, just this past weekend, union leaders again indicated that they had the support of all levels of government. Of course we would have liked to see a buyer come forward, but the government cannot invent one. One thing is certain: we feel for the workers and

what they are going through in this very difficult situation. I would like to assure this House that we will continue monitoring the situation very closely.

\* \* \*

[English]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of National Defence made an important announcement regarding the Government of Canada's first defence strategy.

Would the Minister of Public Works inform the House about this vital investment?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this member knows how proud our government is to have delivered this first Super Hercules aircraft to our troops in Trenton last Friday because it is in his riding. The aircraft will support the Canadian Forces and this investment will create hundreds of jobs and \$2.3 billion in economic regional benefits to Canada. However, the best news is this aircraft was received six months ahead of schedule and under budget.

\* \* \*

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is now a full week since the minister promised to read Justice Oliphant's report into Brian Mulroney's business relationship with Karlheinz Schreiber. If he did his homework, he would know that Canadians paid Mr. Mulroney \$2.1 million based on testimony that Justice Oliphant has now deemed patently absurd.

Is the minister now prepared to demand that Mr. Mulroney repay the settlement, with interest, to Canadian taxpayers? Or has he still not read the report?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to the Oliphant report that was prepared and tabled last week. There are a number of recommendations as members are aware. The report covers hundreds of pages and every recommendation is being carefully reviewed.

While I am on my feet, would the hon. member for Malpeque tell this House whether he will stand by his commitment to get rid of the long gun registry? Would he stand and let the House—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Members seem to be urging me to have opposition members answer questions. This is not the purpose of question period. I am afraid he cannot.



### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of: first, Senator Lesil McGuire, Senator of the State of Alaska and President of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region; the Honourable Barry Penner, Minister of the Environment for British Columbia; and the Honourable Jim Kenyon, Minister of Economic Development of Yukon.

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

**The Speaker:** In addition, Canadian Forces Day is an opportunity for Canadians across the country to recognize the sacrifices that our men and women in uniform make on our behalf.

[Translation]

It is with great pleasure that I draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of 12 members of the Canadian Forces who are taking part in Canadian Forces Day today.

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

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1505)

[English]

### CANADA NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to table in the House, in both official languages, an amendment to the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act that would create the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and the Haida Heritage Site.

\* \* \*

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition.

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### CREATING CANADA'S NEW NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IMMIGRATION AT PIER 21 ACT

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Museums Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

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### CANADA NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS

**Hon. Jim Prentice (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I had the honour a few moments ago to table an order in council to formally establish the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and the Haida Heritage Site, both of these under the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act.

### Routine Proceedings

This is a remarkable achievement, one that this House envisioned some 23 years ago when it passed at that time a unanimous resolution supporting the protection of the lands and the waters around Gwaii Haanas. The House also called for the participation of the Haida in this conservation initiative.

[Translation]

Canada will become the first country to protect a region from the alpine meadows of the mountaintops, to the depths of the ocean floor beyond the continental shelf. For the Haida people, the land does not exist independently of the sea. By protecting some 5,000 square kilometres of water and land, we acknowledge that sacred connection.

[English]

We are working with the Haida to protect some of the world's most abundant and diverse marine habitats, home to over 3,500 kinds of marine species alone. It is known by many in the conservation world as the Galapagos of the north.

For hundreds of generations the Haida Nation has lived in harmony with this environment and today this wealth of marine resources continues to sustain local communities as well as recreational and also commercial fisheries. This new national marine conservation area reserve will ensure that this can continue.

With today's tabling, we take a significant step forward, the penultimate step forward, in protecting the incredible biodiversity in the reserves of Gwaii Haanas and we demonstrate world-class leadership in integrated oceans management.

I especially would like to acknowledge the strong and visionary leadership of my good friend, Guujaaw, President of the Haida Council and the many others within the Haida community, the Haida First Nation, who have done so much to make this marine conservation area a reality.

Together the Government of Canada and the Haida are demonstrating remarkable international leadership in protecting the lands and the waters of Gwaii Haanas for future generations, for our children, our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

[Translation]

I also want to acknowledge the oil and gas companies that voluntarily relinquished their petroleum rights in this special place: Petro-Canada, now Suncor Energy, Shell Canada, ExxonMobil Canada and Chevron Canada. Finally, I want to thank the Nature Conservancy of Canada for subsequently surrendering those rights to the federal administrator on behalf of the companies.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Tomorrow, nations around the world celebrate the oceans. It is a time for Canadians to reflect upon our remarkable marine heritage, from the Atlantic to the Arctic to the Pacific. This year we also celebrate 125 years since Canada created its first postage-sized national park, the Banff National Park at that time. What better way to celebrate World Oceans Day than to create a marine protected area that is unique in Canada, in North America and in the world? It is the first time on this planet that we have protected an ecosystem from 2,000 feet below the surface of the ocean to 4,000 feet above it on the mountaintops.

What better way to celebrate the legacy of our park system than by designating Canada's first national marine conservation area under the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, a piece of legislation that is now 10 years old?

This year the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity, Canada is bestowing another remarkable gift to the world. With Parliament's support, which started here 23 years ago, Canada will now provide opportunities for visitors to develop their own personal connections with the wilderness area and opportunities to experience and learn the Haida culture, a truly unique experience in the world. Through these experiences, all Canadians can develop a greater appreciation of the inseparable nature of the land, the sea and our people.

Twenty-three years ago, the House unanimously called for action to protect Gwaii Haanas. Parliament responds today with the finalization of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and the development of a collaborative relationship with the Haida.

Today, on the eve of World Oceans Day, we honour and renew the call to action through an order-in-council to formally establish the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and the Haida Heritage Site. I thank everyone in the House who makes this possible.

• (1510)

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I am pleased to rise today to support the establishment of the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and the Haida Heritage Site. Today's announcement is doubly important because it creates the first ocean national marine conservation area under the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act.

This law was passed in 2002 under a Liberal government. It was far-sighted and remains to this day an essential piece of legislation to meet Canada's commitments to protecting marine biodiversity and cultural heritage and ensuring sustainable marine use. This act, along with the Oceans Act of 1996, which the then-Liberal government also passed, were and are considered landmarks internationally for marine conservation.

Although progress has been made in designating marine protected areas, Canada's national and international commitments to establish a network of marine protected areas has yet to be realized. In establishing Gwaii Haanas, the people of Canada are fulfilling a long-held and overdue promise that successive governments have

made to the Haida and the people of British Columbia to establish this as a marine conservation area.

Although we commend the government for today's announcements, it needs to be much more vigorous in meeting its commitments to protecting the health of our oceans by completing a national system of marine conservation areas that protect biodiversity and the ecological and cultural diversity of Canadian marine environments from sea to sea to sea.

Gwaii Haanas is to be a multiple-use conservation area that will have both zones of protection and sustainable use. The process that follows designation and the co-management model which underpins it provide an opportunity to work with stakeholders to design a conservation area that meets both the needs of local people and conserves and protects ecosystems for future generations. It will be important to provide for sufficient protection zones, uses which conform to conservation objectives and ensure that this development be adequately supported and resourced by the government in the future.

In short, this reserve and heritage site is a beacon to inspire more and better oceans management. It is an opportunity to develop a conservation model that will surely inform many more marine protected areas to come. At the same time, we are hopeful that it will inform our negotiating position, yet to be revealed to Canadians at the ongoing negotiations of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, to speak about the Gwaii Haanas national marine conservation area reserve and Haida heritage site. The Bloc Québécois believes that preserving national heritage sites is vital. It means that humans humbly recognize the majesty of nature and also its fragility.

The world is a place of beauty but we have the lamentable capacity to destroy it, as evidenced by global warming and the constant threat that we pose to thousands of ecosystems throughout the world. The Gulf of Mexico disaster is a bitter example of this. To protect the world's beauty, we must take the necessary measures to preserve conservation sites such as the Haida Gwaii Haanas reserve.

The Bloc Québécois will support the order to protect this area, which also has value added as a heritage site.

However, you heard, as did I, the Minister of the Environment use his statement to praise the oil companies which, he says, "have voluntarily relinquished their petroleum rights in this special place." The Minister of the Environment! What a laugh! The oil companies, the nice corporate citizens, are agreeing to leave the Haida territory and the Conservatives, moved and grateful, are jumping on the opportunity to praise one of the most polluting industries in Canada in a statement on an aboriginal marine area that must be preserved. How about that.

If the Conservative government was again attempting to hide its true nature with this announcement, it has failed. This government uses every possible forum to announce the creation of a park or new protected area in an attempt to hide its stone age mentality when it comes to sustainable development and its catastrophic record on environmental protection.

Quebec's environmental values are diametrically opposed to those of the Conservatives. In Quebec, the environment is a priority. That was evident last week in a poll confirming that, according to Quebecers, the priority for the G8 and G20 meetings to be held in a few days is, without question, the environment. The government has categorically rejected this idea. It believes the priority must be the economy, period.

That is not surprising. For this Conservative government, with its blind faith in market forces, anything that does not have a dollar sign attached to it is of no interest, anything that does not smack of deregulation, globalization, free this or free that, is just socialist propaganda. It is as though the environment and the economy were irreconcilable. This Conservative government and the environment, that is what is irreconcilable.

And since Quebec and the environment are very compatible, it is not surprising that this government always makes decisions that are not in the interest of Quebec and the environment.

• (1515)

[English]

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure today to rise and support enthusiastically the creation of Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area and Haida Heritage Site. We seek to expedite this work with all members of Parliament.

It is important for Canadians to understand the place we are speaking of because this truly is one of Canada's most remarkable gems. Five thousand square kilometres will be protected from the alpine tundra through to the temperate rainforest and into the depths of the ocean, 1,500 square kilometres of rainforest and 3,500 square kilometres of Pacific waters. Nearly 3,500 marine species are found within this archipelago and 600 coastal archeological sites identified by UNESCO's World Heritage Site SGang Gwaay.

In 2005 *National Geographic* named Gwaii Haanas first among 28 national parks across North America based on its incredible remote wilderness and in collaboration with the Haida.

I extend a personal invitation to all members in the House, including the minister, and all Canadians to come and spend some time in this most remarkable place. It is rare to have all parties join together in this place to do something that will benefit all Canadians, something that is good and lasting.

Canadians must also pay tribute to the courage and dedication of the Haida and the people of Haida Gwaii, who have led this process from the beginning. Special recognition must also go to the Council of Haida Nations and to its president, Guujaaw, who has embodied Haida pride and a traditional and unique sense of Haida heroism throughout.

### Routine Proceedings

We also must recognize the early and visionary work of the former MP for Skeena, Jim Fulton, who to his dying days believed in a Canada that would include first nations and environmental values in all of the decisions that we make.

We want to congratulate the federal government and the oil industry in their recognition that there are some places in this world that we simply must protect and not allow coastal drilling.

In 2006 Canada committed to protecting a minimum of 10% of our coastal waters. While we have made a good step today, there are many steps yet to take along this path. We have an expression in the north that "it is the land that makes the people". Today we have taken a further step toward protecting that land and protecting its people.

\* \* \*

• (1520)

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to this very important announcement today, I would like to indicate that there have been discussions among all parties and if you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development be the committee designated for the purposes of section 7 of the Canadian National Parks Act.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

#### FINANCE

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Finance regarding Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for loss of retirement income).

[English]

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

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### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-526, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (special benefits).

*Routine Proceedings*

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation that would amend the Employment Insurance Act to extend the maximum period for which special benefits for illness, injury or quarantine may be paid from 15 weeks to 52 weeks.

The inspiration for the bill came from Natalie Thomas, a cancer survivor from Coquitlam, whose story touched me and made me realize how important and necessary changes to the Employment Insurance Act were. Another cancer survivor, Marie-Hélène Dubé from Montreal, who is on the Hill today, has gathered over 200,000 signatures for a petition that calls for these changes.

Both of these amazing women had one thing in common. They had to focus on how they were going to find the funds needed to survive once their 15 weeks of medical EI ran out. This made it extremely difficult to focus on what they should have been focused on, recovery. That is why I am introducing this bill today.

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

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**CANADA PENSION PLAN**

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-527, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan (pension and benefits).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to be introducing a bill that would finally put a legal end to the potential for people who have been convicted of spousal homicide to derive a CPP survivor benefit from their heinous crimes.

I had assumed that the long-established principle in law that no one should be able to benefit from a crime would also be enshrined in the eligibility criteria for government benefit programs. Imagine my surprise when I received the following correspondence, which states, "I have a relative who killed his wife, served very little time for manslaughter, and is (and has been) collecting CPP survivor benefits for over 10 years. Since 1-2 women per week die at the hands of their partners, how many more men are collecting this? How is this legal?"

I researched the file to verify that this could really happen and I learned that there was no legal prohibition that prevented people who had been convicted of spousal homicide from collecting either the death benefit or the survivor pension. Clearly, that loophole must be closed.

My bill would do precisely that. It would amend the Canada pension plan to prohibit the payment of the survivor's pension, orphan's benefit or death benefit to a survivor or orphan of a deceased contributor if the survivor or orphan had been convicted of the murder or manslaughter of the deceased contributor.

The integrity of the Canada pension plan is enormously important to Canadians. I know I am not alone when I say that the very thought that someone convicted of spousal homicide could derive a monetary benefit from such a heinous crime is an issue of fundamental justice. I trust all members of the House will feel the same way and I look forward to the speedy passage of my bill.

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

● (1525)

**PETITIONS**

## CALGARY AIRPORT TAXI SERVICE

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a petition signed by over 400 residents in Calgary.

The petitioners call on the House to protect taxi drivers and consumers at Calgary International Airport. Moving to a single taxi contract would create a monopoly, kill competition and remove consumer choice. It would not only hurt consumers but would also hurt the families of hard-working small business people.

The petitioners seek to defend their community from the unilateral actions of the Calgary Airport Authority.

[Translation]

## HOUSING

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition to the House of Commons signed by 475 Gatineau residents urging the Prime Minister to support Bill C-304. This bill would ensure access to safe, adequate, available and affordable housing for all Quebeckers and Canadians. It is extremely important for our society to make that happen for people.

[English]

## ACCESS TO MEDICINES REGIME

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to table a petition on Bill C-393 regarding the reform of Canada's access to medicines regime.

Fourteen thousand women, men and children die every day from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV and AIDS. This country has yet to fix Canada's access to medicines regime which was created a number of years ago, back in 2003, which still has not helped provide access to low cost medicines for those abroad. We are literally letting children, women and men suffer unnecessarily.

The petitioners call upon Canada to reverse its policy and to become a contributor to the health and well-being of those individuals as opposed to ignoring them.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to table a petition from the citizens of Edmonton, St. Albert, Lac La Biche and Spruce Grove, Alberta.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to enact Bill C-469, an environmental bill of rights, so as to provide the tools for Canadians to hold their government accountable to protect the environment, including the enforcement of environmental laws, and to act on international conventions and obligations, and to give Canadians the right to participate in environmental decision making.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** I have a second petition, Mr. Speaker, from the citizens of Edmonton calling on the House of Commons to support Bill C-466 to create greener commuter choices.

The petitioners are concerned about declining urban air quality, the threat of climate change and the fact that one-half of transport is personal transport creating greenhouse gases.

They call on the House to pass Bill C-466 and to implement a national transit strategy and to increase the municipal share of the federal gas tax.

## COSMETIC PESTICIDES

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a third petition from the residents of Edmonton, St. Albert and Spruce Grove, Alberta, calling for a ban on the cosmetic use of chemical pesticides due to clear links to health risks and the environmental impacts associated with the use of those substances. The petitioners call for action on the international precautionary principle which Canada has signed on to and has been enforced by the Supreme Court of Canada.

## PRISON FARMS

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today. The first petition is a call to stop the closure of the six Canadian prison farms. Dozens of Canadians have signed this petition demanding that the government reconsider its ill-thought decision.

All six prison farms, including Rockwood Institution in Manitoba, have been functioning farms for many decades providing food to prisons and the community.

The prison farm operations provide rehabilitation and training for prisoners through work with and caring for plants and animals. The work ethic and rehabilitation benefit of waking up at 6 a.m. and working outdoors is a discipline that Canadians can appreciate.

Closing these farms would mean a loss of the infrastructure and would make it too expensive to replace in the future.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to stop the closure of the six prison farm operations across Canada and to produce a report on the work and rehabilitative benefit to prisoners of the farm operations and how the program could be adapted to meet the agriculture needs of the 21st century.

•(1530)

## EARTHQUAKE IN CHILE

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition also signed by dozens of Canadians calls on the Canadian government to match funds personally donated by the citizens of Canada to the victims of the earthquake in Chile.

*Routine Proceedings*

## INVESTMENT CANADA ACT

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again I rise to bring forward the concerns of the people of the Timmins—James Bay and Sudbury regions who have seen the absolute abandonment of natural resource policy by the Conservative government and in particular, the debacle surrounding the selling off of international mining giants Falconbridge and Inco. The government sat back and allowed them to be picked up by corporate raiders like Xstrata. Now we have a situation where Xstrata is shutting down all the copper refining capacity in Ontario and shipping out raw concentrate and high-grade resources. We see Vale now shutting down Sudbury, the jewel of international base metal mining for almost a year.

This is a direct result of the negligence of the government and the Minister of Industry in particular, who has been more concerned about promoting cleaning products in his riding than standing up for the resource industries of Canada.

The petitioners are calling on the government to open up section 36 of the Investment Canada Act so that they can see whether or not the minister did any due diligence when allowing these two great Canadian companies to be sold off.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 210 and 213.

[Text]

Question No. 210—**Hon. Marlene Jennings:**

With respect to allegations of political interference in responding to requests under the Access to Information Act: (a) how many allegations have been brought to the attention of the Privy Council Office or the Prime Minister's Office since January 23, 2006; (b) in which departments or agencies were these allegations made; (c) on what dates did each alleged incident occur; and (d) what actions were taken to remedy each situation?

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office responds that in February 2010 one allegation of political interference in responding to access to information requests was brought to the attention of the Office of the Prime Minister. It concerned actions taken in July 2009 by the then Parliamentary Affairs Director within Public Works and Government Services Canada. The minister of the department took action to address the situation. The allegation is currently under investigation by the interim Information Commissioner of Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

Under Section 73 of the Access to Information Act, only officers or employees of a government institution may be delegated to perform the duties or functions of the head of the institution under the act. No political staff member may receive a delegation of authority under the act, or make access to information decisions.

Ministers are responsible to Parliament as to how the duties entrusted to them under the act are discharged.

**Question No. 213—Hon. Marlene Jennings:**

With respect to the press release published on the Department of Justice Web site on January 29, 2010, initially entitled "New Senators to Help End Opposition Obstruction of Law-And-Order Bills": (a) was this press release initially drafted by public servants or political staffers; (b) what modifications were made to this press release, documented by date, time and modification, after its initial publication; (c) did any departmental employee or political staffer access the Web page containing the press release, for the purposes of modification, intentionally or unintentionally, on February 1, 2010, whether or not any modification was in fact made; and (d) at what date and time was the Web page containing the press release last accessed for the purposes of modifications, intentionally or unintentionally, whether or not any modification was in fact made, by either a departmental employee or a political staffer?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the subject matter of this question is currently under investigation pursuant to section 118 of the Public Service Employment Act. As a result, it would not be appropriate to provide any of the information requested, as this could prejudice the investigation.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**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. 209, 211, 214, 215 and 217 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Text*]

**Question No. 209—Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:**

Within the constituency of Brossard—La Prairie, what was the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2005-2006 up to and including the current fiscal year, itemized according to (i) the date the money was received in the riding, (ii) the dollar amount of the expenditure, (iii) the program from which the funding came, (iv) the ministry responsible, (v) the designated recipient?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 211—Hon. Marlene Jennings:**

With respect to the Special Report to Parliament published by the Information Commissioner of Canada in April 2010: (a) what specific recommendations will the government implement for each department or agency listed in the report; (b) for each recommendation, when does the government expect to be in full compliance; and (c) generally, what other initiatives does the government intend to pursue to reduce the number of responses to access to information requests that exceed the deadlines required by the Access to Information Act?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 214—Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With respect to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games: (a) for each fiscal year since 2005-2006, how much money has the federal government

allocated to the Games, to which entities, on which dates, for what purposes, and what is the total amount; (b) how much money in total was spent on the Canada Pavilion; (c) which companies were invited to bid on the Canada Pavilion; (d) what is the cost breakdown of the Canada Pavilion with respect to construction, hospitality, wages, security and other categories of costs; (e) who adjudicated the bids related to Canada Pavilion contract proposals and on what criteria was the adjudication based; (f) what requests for proposals, including MERX codes, did the government put forward related to the Games; (g) in total, how much money was allocated for promoting bilingualism and French translation, on what dates were these funds distributed, to which entities and for what purposes; (h) what was the government's plan to address the H1N1 influenza pandemic before and during the Games, how much money was allocated for this plan, to which entities was it allocated and for what purpose; (i) what was the government's plan to address human and sex trafficking during the Games, how much was spent on this plan, which entities received funds, on which dates and for what purposes; (j) how much money did the government spend on including aboriginal communities in the Games and for what initiatives; (k) how much money was allocated from Sport Canada for the Games, on which dates and for what purposes; and (l) what costs, including hospitality, accommodation, travel and other categories of costs, were incurred by the federal government to support the participation of the Prime Minister and other Ministers at the Games, how many staff members were sent from the Prime Minister's Office, how many rooms did the Prime Minister, Ministers and their staff require, at what cost, at which hotels and for what dates?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 215—Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With respect to sport funding in Canada: (a) what programs and services were eliminated or reduced as a result of cutting Sport Canada's direct funding allotment from \$197,318,000 to \$179,812,000, and what was the rationale for the cut; (b) why was Sport Canada not included as a line item before 2008-2009; (c) when will the internal audit of Sport Canada be made publicly available; (d) what is the year-by-year summary, from 2005-2006 to 2010-2011, of Sport Canada's total funding allocation, as well as the total funding allocations for its funding programs, the (i) Athlete Assistance Program, (ii) Sport Support Program, (iii) Games Hosting Program; (e) what programs and services were eliminated or reduced as a result of cutting Sport Canada's Hosting Program from \$43,992,404 to \$16,315,575, and what is the rationale for the cut; (f) how much of the Hosting Program funding flowed to Olympic or Paralympic related activities; (g) what is the cost breakdown, from 2005 to 2010, of the Hosting Program's funding contributions to specific events and organizations, and on what dates were these contributions made; (h) have the recommendations of Acting Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive, Robert Lalonde, concerning the Hosting Program been implemented, (i) why or why not, (ii) when were they implemented, (iii) has there been an assessment of these changes and what is the outcome; (i) is the funding to the Canadian Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics and ParticipACTION announced in Budget 2010 additional to the funding these organizations receive from Sport Canada's Sport Support Program, or is this the total allocation these multi-sport organizations can expect to receive; (j) how much money was received by the Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Special Olympics and ParticipACTION each year since 2005; (k) what is the rationale for cutting ParticipACTION's funding from \$3,500,000 to \$3,000,000; (l) what is the year-by-year cost breakdown of the funds that have been allocated since 2005 to the Own the Podium program, is there an audit of what these funds have been spent on and, if so, where is it available, which entities received funds associated with this program, what is the funding commitment for this program in the future, when will this funding expire, how much of this funding will be spent on winter sports, how much of this funding will be spent on summer sports, and which organization will deliver and administer the Own the Podium funding; (m) how much money has the government spent and how much is it projected to spend on the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, on which dates, to which entities and for what purposes, including costs associated with travel, hospitality and pavilions; (n) how much money has the government spent and how much is it projected to spend on the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara, on which dates, to which entities and for what purposes, including costs associated with travel, hospitality and pavilions; and (o) how much money has the government spent and how much is it projected to spend on the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, on which dates, to which entities and for what purposes, including costs associated with travel, hospitality and pavilions?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 217—Mr. Luc Desnoyers:**

With respect to contracts awarded by the government since January 2006 for procurement of military airplanes and helicopters, valued between \$5 million and \$100 million and including Industrial and Regional Benefits (IRB) requirements, for each contract: (a) what is the name of the principal contractor; (b) what is the name of the Canadian company that concluded a partnership agreement with the principal contractor under the IRB policy; (c) briefly, what is the project's description; (d) where will most of the project be carried out; (e) how long will the project take; and (f) what is the project's IRB value as defined by the IRB policy?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, government orders will be extended by 14 minutes.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### ELIMINATING PARDONS FOR SERIOUS CRIMES ACT

**Hon. Jay Hill (for the Minister of Public Safety)** moved that Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise in sponsorship of this important bill before us today. Bill C-23 would fundamentally overhaul the system of pardons in this country in order to ensure that the rights of victims and law-abiding Canadians are properly balanced with those of offenders.

We told Canadians that this is what we would do several weeks ago, and our government is one of action. We deliver on our commitments both expeditiously and thoughtfully. Over the last few weeks, I believe that all of us have been made aware of just how important this legislation is. We have heard from many ordinary Canadians who wonder how a serial sex offender such as Graham James could have his record sealed just five years after finishing his sentence.

We have heard from other Canadians who asked the same question about other offenders who may be eligible to receive a pardon for their offences with almost no regard for what kind of crimes they have committed or the lasting impact on victims.

We have heard from victims themselves who have spoken about the pain and suffering they have endured for many years. Those same victims have urged us to ensure that the changes our government is proposing are quickly passed into law. We have heard from victims who have told us that this bill is on the right track. We have heard from many of them that these changes are

needed. We have heard that the changes proposed by Bill C-23 are tough, but also that they are fair.

I therefore urge all hon. members to work with us to give Bill C-23 the speedy passage it deserves so that we can ensure that the pardon system in this country works the way it should.

For many people today, the word “pardon” somehow implies that previous offences have been completely forgotten, regardless of how much pain and suffering was caused to the victim. A pardon suggests that everything is now okay because the offender has waited three or five years and stayed clear of the justice system for that time. Our government believes that this is not an accurate reflection of how the legal system works.

How the system really works is that in certain cases and under certain conditions, an ex-offender's record is sealed and kept apart from public view so that ex-offenders have an opportunity to get on with their lives as law-abiding citizens who can more easily find work and more fully contribute to society, but the record can again be brought back into view under certain circumstances, so it is suspended rather than permanently deleted. Bill C-23 would therefore amend the Criminal Records Act to replace the word “pardon” with the more accurate “record suspension” to reflect this fact.

Today if individuals want to receive a pardon, or record suspension, all they need to do is finish their sentences and stay clear of the law for three or five years. To many people, the process appears to be virtually automatic, and the numbers would support that view. Only 2% of all applications were rejected by the National Parole Board last year and only 1% of the applications were rejected the year before that. Our government and indeed many Canadians believe these numbers indicate that fundamental reforms are required to the way the National Parole Board works.

As the Prime Minister recently noted, our government believes that a pardon is not a right. There are some cases and some occasions where actions should never be pardoned. Bill C-23 therefore proposes amendments to the Criminal Records Act to provide the National Parole Board with the tools and discretion it needs so that in certain cases, individuals convicted of serious crimes would not be eligible for a pardon or record suspension. In particular, Bill C-23 would amend the Criminal Records Act so that individuals convicted of certain sexual offences against minors would not be eligible for a record suspension unless they could prove to the National Parole Board that the offence did not involve a position of trust, bodily harm or the threat of violence.

Victims and victims' advocacy groups have asked for these changes and our government is delivering them.

*Government Orders*

Under this new legislation, individuals convicted of four or more indictable offences would not be eligible to apply for a record suspension. In cases where an ex-offender is eligible to apply for a record suspension, the waiting period for some re-offences would be increased from three to five years, and for indictable offences, from five to ten years.

• (1535)

For indictable offences, the changes our government is proposing would allow the board to examine factors such as the nature, gravity and duration of an offence. The board would also take into account the circumstances surrounding the commission of the offence and the applicant's criminal history.

As well, a person convicted of an indictable offence would need to prove to the National Parole Board that receiving a suspension of record will contribute to his or her rehabilitation and will not bring the administration of justice into disrepute.

As I mentioned before, the changes our government is proposing are tough but they are also fair. It is not just our government that is saying this. Sheldon Kennedy, one of the former victims of Graham James, recently noted, with regard to the reforms that the government is proposing, that, "There was a lot of thought put into them—and that the approach—is balanced".

The *Globe and Mail* also recently noted:

Reforming Canada's system of pardons to disqualify child sex offenders such as the former junior hockey coach Graham James – or worse, child sex killer Karla Homolka – is sensible. It's also reasonable to scrap the term "pardon" and substitute "record suspension." Pardon implies a forgiveness that the offender may not have earned.

In the same light, Ron Jette of the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Network, in an interview with *CTV*, said "that granting a child molester a pardon would be a slap in the face to a victim" and essentially tell the victim that he or she does not matter.

Our government agrees, as do millions of Canadians who want us to continue to take the necessary steps to secure the safety of all Canadians. That is what the proposed reforms in Bill C-23 would do.

I therefore would again strongly urge all hon. members to give this vital bill the speedy passage it deserves.

• (1540)

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-23, a bill the government introduced to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

In summary, the bill aims to amend the Criminal Records Act substituting the term "pardon" with the more narrowly defined "record suspension" and would prohibit record suspension in the cases of individuals convicted of sex offences perpetrated on children. The bill would also restrict record suspensions in cases of repeat offenders and extend the waiting periods required between parole and eligibility for record suspension. It would also create regular reporting requirements for the National Parole Board to the Minister of Public Safety.

We will be supporting the bill to go to committee and are supportive of changes to the system that currently exists for granting

pardons. However, it bears mentioning that three years ago the then minister of public safety had undertaken a review of this system of granting pardons and had said that everything had been fixed. Therefore, this is not the first time the government has looked at this issue. Three years ago, the then minister conducted no hearings and did not consult the public safety committee but made some minor changes and said that the problem was solved and that we did not need to worry about it anymore. In fact, what was done at that point in time was to add a second person to the review panel and say that both people had to be in unanimous agreement that someone would be given a pardon before it was allowed.

That was the end of it until, of course, a major sensational story hit the media, a very unfortunate story involving Mr. James receiving a pardon, and suddenly the government had a renewed interest in the topic. What we see again and again is that the government waits for a sensational story, something that is very emotional that it can use politically, and then writes legislation on the back of a napkin to capitalize on. Usually this is done particularly when Conservatives are under siege for some other political issue. In this issue, under scrutiny and attack for their complete mismanagement of the G8 and G20 meetings that are being held in Huntsville and Toronto. It rings a little hollow when they come out and demand urgent action and feign outrage when they have been in government for more than four years and themselves reviewed this issue three years ago.

A couple of areas in the bill do cause concern. When we are dealing with sex offenders, I fully support those changes. They are important and we recognize that, but there are a couple of areas on which we want clarification. One area is the indictable offences. The length of time for someone to receive a pardon would increase from three to five years to five to ten years. Some indictable offences can be for something that is serious but also something relatively minor. For example, if someone were charged with marijuana possession, that could be an indictable offence. If someone were involved in cheque fraud, clearly not something we would want to see anybody engage in, but that also could be an indictable offence. Someone who was in a desperate financial situation and made a really dumb choice to engage in cheque fraud could be in a situation where she or he would not get a pardon for 10 years.

This is a major difference, because someone who is 18 years old and has to wait three years for a pardon and are then able to continue their life at 21, is materially different than someone who has to wait 10 years for a pardon and would be then 28 years of age before he or she could begin his or her life.

It bears mentioning that we have pardons for a reason. While we would all agree that there are certain people who should never get pardons, trying to hold that out as if everybody is dishonest is, frankly, a perversion of fact. When the Prime Minister stands and says that this is about stopping Karla Homolka from getting a pardon, of course no one wants to see her get a pardon. What a bunch of absurdity to even raise that, to put the victims' families through that. The reality is that most people who are getting pardons are people who have made mistakes but clearly deserve another chance and be given an opportunity to redeem themselves and positively contribute to society.



*Government Orders*

•(1545)

If somebody, for example, were charged with marijuana possession when they were 18 years old, would we want to see that person never able to be employed? Would we want to see that person live in poverty with no hope for the rest of his or her life and no opportunity to clear his or her name?

I would hope most members of the House would say no, that it is not a fair thing to do and that it is not just. Of course we want to ensure that those who have committed serious crimes do not have the opportunity to get pardons but that is something that should have been done four years ago, and particularly three years ago when there was another sensational case that the then public safety minister was talking about.

What deeply concerns me is that my comments today, my legitimate concern around a bill and asking questions, will almost certainly be twisted and contorted for partisan gain. I am just saying that we need to look at this in committee, that we need to ensure the right people will have the right outcomes here and that people who do not deserve it will not be caught in a mistake, particularly when the legislation is written in such haste.

Instead, when we ask questions, that is contorted as somehow being for criminals. I will give an example. Recently I was speaking to the issue of taxpayers paying benefits for prisoners in jail. The case of Clifford Olson, of course, is invoked because the government seeks to get the maximum amount of emotion and to get people as disturbed and angry as it possibly can as it plays politics with people's emotions toward crime.

I will go over what the Conservative member for Abbotsford said:

Yesterday, the Liberal MP for Ajax—Pickering shamefully defended prisoners getting taxpayer funded old age security benefits.

**Some hon. members:** Shame.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Before members shame it, maybe they should hear the facts. If they actually waited for facts instead of yelling the word shame, I think this would work better.

Another member, the member for Oak Ridges—Markham, went on to basically repeat the same thing and then the minister stood up and made the same proclamation.

Here is the problem. Here is what I said, “Mr. Speaker, you clearly do not want a situation where someone who is in jail and committed a minor offence is suddenly losing their pension”.

I said that my concern was not with Clifford Olson and not with somebody who committed a serious crime, I clearly stated, in very plain language for anybody who bothered to read it, that my concern was that somebody who committed a minor offence would be caught up in losing his or her benefits. I simply wanted to ask that question at committee.

Has this House degenerated to the point where just asking a question about a bill and having a concern that somebody who does not deserve to be caught in something that it is not fair is then translated into somehow standing up for prisoners? That is the degeneration of the debate in this place and it is shameful. There has been no apology and no attempt to correct the record even though it

has been made very clear in the media, mocked, that this would be done.

Even now, without even hearing me speak or hearing the facts, members on the other side yell the word “shame”. It is a shame. It is a terrible shame that a government would distort facts and information to try to use crime as a political weapon.

The reality is, without any question, that crime is an issue that deserves bipartisanship. It needs to be based on evidence. We need to take a step back and ask how we can make our communities safer. I am a father of three children. I would say that every member in this place who has a child and cares for their safety, cares for—

**An hon. member:** Are they all yours?

•(1550)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I regret to interrupt but I will ask the hon. members to show some respect while a member is speaking and to refrain from disrespectful comments.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Madam Speaker, it is disappointing that when I reference the fact that I have three children, there is an attack that is levelled on me even about that.

What I was trying to say, if they would bother to listen instead of shouting things at me, is that every member in this House cares about their family, cares about their community, and came to this place because they want to make their country and their community a better place. When members cast aspersions on other members, on their motivations, to say that somehow I care less about my children or somehow I care less about my community than they do theirs, that is when the word “shame” is appropriate.

When we are having discussions about how to proceed with keeping our community safe, why do we not do it honestly? Why do we not do it with integrity? Why do we not do it by a method in which people who elect us expect us to operate?

I think that this bill, again, deserves to be supported, deserves to go forward, deserves to be looked at committee, but it also deserves to be questioned. People who have legitimate and fair questions about that should be assured that a young person who is 18 years old is not going to be in a situation where his or her life will be destroyed unnecessarily. They must be able to have a voice to that issue.

Playing games with crime has to end. We have to move to an evidence-based system.

When we had the former victims' ombudsman, now let go for reasons we do not know, saying the current government's plan for victims was unbalanced and would not work, when we had the correctional investigator sounding the alert, saying that our prison systems were getting ready to burst or were overloaded, when we had a Minister of Public Safety saying that a bill was going to cost \$90 million and then under threat of a PBO report, a Parliamentary Budget Officer report, saying, “Now that the truth is going to come out, it's \$2 billion, not \$90 million”, I think the government has a problem with numbers.

*Government Orders*

It has a problem adding up costs, not just with this but with the G8 and G20 and the budget. It said we were not in deficit when we were in fact heading into Canada's largest deficit we have had in our history, a deficit before the economic downturn even began. The government is more interested in hyperbole, in trying to twist and contort things to play games, and to play politics than it is interested in public policy.

What concerns me about a bill like this is that I know that what started this bill was talking points. What started this bill was how the government could win with it politically, not how to create good public policy.

Instead of asking that question, instead of starting as a starting point, let us develop good legislation, let us do what is right for Canadians, let us base it on evidence, and let us base it on making our communities safer. Yet, the government based it on politics. It based it on writing something on the back of a napkin, creating talking points, and then worrying whatever the legislation will be later.

There are lives in the balance and Canadians expect much more of us.

I am going to finish on this note. When we have a situation as fortunate as Canada's is where, while we still do face crime, we have one of the lowest crime rates anywhere in the industrialized world, where we have seen crime decline year over year, what we would expect is a government that would be investing in seeing that trend continue, taking a look at jurisdictions that have succeeded. We would see a government that would be investing in things like crime prevention, in victims, in front-line support, in mental health, in drug addiction, and things that really bring crime down, as evidence has shown.

Instead, on the same thing, because it thinks it will win more votes, this is a government that is dumping billions into prisons.

There was a delegation that came from the United Kingdom to study how Canada could have such a low crime rate and such a low rate of incarceration. When the delegates got to Canada and saw this government's direction, that it was racing after a Republican failed model that had been a disaster and crushed in states like California, that was done in the U.K. to disastrous effect, they said, "Please don't do this. Don't walk this road. Because if you do, it'll be incredibly hard to undo. It'll cost you billions of dollars. It'll make your communities less safe. It'll turn young people from minor criminals into serious ones, throwing them into jails that are overcrowded without programs to make them better, criminalizing them, and continuing a cycle of violence that often was happening well before they arrived in that jail cell".

• (1555)

Victims are not some people who appear out of the ether. Victims are often people who have been living in cycles of victimization. They are often offenders themselves, people who turn to substance abuse to get out of their horrific situations, people who end up developing mental disorders because of their terrible situations.

There are not bad people and good people, and black and white. There is the truth, and the truth is that if we follow evidence, if we care, if we invest in things such as crime prevention, early

intervention, and trying to turn young people away from dark paths, that works.

Dumping money on a political agenda designed to win votes, chasing after a system that did not work, that was broken, where every jurisdiction that adopted it is saying it was a disaster and crushing it, is the wrong way to go. All I am asking is that the government listen to reason and evidence.

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, no doubt this bill will be sent to committee. I know that it is a committee that the member has an interest in and of which he is a member.

Could he forecast, for the members who are not on the committee and the public who are interested in this important bill, what kind of witness lists he would expect to see, what kind of evidence he would like to hear, what outcomes there might be with respect to, for instance, groups in our community that offer pardon services, groups that work toward rehabilitation and think that a pardon is part of that reintegration into society, and not to go so far as to give any consideration to the most egregious cases?

What kind of testimony is he looking to see at committee, in support of or against this bill?

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Madam Speaker, first, we are going to want to hear from witnesses on how we can ensure, which frankly should have been done three years ago when the public safety minister said he was going to do it, that people who should not get pardons do not.

Obviously, somebody who is a serious sex offender, somebody who has committed a serious and heinous crime, should not get the opportunity to receive a pardon. As I said in my comments, there is a whole other category of people, the vast majority of people who do get pardons today, whom I think pretty much everybody in this House would agree should continue to receive a second chance, should have an opportunity at redemption and an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Certainly, we will want to hear from the John Howard Society and the Elizabeth Fry Society that represent inmates. We will want to hear from the Canadian Bar Association. We will want to hear from the National Pardon Centre itself, that actually processes these applications. I had an opportunity to talk with those officials. They are very supportive of some elements of the bill, as am I. They have some important questions about other elements of the bill, where they feel that there is a possibility of young people being trapped in a situation where their lives would be destroyed.

That is the type of balance we want to see and I would hope that the members, instead of engaging in hyperbole, political demonization and games, and playing politics with this issue and others, would take a moment to take a step back, ask some honest questions, do their jobs, and base things on evidence.

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[Translation]

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this bill to amend the Criminal Records Act by substituting the term “record suspension” for the term “pardon” and extending the ineligibility period for applications for a record suspension. It also makes certain offences ineligible for a record suspension and enables the National Parole Board to consider additional factors when deciding whether to order a record suspension

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of a review of the Criminal Records Act in committee. We would have preferred this to be done more rationally and intelligently through a review in committee rather than through a cobbled together bill full of poison pills. In any event, we are accustomed to the Conservatives' attitude and their way of doing things.

The Conservatives' usual modus operandi for this type of thing is to wait for a heinous event to be reported in the media. They latch on to the story, act outraged and then draft a bill that proposes repression, punishment, double punishment and non-pardons. To top it all off, they put on a big show to give the impression that they are taking care of public safety and victims.

For this bill, the government used the same modus operandi: a media event concerning the 2007 pardon of hockey coach Graham James. Then Bill C-23 is announced with great fanfare to supposedly get tough on crime when it comes to pardoning pedophiles. The bill apparently targets pedophiles.

In fact, the bill is full of poison pills that will affect not only pedophiles—it does indeed do that—but everyone from purse snatchers to marijuana smokers to ordinary thieves.

I am not the only one who says so. In an article in *Le Devoir*, Ms. Cornellier said:

Once again, the government is taking advantage of an incident, a controversy, to push changes that will have drastic consequences. Making certain criminals who have served their time ineligible for pardon can compromise rehabilitation efforts and, as a result, the long-term safety of society. Whether the minister likes it or not, the possibility of a pardon, in the most serious cases, is an incentive to make an effort towards social reintegration. In more minor cases, for example with old marijuana possession convictions, it can help clear up some troubles.

Now there is someone who understands what the government is doing.

Is the Bloc Québécois in favour of examining the Criminal Records Act to review automatic pardons for pedophiles? Yes. Do we think that pedophiles should be subject to more careful and in-depth analysis by the National Parole Board? Yes, obviously. But does this bill deal with only pedophiles? No.

With this bill, the Conservatives are once again using a media event—the Graham James case—to present a complete overhaul of the pardon system, which works fine as it is. In fact, 97% of those who have received pardons have not reoffended. That means that 3% have. Do we need to be more vigilant with them? Yes, but does that mean that we need a complete overhaul of the pardon system? I do not think so.

It is a matter of looking into what kinds of crimes those who fall into that 3% have committed. We would have to ask ourselves how

we can improve legislation to specifically address that 3%. That would be an intelligent analysis. Is that what the bill does? In my opinion, no.

• (1600)

Let us look at the current system. First, a pardon does not erase the fact that a person was convicted.

A pardon just means that a person's record is suspended. The record is removed from the Canadian Police Information Centre. Information on other convictions is also removed. If a police officer searches for the person's name in the information centre after the pardon is granted, he will not find it. But if the person commits another crime, the record becomes public again. It is therefore suspended as long as the person obeys the law.

Currently, if an offender who has been pardoned for a sexual offence applies for a job that involves contact with children or vulnerable persons, a police force or any other authorized organization can, with the applicant's permission, check whether he was ever pardoned. If the applicant was convicted of child-related offences, it is up to the employer to decide whether or not to hire him.

Moreover, a person convicted on indictment must currently wait five years to apply for a pardon. That is five years from the time the sentence has been completely served, meaning that the offender's fines have been paid, he has completed his probation period and he has finished paying his debt. Beginning at that point, he must wait five years from the time he was convicted on indictment before applying. It can take from 6 to 18 months to get an answer, and sometimes even longer, depending on how complex the case is. A person convicted of a summary conviction offence must wait three years to apply.

With this new bill, the length of time people will have to wait before applying will increase from five to 10 years and from three to five years. I want to raise another point before I talk about the 10-year ineligibility period. The effect of a record suspension is limited to Canada. Certainly, if the American authorities have the record in their system, a person may be refused entry into the U.S. at the border. Records generally remain in the American system even if the person has been pardoned.

Only the Minister of Public Safety is authorized to provide information about a pardoned individual's file. He may provide such information only under exceptional circumstances and only if he believes that providing the information is relevant to the administration of justice or public safety in Canada or if it is related to another state.

What does the act cover now? Let us consider the first point on which I believe everyone in the House will agree, which is that any person convicted of “an offence involving sexual activity relating to a minor...unless the applicant can demonstrate s/he was “close in age” and that the offence did not involve a position of trust/authority, bodily harm or threat of violence/intimidation” would be ineligible for a record suspension.

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Who could disagree with that? The committee will have to consider whether that can be improved upon.

We have some questions about the 10-year and 5-year provisions. This bill would increase the waiting time from 5 years to 10 years for convictions on indictment and from 3 years to 5 years for summary convictions. What does that really mean? I decided to have a little fun checking out the Criminal Code. Here is what I found in section 437, which is about false alarms:

Every one who wilfully, without reasonable cause, by outcry, ringing bells, using a fire alarm, telephone or telegraph, or in any other manner, makes or circulates or causes to be made or circulated an alarm of fire is guilty of

(a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or

(b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.

●(1605)

The Criminal Code is full of minor offences that deal with all kinds of things, such as removing a natural bar without permission. But a person convicted of an indictable offence must wait 10 years after paying the fine to request a pardon. How will that affect the person's ability to find a job? We have to understand that a criminal record can close many doors when it comes to employment.

When I read this bill, an image came to mind. When I was studying criminology, I remember that we were told that a long time ago criminal records did not exist. Criminals were identified by branding with a hot iron. Branding worked for livestock. It meant that criminals would be marked for life and, in addition, it was extremely humiliating. Branding was a kind of permanent criminal record. It could not be erased and criminals would experience rejection and humiliation for the rest of their lives. They would live like pariahs. The branding was often chosen based on the crime: "T" for thieves, or "C" for counterfeiters. According to the French Penal Code from 1810, criminals were branded on the right shoulder: "T" for hard labour, *travaux forcés*, or "TP" for hard labour for life, *travaux à perpétuité*. I was very surprised to see that in Canadian military prisons "D" was used for deserters. We have to make sure that we do not regress to those times.

We are concerned about the idea that people who have been convicted of more than three offences resulting in prison sentences of more than a year would be ineligible for record suspension. Take a typical case of an 18 year old who committed three robberies. That person would not be able to redeem himself even if, after two or three years, he no longer wanted to be a delinquent and decided that he wanted to go back to school and rebuild his life, and really wanted to turn things around. This young man, at the age of 25, married with children, wanting to start a career and be a good person, would not be able to make a criminal record request because he had committed three offences, so it would not be allowed. He would live in constant shame, all because he made the wrong choices in his youth. And despite having turned his life around, he would be branded for life. It is the same symbolism.

The Conservative government is a little like the Javert character in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Javert is the police officer who has always believed that once a man becomes a criminal, he is always a criminal and there is no such thing as pardon or rehabilitation. He regarded the law as divine law. He thought that Jean Valjean would remain a criminal his entire life, but Jean Valjean demonstrated that,

on the contrary, he was capable of pity, clemency and rehabilitation. Poor Javert was completely devastated, jumped off the Pont Notre-Dame and drowned in the Seine.

We are wondering what the connection is between doubling the time required to obtain a pardon in all cases and James Graham, who was charged with pedophilia. There is no connection. The only point that links this case, which got a lot of media attention, is that there were a few changes to the terminology. Apart from that, nothing else really made sense, because the system already works just fine. I repeat: 97% of people who received pardons have never reoffended.

●(1610)

Applying this measure across the board does not make sense. Society has implemented this means of suspending criminal records precisely in order to allow men and women the opportunity to find decent jobs, support their families, pay their taxes and get away from their criminal past. I believe this last point is the only one that guarantees a safer society, and not the Conservatives' obsession with ever-lasting punishment.

What do the Conservatives think today? Do they believe that by making life more difficult for reformed individuals, people who have not reoffended, we will be better protected? If those people are starving, if they and their family members do not have good jobs, do not earn much money or have any income security, do they think we will be collectively richer and safer? I do not think so. Do they believe that life has meaning only if people pay for their mistakes for the rest of their lives? I do not think so. Should we be happy or pleased about the suffering and difficulties facing those who have fallen and made mistakes, when three to five years after they have served their entire sentence and have never reoffended, they try to redeem themselves? Is that what Christian generosity is all about?

This bill sends a clear signal that what the Conservatives want is to get rid of the word "rehabilitation" in every case. Unfortunately, that is what they are all about.

There are cases that call for extra caution, for extra careful thought and analysis before a decision is made to grant a pardon or not. Every case is different. I think the people at the National Parole Board are smart. They are experienced people whose job it is to look at every case. We can give them additional tools, and we have to have confidence in a system with a 97% success rate. The success rate is not 3%, but 97%.

Sexual offences, especially those involving minors, need to be looked at carefully, and the act needs to be reviewed as it pertains to such offences. We agree. But please, let us avoid the Conservatives' tendency to exaggerate and put all offenders in the same boat. They would have us lock everyone up and throw away the key.

The Bloc Québécois feels that a thoughtful, rational, non-partisan study of the Criminal Records Act could be good for victims, for our society and for the rehabilitation of offenders and I would even say former offenders.

With this criterion in mind, we will support sending this bill to committee. Clearly, public safety must be the top priority in deciding whether or not to grant a record suspension, and it can be ensured by rehabilitating offenders and pardoning people who have been rehabilitated. We will not build more just societies by branding people for life and making them wear scarlet letters.

I still have a minute left, but I have nothing more to say. Everything has been said.

• (1615)

**Mr. Guy André (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague for her excellent speech. I have a question for her.

She said that 3% of people who are pardoned eventually reoffend. In the bill before us, all types of crimes are mixed together. The bill is meant to punish pedophiles, but it includes other crimes and extends the pardon period for other crimes that are less significant.

I would like my colleague to answer the following questions. What type of crimes are committed by the 3% of people who reoffend? Also, for those who have not been pardoned, and the hon. member covered this very well, what are the consequences in terms of reintegration into the work force? When someone has a criminal record, often for offences committed at age 17, 18 or 19, this can have a major influence on their career and their personal development and can often marginalize them.

What can we do to change this bill intelligently and not, as the hon. member says, like the Conservatives, who lump everyone together, punish people, draft new legislation and move on?

• (1620)

**Mrs. Maria Mourani:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. We do not have a breakdown of what kinds of crimes that 3% segment has committed. What we do know, however, is that individuals who have committed a sex crime already have a much harder time obtaining a pardon. There are some cases that show up in the media. From what I understand, the government created this legislation to prevent Karla Homolka from obtaining a pardon. I can understand that specific cases will come up, but we should really look at what crimes the 3% are committing. The National Parole Board already examines cases of serious pedophilia offences and the like, and it takes its time and deliberates before granting a pardon.

As for the other 97%, they are already rehabilitated. There is a waiting period of three or five years to see whether or not they reoffend. We must not forget that the criminal record is not wiped out; it is suspended. This means that after people have served their sentences, they will be monitored for five years to see whether or not they reoffend. They are monitored to see what they do, and then they are granted a pardon, which can take one year. So that is six years total. If, 10 or 15 years later, the individual commits a theft, for example, for whatever reason, the criminal record will become active again.

As people age, work, get married and have children, they are surrounded by fewer and fewer factors that attract them to a life of crime. It makes sense. As soon as people start participating in society, they no longer feel excluded and are not anti-social. They become law-abiding citizens. Are we going to tell them that not only

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did they serve a 10-year sentence, but that they will also not be receiving a pardon for some thefts they committed at the age of 18?

If they committed three thefts, they will never be able to request a pardon. Why not four, five or six? Why is the government adopting this American mentality that has never worked? The United States is in the process of releasing offenders and street gang members because the prisons are too full.

It is unfortunate that, since this government took power, it has been making a spectacle out of public safety.

[*English*]

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-23 from two perspectives.

First, do we need to study the pardon bill, or the record bill, or whatever lovely name we want to give it? It really does not matter what one calls it. We need to look at how to go about granting pardons to folks who have committed different categories of offences. It seems appropriate that we should be doing that. However, it seems to me that we could have done that three years ago, because what has been said previously in this House is true. There were opportunities. There was a quick look at it, and the minister decided that it was good enough and simply said that things were fine.

We saw the most recent example of this in the press, which reported that Mr. James was granted a pardon a couple of years ago. It twigged the government's interest in looking at the pardon bill.

My community in the Niagara Peninsula went through an absolutely horrendous evil with Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka. I do not know how else to explain it to hon. members. We lived through a series of things that no one should have to live through. Clearly, for us, the granting of a pardon to Karla Homolka is unconscionable. Unfortunately, the bill before us cannot be passed in time to prevent Ms. Homolka from applying for a pardon.

New Democrats offered the government a way out by suggesting that we split this bill with a motion that would allow us to deal now with people like Karla Homolka. We would look for unanimity in the House, which I believe the government could get, to fast-track it so that Ms. Homolka would not be granted a pardon. The motion stated:

That, in the opinion of the House, urgent changes to the Criminal Records Act are required to prevent pardons from being granted that would shock the conscience of Canadians or bring the administration of justice into disrepute, and therefore the government should immediately introduce legislation with the specific purpose to empower the National Parole Board to deny pardons in cases where granting a pardon would shock the conscience of Canadians or bring the administration of justice into disrepute....

It was an opportunity to do this, and hopefully, there still will be an opportunity to do this.

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I met with the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. French on Friday. She wrote me a letter asking what I could do to help with this issue. She was very compelling. She did not have to be. I raised my family in that community. I know what it was like to live through that period of time and the fear it generated. We lived through what was for all of us a period of anxiety that none of us had ever experienced before, which none of us ever want to experience again, especially those of us who had young girls, who were the specific targets.

I invited her to speak with me about the issue she was representing. She had generated within a very short period of time 1,700 names, which she sent to the Minister of Public Safety. She was imploring him to take out this piece and work on this one aspect. As I explained how we could do that, she was extremely gratified. She said that this is what she would like to see happen. As I explained to her, the other parts of the pardon act do not pertain to the types of heinous crimes that were committed by Ms. Homolka and her spouse, Paul Bernardo.

I talked to her about a young man who had sent me an email. This young man was a 19-year-old who was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. He said that he had done it, he was guilty, he was caught, and he served what he had to under the Criminal Code. He pleaded guilty to his act. He said that he had never done it again, that he will never do it again in his life, and that he had accepted the punishment. He also asked that we please not add a couple of more years to the punishment, because he did not deserve it.

When I related that story to Ms. Doyle, she said that he was right; he did not.

• (1625)

I thought that was absolutely compelling testimony from the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. French and the niece of Kristen French. She got that. She said that I was right that he should not have to suffer any more. He had suffered enough.

However, she also relayed the message that she and her family should not have to suffer again. Every time the name is raised and the event is talked about, they suffer again what happened to them in an all too real way that most of us cannot imagine. For them, it is never over, as she said to me. She was quite cogent about the fact that it is never over for them. One day leads to the next, but they are always reminded in one form or another.

If Ms. Homolka were to receive a pardon, for the French family, and indeed, for the members of my community in the Niagara Peninsula, it would be as if she had been forgiven. To be truthful, the French family does not want her to be forgiven. I know that my community in the Niagara Peninsula does not want to forgive her either.

I implore the government to reconsider and find a way, with the help of this side of the House, of course, because that hand is open to you and is extended to you, to ensure that this indeed does not happen. Let us not have that family relive those days. Let them rest assured that the acts perpetrated by that couple will forever be admonished and will never be pardoned in the sense that it is okay and it is now over. For them, as I said, it can never be over.

All of us understand it in a mental way, in the sense that we can intellectualize it, but to understand it as they do, in our hearts and in

our guts, is next to impossible for us, including those of us who lived in the region and understood this absolute horror on a first-hand basis.

I would ask the House, especially the government, to hear what Ms. Talin French-Doyle said in her letter, which states:

Victims of crimes are direct and indirect as in family, friends and even the general public in the case of particularly fear inducing or morally reprehensible acts. Please be aware that each time an offender name is mentioned or the ongoing events of their life are documented, the victims, both direct and indirect are brought back to the events of the offence. In this regard, the past is never gone for victims and the world will never be the same again.

She went on to say:

Forgiveness is the right of a victim, not a requirement of the State.

Ms. Doyle is asking the government and all of us in this place to help the French family not have to endure what they have endured for so many years by allowing a pardon. Time is of the essence, because as we know, indeed, the application process could start as early as next month. There is no guarantee that it will happen, but no one in the House can guarantee the Frenches that it will not. They are asking the House to ensure that it cannot happen in Ms. Homolka's case. We have that ability.

It would be a shame, in a magnitude of disproportionate terms, not to ensure that we stop it, especially when we have the ability to do so. We owe it to the French family to say that we will ensure that this request it is making of its government is carried forward. It is not asking a lot. It is simply asking that the government do what it wants to do with its own legislation, but to do it now.

• (1630)

I believe if the government were to ask for that one section, we may find that we could get it done. That would send a message to the French family that we have not forgotten it, that we understand the type of terror it went through, we understand the pain it has suffered and still continues to suffer and we understand if this is one small thing we can do, we will do for the family.

I implore the government to consider Mr. and Mrs. French when it thinks about what it can do in the immediate term. For those who perhaps are less familiar with the case, albeit for me to recite the horrors of it because they are horrors, they may want to go back and do a little research to understand that case and what was perpetrated on those young women, the horror the family faced and what it felt like to live in a community that was wretched by fear.

I will not take the time to go through the details because they are absolutely heinous and extremely gory. I would never want to subject anyone, through a debate, to have to listen to those sorts of details. However, people should make themselves aware of it so they can understand what that family lives with every day of its life.

Let me speak to the other side of the bill, which really needs to go to committee to be studied. Like the young man I referenced earlier who had a drunk driving conviction, we need to look at those clauses of the bill. We need to ask ourselves if it is appropriate for the timeline we now have or should it be extended perhaps for him and for others. We need to study it and we need to have expert witnesses who know the criminal justice system and what works and what does not.

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Clearly we have examples around the world on things that do work. People do deserve to get pardoned, provided they meet the requirements set out in law, people who are participating in the broader community, who have not committed other offences, who are deemed to be of good character and who are moving on with their lives. As my hon. colleague said earlier, they do not deserve to have a brand put on them for the rest of their lives. They deserve the opportunity to move forward with their lives and we want to see that happen.

However, we need to talk to folks who understand the system and not make law on the fly because of something we see in the newspaper or because we missed one in the case of Mr. James and then rush to try to ensure it works.

One of the provisions in the bill is the three strikes and out. The three strikes and out law in the U.S. does not work. Why do we want to incorporate things that do not work into legislation? We want to make good, appropriate legislation to ensure that it does work for society.

It is about all of us, not just those who ask for a pardon. It is about the broader community. We want everyone to participate in the system so when we say people are pardoned, it is because society says they are and believes in that pardon. Those people can then go forward with their lives knowing full well that whatever punishment they have served, society has said to them to move forward with their lives.

In one of the three strikes and out clauses in the bill, one could be charged with three offences during one crime. If that is the case and one happens to be a younger person, or a not so young person, who commits a crime and is charged with three serious offences, that person would never be pardoned. There could have been all kinds of underlying reasons as to why the person committed that offence at that moment in time. It could have been an impaired mental state, a deep depression, anxiety, some sort of mental breakdown or any number of things that happened at that point in the person's life. This could happen to all of us.

• (1635)

Mental health experts say a great many of us can suffer mental breakdown. Most of us do not want to have that happen to us and when we see it in the broader community, or our families, it is heart-rending. However, to punish people for the rest of their lives based on what happened to them in a moment of time that would never happen again is not appropriate.

It is more appropriate that we take the system, ensure we understand the rules, ensure we review it and allow ourselves to be educated around what works and what does not. We should talk to the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society. The Salvation Army in my community works with folks in halfway houses to help them integrate into the broader community. There are all manners of occupations and groups around the country that work with folks as they come out of incarceration. They can help us understand what it takes to help them on their way and what we should look for when we pardon them.

Except for those I referenced earlier who should never be pardoned, the Karla Homolkas of this world, we want others to be

pardoned. I think all of society wants that. If they fit the criteria, if they have successfully done all of the things society has asked them to do, then it is fair and appropriate of society say that they have met all the requirements put before them and if they request it, they will granted the pardon.

If the government is serious about the pardon system, then it has an obligation to Canadians to ensure it gets it right. It seems we have not done so to date. The very reason the Conservatives have rushed this forward is their acceptance of not getting it right three years ago when they took a quick look at it and put it back on the shelf thinking all is well and now recognize that all is not well.

In my community we recognize that all is not well in the system when we look at a person who should never get a pardon but is about to get one if we do not act. If the government is not going to act on this issue, then clearly the government is going to take responsibility for another individual who should never receive a pardon. It will have to answer why that happened. It will be the government's responsibility, when it had the opportunity to ensure it did not happen, to answer the question as to why it happened.

The act has become bigger than many folks probably thought it would be. I am sure many folks thought it was only about a pardon system and what could be so difficult about that. It is difficult because we are dealing with the future of other human beings and we are dealing with society determining whether it wants to give to other individuals in the broader community the right to move forward with their lives. It is up to us to say that we understand that they have decided to move forward and put their past behind them, that we accept the fact they want to move forward and therefore we grant them that pardon. Without this, in many cases, they will be unable to move forward and it will hang over them for a long time.

The other side of the coin must be that there are those we can never pardon and time is of the essence. I look to the government to say that it will not allow Ms. Homolka to get a pardon and that it will ensure that. Then I can convey that message to the Frenches, that they can rest assured it will never be seen in their lifetime.

• (1640)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Madam Speaker, this is an important issue. I know the member for Welland is one of the strongest advocates that we in the House not forget families like the French family that has suffered so much in the past. I think all members of the House are thinking of the French family today and other families that are impacted by the current situation around pardons.

He has been very eloquent in spelling out the problem. The NDP has urged the government to put forward changes to the Criminal Records Act that could be fast-tracked through the House of Commons. They would not in any way hold up a decisive measure that would avoid the kind of situation we all want to prevent without bringing forward the much broader legislation that has a contrary impact on the lives of a number of other people.

*Government Orders*

The member for Welland has said very clearly that there is a balance that needs to be maintained. There is also an urgency for action. That is why the NDP has put forward the request to the government to streamline the Criminal Records Act changes, do that in the first stage and ensure that the crimes which shock the conscience of Canadians are not included under pardons. This would head off any possibility of Ms. Homolka getting a pardon.

We put forward this legislation in an effort to fast-track that component of the bill. As yet, the government seems to be resistant to it and prefers a much more difficult, convoluted and, in some parts, poorly drafted bill that does not get the job done on the one hand and will have to be fixed in committee on the other.

The member for Welland has been very articulate on this issue. He is a very strong advocate for the people of his riding and his community who suffered during that period. Why does he think the Conservatives do not seem to be willing to do the right thing in this place right now and streamline the Criminal Records Act changes in a specific way that would resolve this short-term issue and then work with all parties so we could get the broader-based reform that we all want to see? Why have they not done that?

• (1645)

**Mr. Malcolm Allen:** Madam Speaker, it defies logic as to why we need to have all of it at once. As my colleague said, we gave the government a motion last week. It is not an issue of me standing in my place and springing something on the government during debate. We sent it to the government a number of days ago to let it study it, so it had plenty of time to look at it before bringing forward its bill and to see if it had the sense that it would want to do that.

I remain optimistic. I have to be optimistic for my community and, most important, for the French family, that the government will understand why we have asked for this. The government knows its bill is going to committee, which means it cannot get this piece through in time to prohibit Ms. Homolka from applying for a pardon. If it would work with us on this side of the House in a spirit of co-operation, I believe it would find that all of us want to assure the Frenches that a pardon cannot be applied for by Ms. Homolka.

I understand the government has its agenda and bills in hand and wants to move forward with them. However, in this case, when all of us understand the significance of this process and this pardon that Ms. Homolka will ask for, surely this one time, the government, in a spirit of co-operation, would cut the one piece off, get this done, go to committee with the rest of the pieces and work it through. In a bipartisan way and in the spirit of co-operation, it would make the pardon system work for all of our communities and for all of those who will apply for pardons in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Before resuming debate, 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 Random—Burin—St. George's, Access to Information; and the hon. member for London—Fanshawe, Status of Women.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to voice my support for the bill the hon. Minister of Public Safety has placed before the House.

As hon. members are aware, just a few weeks ago Canadians were shocked to learn that someone who had been convicted of sex offences against children had been granted a pardon.

The pardon granted to Mr. Graham James revealed what millions of Canadians and this government judged to be a number of unacceptable flaws in the Criminal Records Act. An editorial published by the *Victoria Times Colonist* shortly after the news of that pardon became public stated very clearly what many Canadians were feeling.

While it means well, the legislation flunks the most basic of tests. It fails to make morally relevant distinctions. It impedes vital police work. It imposes the most lax of standards on officials. And it offends our sense of propriety.

Perhaps needless to say, those are very serious failings, unacceptable in a country that prides itself on fairness and balance of its justice system. The bill before us today, Bill C-23 will bring the proper balance to the Criminal Records Act.

Bill C-23 will put public safety where it belongs, at the forefront of all decisions. Under Bill C-23, the word “pardon” would be replaced by “record suspension”. The bill would have the power to deny a record suspension if, for example, investigative evidence showed that granting one would bring the administration of justice into disrepute. This bill would allow the board to consider a wide range of factors in making its decisions.

I am sure hon. members will agree that this is the way the system should work. Our justice system is based on fairness and balance. The National Parole Board cannot make decisions that are fair and balanced if it does not have the tools it needs.

To ensure offenders have every opportunity to demonstrate that they can benefit from a second chance, Bill C-23 will extend the waiting period before an offender can apply for a record suspension. For summary offences, the period would be lengthened to five years from three years, and for those convicted of an indictable offence, from five years to ten years. In other words, record suspensions would be granted only to those who have fully demonstrated that they have earned a second chance. This is as it should be and Bill C-23 would make it so.

Bill C-23 would also ensure that the Criminal Records Act recognizes what Canadians recognize, that some offenders simply should not have their records suspended. There are cases where the insult to our sense of propriety or the risk to public safety is simply too great to justify a record suspension.

A person convicted of more than three indictable offences has demonstrated a pattern of behaviour that invites the question, can a potential risk to the public safety posed by a suspension of that person's criminal record be justified? In the opinion of many Canadians and of this government, the answer is no.



*Government Orders*

The pardon system was created to recognize the right of an offender to have a second chance, to start over with what amounts to a clean slate, but the right to a second chance must be balanced against the need to protect public safety, which must be the primary consideration at all times.

Bill C-23 will provide that assurance by making anyone convicted of more than three indictable offences ineligible for a record suspension.

As for offending our sense of propriety, in the words of an editorial in a recent edition of the *Ottawa Citizen*:

Sex offenders who prey on children are a special class of criminal. It's one thing to let them out of jail when they've served their time, but it's wrong to pretend all is forgotten. Certainly, the children who are victimized will never be allowed to forget.

That is why Bill C-23 would make anyone convicted of a sexual offence against a child ineligible for a record suspension.

• (1650)

We have seen and heard the response from the victims of Mr. James and other sex offenders who have been granted pardons under the act. They feel, quite rightly, that insult has been added to injury.

Legislation should not do further harm to those who have been harmed already. As underscored earlier, by replacing the term “pardon” with “record suspension”, Bill C-23 will help to show our respect for the victims of crime and the physical and emotional injuries they may have suffered. This is the very least we can offer to the victims of crime and I urge all members to support the quick passage of this bill.

I have listened to the previous speakers. We have learned from them and we have heard them say that they support parts of this bill, that it should go before the committee for further study. We have just heard that we need to sever parts of the bill to accommodate other members' feelings with regard to parts of the bill that are good and parts of the bill that need study. We also heard from other members who said that they have already tried to solve the problem and they did not quite do it, so now the government has come back with additional regulation.

It is important for Canadians to understand that criminal law and laws are like society. They change and they grow. They need change and they need refinement, and like most of us in real life, we react to things that happen around us. The government has a legislative agenda when it comes to public safety in our country and this is one of those pieces of legislation that addresses the need for Canadians to understand that the criminal justice system must work for them.

I believe that this piece of legislation does just that. It balances the need for people to have their records suspended so they can get on with their lives, but also the need of society to feel that public safety, that their safety and the safety of their children and their loved ones, is being taken into account by this House. I believe this piece of legislation goes a long way toward achieving just that.

I welcome the co-operation of all members, especially the members of the public safety committee and the members of the justice committee who will be looking at the legislation that has come before this House, so that they can look at it with a view to

how their constituents really feel as opposed to: “How do I feel?” or “How does my party feel?”

In the coffee shops around this country, when we talk about the situation with Mr. James and the situation, as has been mentioned, with Karla Homolka, this is the kind of legislation that they not only ask for, but quite frankly they demand.

I look forward to the co-operation of other members to ensure that this legislation sees speedy passage.

• (1655)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his very straightforward and cogent comments on this bill.

One of his comments that stood out for me was the statement that we want to ensure that our Criminal Code represents the current views of society. As my colleague in the NDP mentioned earlier, if we asked around this House, we would probably find the unanimous belief that people find it reprehensible regarding persons such as Karla Homolka, and not to single her out as there are other persons who have been convicted for equally reprehensible behaviour.

What is troubling though is that our party has proposed a solution to this problem. The government, in its wisdom, has brought forward this bill in a time that will not allow both the full review by all members of the House and to address the concerns regarding Karla Homolka. Our proposal would allow for that to be addressed.

It is very critical that amendments to the Criminal Code undergo a full review by the appropriate committee and that all appropriate members of the House have an opportunity to thoroughly review the bill. Given that and given the importance of our elected assembly to represent a perspective of society, which is exactly what a democratic government is all about, would the member care to comment on the proposal we have put forward and the fact that it may well address the very issue that the government has raised?

In fact, the government keeps raising the issue of Karla Homolka. Would it not agree to a reasonable compromise regarding the fact that we will not be able to actually address the very issue which it is showcasing with this bill?

• (1700)

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. friend who posed that very interesting question. I would pose the question back. We can do both today, or very soon. We can pass the government's legislative agenda, this particular bill, Bill C-23, which would accommodate the very thing that she and her party want. So, when it comes to co-operation, of course, we are prepared to do that. Let us pass Bill C-23.

That is just what I and the parliamentary secretary have asked. Let us pass the legislation. It is good legislation. It is timely legislation. It is, as I have previously stated before I stood to answer this question, the talk at the coffee shops around this country. It is the talk that I hear from citizens not only in coffee shops but when I meet them at various functions, that the current legislation does not work as effectively as it should work and that our system of public safety needs to be improved. That is what Bill C-23 would do.

*Government Orders*

So, yes, I agree with her. We could make this bill go through the House very quickly with the co-operation of the official opposition. However, I hasten to remind her that much of the public safety legislation in this House has been held up in the very places and at times where it should have been put forward.

So, yes, we can deal with this very expeditiously in this place. Bill C-23 could receive unanimous support and we could that enacted in a timely fashion that would facilitate the very thing that the member's question poses, the very thing of keeping people from having a pardon when they should not and offending the very core of our sense of propriety in this country.

So, let us just get behind Bill C-23 and pass it unanimously. I agree.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think the member is missing her point.

We had the government's own member, the member for Surrey North, introduce Motion No. 514, basically calling for a review of this whole area. This comes after four years, in 2006, when the minister of the day said the government was going to do a review, and now the government jumps up and puts in Bill C-23.

What we are saying is if we really want to deal with the problem at hand right now, the case of Karla Homolka, then we have a solution right now where we could pass it today. We propose:

That, in the opinion of the House, urgent changes to the Criminal Records Act are required to prevent pardons from being granted that would shock the conscience of Canadians or bring the administration of justice into disrepute, and therefore the government should immediately introduce legislation with the specific purpose to empower the National Parole Board to deny pardons in cases where granting a pardon would shock the conscience of Canadians or bring the administration of justice into disrepute, with cooperation and support from all parties to move swiftly such legislation through the House and Senate before Parliament rises for the summer, and further that the Standing Committee on Public Safety should be directed to conduct a thorough study of all other changes that should be made to the Canadian pardon system to ensure it is strengthened and fair for all Canadians.

That latter part is what the member for Surrey North has in her Motion No. 514 that we just discussed the other day.

So, let us move ahead. Let us deal with this Karla Homolka issue today. Let us get it through. Then we can proceed with the rest of the bill and give it due process at committee. That is what we are talking about.

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Madam Speaker, to me, the question quite simply is, is Bill C-23 a good piece of legislation?

Once again we are seeing where the opposition wants to have a piece of legislation and it is really not necessary. I simply say that this legislation does not have anything in it that would be contrary, I believe, to the average citizen's sense of propriety. It actually addresses some of the issues we are faced with as a society, one of which, as the member who questioned me stated, takes into account the Karla Homolka situation. It takes into account many other situations. We could research and bring up any number of people who are beginning to be eligible for a so-called pardon that we want to change to a record suspension which I think addresses the fundamental issue better.

Therefore, why not pass Bill C-23? There is nothing in it that would make the average citizen in our society feel it is inappropriate.

That is why I say to the member that we do not need to approach this in a piecemeal fashion. We do not need to chunk things up, to box them up or to repackage them. Bill C-23 is a good piece of legislation. Before the House rises for the summer constituency period, we could deal with that and we could pass it unanimously.

I am all for that and I believe the government is all for that. Let us just do it. I agree.

● (1705)

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my question is relatively short. The problem with the bill is that it is extremely broad. It is probably a good bill for someone like Graham James. Is it a good bill for Commander Robert Piché, who saved the lives of over 150 people? Later we suddenly learned that he had a rather serious criminal record. He probably would not have been granted a pardon and would not have been the level-headed pilot who safely landed his plane and saved so many lives after losing both his engines over the ocean. Nobody has a problem with his situation.

Once again, as with too many bills introduced by the Conservative government, they start with one specific case and apply it to hundreds of cases that call for different treatment.

Does the member honestly believe that if this bill is appropriate for the case of Graham James, it would also have been appropriate for Commander Robert Piché?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Madam Speaker, quite simply it is typical of the member. We have served on committee for the last four and a half years.

We could begin to raise each specific instance and say this is good but that is bad, we need to change this and we need to change that. We will never have a perfect Criminal Code. We will never have a perfect bill of any kind, but I believe that the National Parole Board will take into account those instances where people are deserving of a record suspension.

Once again I say, pass Bill C-23 and I believe that we will address more properly the feelings of Canadians vis-à-vis record suspension.

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to say a few words on Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

I want to start with an anecdote and history in Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe. My uncle was a member of this House. He also was a provincial court judge for over 35 years. He had the nickname of “Hanging Henry”. One might think he was hard on law and order stuff, but over the years I have come to know many people who appeared in front of him as young offenders, as first-time offenders. They told me or members of my family that Judge Henry gave them a chance. He was stern and scared the living daylights out of them, but he gave them an opportunity to change their lives around because they faced the wall of justice and an uncertain future because of that. Because of the harshness and the severity of that wall of justice, many of those people are very important and contributing members of society.

That is the preamble to what we should be thinking about in terms of the pardon process. Less than a month ago, the Minister of Public Safety introduced this bill. It is another of the Conservatives' criminal justice pieces that was proposed with much fanfare, but it has been relatively unexamined. Of course, the purpose of the House of Commons is to look at bills in their first blush, send them to committees where they will be studied with the aid of testimony from witnesses, not just experts, but ordinary people who come forward like many of the people who appeared in front of my uncle over 35 years to say that they were given a chance and thank goodness, because now they are fathers or mothers and contribute to society, have jobs and so on.

The full effects of the bill will be clearly looked at in committee, but in short, the eliminating pardons for serious crimes act would amend the Criminal Records Act to substitute the word "pardon" with the more defined "record suspension". As Canadians have been made aware, in cases of individuals convicted of sexual offences perpetrated on children, this bill would also prohibit pardons or record suspensions. Repeat offenders have also been targeted in the bill such that record suspensions or pardons would be restricted and the waiting period between parole and eligibility for record suspension would be extended.

Finally, regular reports to the Minister of Public Safety from the National Parole Board would be instituted.

At present, a pardon permits a Canadian citizen convicted of a criminal offence who has completed his or her sentence to have his or her criminal record kept separate. By and large, all the applications received by the National Parole Board are granted. Of particular note as the House proceeds forward with the debate on this bill is the fact that since 1970, the year when major amendments were made to the Criminal Code, 96% of all pardons granted are still in effect. That is an important underlying fact to the debate here and the debate that will take place at committee. Ninety-six per cent of all pardons granted since 1970 remain in effect. This means, again subject to the test of the evidence at committee, that only 4% of the people have had pardons, record suspensions, withdrawn.

We might say that the system is working because the pardon granted has allowed individuals to pursue a life that at least is not so derelict of following the law that they had their pardon revoked. Virtually all citizens who receive a pardon do not recommit crimes in their community or elsewhere.

Nevertheless, news headlines of late have attempted to paint a picture where Canada enables continued crime through the doling out of pardons. The impression by the ongoing Conservative manipulation of public sentiment machine would have people believe that pardons are being thrown out of a truck on side streets and everybody who gets a pardon then goes out and commits a crime and does not merit these pardons. It does not seem to be the case. As the research has shown, the continued existence of pardons in the Canadian justice system is not reason for the continuation of crime in our communities.

• (1710)

Let us examine the objectives in reality of the pardon system as they are today. The bill's introduction is very recent. By my calculation, around June 23 the government will have been in power

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for about four and a half years. In a normal person's lifetime, four and a half years is a significant period. It could be a period of raising a child from infancy to young childhood. It could be a period of important progress in one's working career. In this environment of perpetual electioneering, one would expect the government to be well on its way with its agenda.

Given that in the 4.5 year range, we have only heard about pardons now, we would have to conclude that this has not been on the radar screen for the government. The government has not really brought it up before; therefore, it has not been a priority. We could say with a liberal interpretation of timing and its agenda that it brought up other justice bills before this and attempted to move them forward.

There are earnest justice-doers on the other side. Sadly, their feet were taken out from other them with the continual prorogation of Parliament. Bills go to the bottom of the list and have to come up through the system again. It is a shame. It is a waste of time. For serious legislation to be delayed by the electioneering and prorogation that takes place in our political system is something that another House or a committee on another day may and should look at.

Pardons were not a hot priority for the government in four and a half years. It is important to examine the very nature behind pardons in Canada. Pardons allow people who have been convicted of a criminal offence, completed their sentence and demonstrated they are law-abiding citizens to have their criminal record kept separate and apart from other criminal records.

Why is that important? It is important for people to get rehabilitated and for those who have been rehabilitated to reintegrate into the community. We cannot go through every pardon that has been given, but if 96% of the pardons that have been given have been given to people who have not reoffended, one has to think that they are not breaking laws and that the pardons have probably permitted them to reintegrate into society in a better way.

How is that so? Again, without the benefit of the evidence, which is why we are sending it to committee, one would expect that when a person applies for a job, a 10- or 15-year-old criminal conviction might stand in the way of an employer hiring that person. The Criminal Records Act and National Parole Board may currently issue, grant, deny and revoke pardons for convictions under the regulations and federal acts of Canada. Under that power, only 4% of pardons since 1970 have been revoked.

*Government Orders*

What we do not have a real thorough grasp on, and I am sure the committee will do its due diligence and find this out, is how many are currently issued, granted and denied. We would perhaps like to know whether the denials are given with reasons or for reasons that make sense in our interpretation of criminal law and are in consonance with our principles of rehabilitation. I think we would all like to know that. We would benefit from this. However, as I say, this is really the first time this topic has come up in this House.

The aim here is to give convicted offenders the chance to reform their lives and return as citizens with respect for the law. For example, the pardon system can often allow offenders to find employment even when criminal background checks are performed. This is not to undermine the safety of Canadians but to ensure that reformed individuals can reintegrate into society.

• (1715)

What seems to be missing in a lot of the Conservative justice agenda is that if we put convicted criminals away for a long time, society will be safer, but for how long? That is the key issue and the fundamental difference between the lock-them-up-out-of-sight-for-a-long-time theory of reintegration of offenders to the reality that most offenders eventually get out.

The question for the security of the public is: What kind of individual do we want coming out after a sentence ends? A five year term will end. It may end sooner rather than later but it will end after five years. Do we want a person coming out who has put a modicum of effort toward rehabilitation? Do we want that person to get a job and be reintegrated into the taxpaying workforce? I would hope the answer from all sides would be yes.

The pardon system as it works now seems to work in that direction. A pardon presently removes all information pertaining to particular convictions from the Canadian Police Information Centre, or CPIC, as anybody involved with the law and police forces of this country would know it as. What does it show on CPIC? Is the individual's record on CPIC? Only the Minister of Public Safety has the authority to disclose this information.

While a pardon under the Criminal Records Act affects records in federal departments and agencies, provincial and municipal law enforcement officials generally co-operate with any restrictions to accessing records.

With particular relevance to the bill before us, sexual offenders may presently receive pardons but the offender's name will remain on the National Sex Offender Registry. To illustrate some of the points that brought this to the attention of the government and of the House, a sex offender will always be part of a National Sex Offender Registry.

A debate is now going on in this country as to how well the registry is working. Every community, village, town, city, region, province and county have raised concerns about the level of awareness citizens have with respect to a convicted sexual offender and his or her inter-relationship with the National Sex Offender Registry. However, we are not talking about that here. We are talking about pardons and this is a difference that should be highlighted because the government should be moving with all haste to examine

as well, maybe on a corollary basis, the National Sex Offender Registry system to see how it is working or not.

Highly important is understanding that pardons carry no international recognition and areas under foreign control may disregard the consequences of a pardon here in Canada. That situation sometimes arises with respect to our largest neighbour and biggest trading partner to the south where pardons are recognized out of order. Convictions are not masked at American borders. We often have members of the House from all parties pleading for constituents who are truck drivers trying to get across the border with a record of conviction from many years in the past, and certainly in their past intellectually because they now contribute to society.

Regarding the application process for pardons, the National Parole Board has the final say on which applicant gets a pardon and which one does not. One important point is that even if the individual's application is denied, the individual can reapply annually.

I would like to highlight a number of statistics released by the National Parole Board. These are the most recent we have but I am sure the committee will be more specific in its questioning of National Parole Board officials. In 2009-10, 24,000 pardons were granted and a mere 425 were denied. We do not know why but it would be interesting to ask the witnesses at committee why pardons were denied. In the last five years, almost 112,000 people were pardoned. That is a significant figure considering the population of our country.

The key item that must be acknowledged again is that 96% of all pardons are still in force. One would have to review that on an objective basis as being a tremendous success rate. It clearly denotes the percentage of recipients who remain crime-free. Is that not the objective of all our criminal justice legislation? This low revocation rate of pardons has been largely attributed to the significant waiting periods required under the existing framework for eligibility.

I certainly see the cause for criticism over the number of applications approved by the National Parole Board but we should hesitate to claim the approval of a pardon as a mere rubber-stamp process.

• (1720)

The developments of more recent years that I want to address derive from 2006 when the then minister of public safety examined the pardon system and proposed no significant changes. That was then. Now it is a big concern. Today the government now appears to feel that a substantial overhaul is warranted. What has changed between the then minister of public safety's review in 2006 and now?

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Could it be that the Conservatives are reacting as a government to some highly salacious, high-profile instances in a system that serves about 100,000 applications in the last 5 years, and I will be conservative with the figures, of some 25,000 applications a year? It wants to change the system based on 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 highly publicized cases, cases that bring us, as members of Parliament and right-thinking people, to a conclusion that those persons should not even be able to apply for pardon and certainly should not get a pardon.

Do we do that in our real life? Do we taken 1 case out of 25,000 and say that everything has to be changed right away, especially when we look at it as a House or at least as the government did some 3 or 4 years ago and said that everything was fine? There must have been a reason why everything was fine in 2006 and now it is awful. We would like to know that at committee, which is why we will support sending it to committee.

The changes that make for the most debate in this House would be whether we should change the name from “pardon” to “record suspension”. I think that is a flip of the coin. As long as people know that “record suspension” means “pardon” and it will not deter people from applying and will not bring different results from the same process, I am not sure there is much to be added or gained by the change of terms.

There seems to be a heavy moral element to it. People are used to the term “pardon”, but is it really a “pardon”? It is not society saying that it forgives people for everything they have done that is under the rubric of this offence. It is just saying that their record will be kept in a separate area and not be used against them if they apply for a job to get reintegrated into the community. Maybe the label is accurate.

Why was that not done in 2006? Why has it not been done before? I would like to hear from Public Safety officials as to the history of the term “pardon” and the history of the term “record suspension”.

Many of us will know the aspect of the bill championed above all else by the government has been the amendment to make those convicted of more than three indictable crimes or of sexual offences against minors ineligible for a pardon.

I am a parent of three young girls, so I may have a bias in this chamber, but I personally do not have a real problem with a pardon not being considered for a person who has been convicted of a sexual offence against a minor. I am not speaking for my party nor am I speaking for members of the committee but that is something that must be looked at by the committee and every member of the House has to come to some reckoning on it.

With respect to the three indictable offences, everybody thinks indictable offences are the most serious and most egregious. This is where I call for discretion in the system because my old Uncle Henry had it and he saved a lot of people, I think, by being stern with them but giving them an out, giving them a chance to rehabilitate.

I am sure the committee will hear an instance of a person who has three indictable offence convictions who is probably able to be reintegrated or has and received a pardon and did very well by it. I do not know, because this is all before the evidence comes into play.

On a similar note, for record suspensions the bill would increase the period of ineligibility to five years for summary conviction

offences and ten years for indictable offences. In summary, that is a way of looking tougher but will it be more efficacious?

Ninety-six percent of people do not reoffend. The system is not that loosey-goosey. There are a significant number of years before a person can even apply for a pardon and many of the pardons that are given are given on the basis of the facts put very up very steadfastly by the National Parole Board and other people.

We will send this to committee. I am not sure that this is not just a knee-jerk reaction to some very egregious headlines about Graham James, et cetera. However, anybody who stands in this House and says that if members are not for this bill they are for Graham James getting a pardon, that is illogical and it is wrong.

• (1725)

We all want to protect society but let us not throw the baby out with the bathwater if the pardon system as we know it for the vast majority of applicants is working. If it works for them and gets them back into society, it works for society, which is us.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I note, as the member did, that in 2006, the former minister of public safety, under the present government, I believe in response to the pardon Clark Noble, a convicted sex offender, conducted a review that led to very minor changes, including the requirement for two parole board members to review the pardon applications from sex offenders. Ultimately, the government and the minister signed off on the current system of pardons as being adequate for public safety.

Now we roll the clock ahead to the current year and we have the Conservative member for Surrey North presenting Motion No. 514, which basically asks the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to undertake a review of the Criminal Records Act and report back to the House within three months.

However, because of current media events, the government jumped the gun, brought in Bill C-23, basically cut the member for Surrey North out of the process and now there is a problem. The former minister said that there was not a problem and now there is.

We in the NDP were prepared to present a motion that could be dealt with right away to deal with the very severe case of Karla Homolka so that in cases that would shock the conscience of Canadians and bring the administration of justice into disrepute, we would be able to deny pardons.

*Government Orders*

Does the member agree with the NDP motion that was offered to the government in the last week so it could explore the opportunity to bring in a bill to deal specifically with the question at hand? The bill could be passed before we recess for the summer to deal with this important issue identified by the government in the last few weeks. I would ask the member if he agrees with our assessment of what needs to be done now.

● (1730)

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, it is a thoughtful motion but what we have before us is a bill that is based on headlines. Whenever one cites names like Graham James, Karla Homolka and Clifford Olson in public, one is sure to get a very emotional reaction and probably a pretty universal one. The crimes committed by those people were egregious and the idea of pardoning, deleting records or giving benefits to any of them shocks the conscience.

I am in agreement with the member that it is emotionally irrational to completely throw out the system that has been in place and has been approved by all governments, Liberals and Conservatives, over the years because of headlines. What I would like to know, maybe through the motion or through the hearings on this bill, which I think accomplishes the same end, is what evidence there is when a person gets refused a pardon.

We know it is a small number of cases, some 400 or 500 out of 20,000, but there are still 400 or 500 people who apply every year and do not get pardons and I wonder why. Is it because their offences were so egregious that it shocks the conscience? What are the reasons? This is the kind of pith and substance we will get to in the committee and hopefully we will make some good changes out of it.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe for again providing a very insightful and informative speech at second reading on a bill that is important to Canadians. He has laid out some interesting points.

Without hearing from experts, members can only deal with information that is available in the public domain. However, we cannot get the information that the witnesses would bring to the table at committee, and it is extremely important that we have to get this right.

Since this appears to be publicly-driven legislation, does he think the public needs to have some sort of an opportunity or a venue to express their concerns so we can determine whether the word “pardon” is really one of the biggest sticking points? The member is quite right, in some cases in the United States, when there is a pardon of someone who has just been caught doing something, a president would pardon someone is fixated in the mind.

However, it is a public issue and the communications with the public in all aspects of this has to be strictly looked at, simply from the standpoint that the public has a right to know the facts and true, full and plain disclosure.

Could the comment on the need to inform the public?

● (1735)

**Mr. Brian Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, absolutely. The member is completely correct. The public will read a headline about Graham James getting a pardon and those three words together “Graham

James pardon” I think send a chill. It should not colour the whole process, however. Maybe there is something wrong with the word because it is not a true pardon. As the member indicates, when President Ford, I think, pardoned a number of republicans, it sent the idea that despite the fact they did something wrong, he would let them walk free and they were absolved. A pardon in the common meaning of it means that we are absolved from what we did.

This is not really what this is and it never has been. It is just the word that has been used. It really is sort of a record suspension.

At committee, I would be open to the debate, but the public has to understand that a record suspension is a more accurate reflection of what a pardon is. It is not necessarily a change of a whole system. If we accept that one change in definition, it does not mean we throw out the system. People have to know that the system seems to work and people have to look deep within their own history, their own minds and their own hearts and realize that if they have had relatives, or friends or a co-workers who have done something in their past who luckily have received pardons because they are now working beside them, part of their family and are contributing in a meaningful way to community, this may, in some ways, be changed if the system is changed much further.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to rise in support of Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. The short title of this bill is “eliminating pardons for serious crimes act”. That is what we believe to be the fundamental objective of these efforts.

With the introduction of Bill C-23, the government has moved forward to significantly reform the current pardon systems and to make good on a commitment to address public safety concerns swiftly and sensibly.

Foremost, these reforms acknowledge that a pardon is not forgiveness. It is an administrative tool to keep someone's criminal record separate and apart, but not erased.

These changes would clearly establish who would not be eligible for a record suspension and, as well, bring about more scrutiny and rigour to the decision-making process for those who apply.

The government has taken action to introduce Bill C-23 because we firmly believe that a pardon is not a right. The commission of serious offences does not warrant a pardon, such as in cases where a sexual offence has been committed against a child. We believe this sentiment is shared by Canadians, in particular victims, who have spoken of the impacts of crime, in particular sexual crimes, and the need for adopting changes to the pardon system.

I urge all hon. members to give their full support for Bill C-23 and work in co-operation with the government to ensure swift passage of this important legislation through Parliament.

One key element of this bill, which I have mentioned, is a shift in the use of—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering on a point of order.

## POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED COMMENTS BY AN HON. MEMBER

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting the speech of the hon. member, but I had just left to do an interview and upon returning, was informed that the reason the Speaker, then Madam Speaker, had interrupted my speech was to say that a member had used unparliamentary language. It has come to my attention that the member for Essex, when I was referencing my children, questioned the paternity of my children in a personal smear against me.

That is unacceptable in this place. For somebody to launch a personal attack on a person's family, on their children, is deeply upsetting to me and I would ask the member stand in his place and apologize.

• (1740)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Essex is not present at the moment. The Speaker will examine the blues.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park on the same point.

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the member referred to say, "Are they all his children?"

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think what the members opposite are talking about is when the member was going on about how he preferred to protect his children, I said that because I prefer to protect my children, it does not make our opinions different. That might be what the member heard. If that is what he heard and he took it that way, I fully take it back and apologize.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Ajax—Pickering was referring to the member for Essex.

I think I have heard enough, unless the member for Ajax—Pickering wants to bring in a new point.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** Mr. Speaker, if I can, so the matter is extremely clear, what I was referencing actually was that all members of the House care about their children and care about the community. As a father, of course I care every bit as much as a Conservative member about my community and my children. It was at that point that the member for Essex very specifically and very clearly questioned whether they were my children. He was questioning the paternity of my children. It was an attack against my family.

I would ask, if the member is not present right now, that he be requested to make that retraction. It is unbecoming of this place and I find it very upsetting.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I can assure the member for Ajax—Pickering that the Speaker will examine the transcript and perhaps other forms of recordings, if necessary, and if the member for Essex is notified of this point, I am sure he will want to come to the House to clarify.

We will move on with debate. The hon. member for Brant has 15 minutes left.

*Points of Order*

## ELIMINATING PARDONS FOR SERIOUS CRIMES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to recap where I was, I was encouraging all hon. member to support our government and Bill C-23 and to work in co-operation with our government to ensure the swift passage of this important legislation through Parliament.

One key element of the bill, which I have mentioned, is a shift in the use of terminology from pardon to record suspension throughout the Criminal Records Act. We need to be clear about what this mechanism does and does not do.

We consider the term "record suspension" to better reflect the purpose of the legislation which is to close off general access to a criminal record in appropriate cases as opposed to expressing forgiveness for the offence. This change in terminology is an important one in terms of reinforcing the role of this legislation and eliminating pardons for serious crimes.

The government is clear in Bill C-23 that in order to be eligible for a record suspension an applicant must not have been convicted of an offence involving sexual activity relating to a minor as set out in the schedule of offences in the bill. This includes those with a conviction, for example, of sexual interference or sexual exploitation of a child or luring a child, all serious and grave offences that we do not believe ever warrant a record suspension.

Further, eligibility for record suspensions will be more restrictive in that individuals convicted of more than three indictable offences will not be eligible to apply for a record suspension. We believe this is a fair balance between those with a few youthful indiscretions and those with serious repeat criminal histories. In addition, the waiting period to apply for a record suspension for summary offences will be increased from three to five years and from five to ten years for indictable offences. We believe this sends a strong message that the ineligibility period must reflect the seriousness of the crime committed.

Bill C-23 also proposes significant amendments to the Criminal Records Act to end what many view as a virtual automatic process of granting pardons. As we have indicated, the legislation will provide the National Parole Board with the discretion required to ensure individuals convicted of serious crimes will not be eligible for a record suspension. It will also establish multifaceted criteria that must be considered to ensure the ordering of a record suspension is appropriate and does not bring our justice system into disrepute. The bill gives the National Parole Board the tools it needs and which are currently lax.

*Points of Order*

Under the new system, the changes our government is proposing would authorize the board to examine factors such as nature, gravity and duration of an offence when it is considering applications for those convicted of indictable offences. As well, the board may consider the circumstances surrounding the commission of that offence and information relating to an applicant's criminal history in making its decision. We believe these are sensible additions to the legislative scheme.

There is also a new level of accountability built into the record suspension making process. Those convicted of an indictable offence would need to prove to the National Parole Board that receiving a record suspension would contribute to his or her rehabilitation. This places an onus squarely on the applicant to satisfy the National Parole Board that this condition is met.

The proposed reforms in Bill C-23 will also bring about more transparency through a report to Parliament on an annual basis from the National Parole Board, which will include statistics on the number of applicants for record suspensions and the number of record suspensions ordered for both summary conviction and indictable offences indexed by offence and province and residence of the applicant.

• (1745)

Further openness and scrutiny of the decision-making process will be achieved through public access to the National Parole Board's decisions regarding orders or refusals for record suspensions. This will be done in a way that does not compromise the privacy of the concerned individuals unless they consent to such disclosure.

In closing, Bill C-23 contains a comprehensive package of vital amendments and I urge all hon. members to give Bill C-23 speedy passage through the House so that these new measures can be implemented without delay.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have indicated before that we support the bill going to committee, but we are concerned about getting action before the House recesses for the summer which is why my colleague has proposed a motion, actually gave it to the government last week. It says:

That, in the opinion of the House, urgent changes to the Criminal Records Act are required to prevent pardons from being granted that would shock the conscience of Canadians or bring the administration of justice into disrepute, and therefore the government should immediately introduce legislation with the specific purpose to empower the National Parole Board to deny pardons in cases where granting a pardon would shock the conscience of Canadians or bring the administration of justice into disrepute, with cooperation and support from all parties to move swiftly such legislation through the House and Senate before Parliament rises for the summer,—

That is what we suggest will solve the problem that the government has identified with Karla Homolka possibly applying for a pardon. Having done that and getting this legislation through quickly, at that point the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security should be directed to conduct a thorough study of all other changes that should be made to the Canadian pardon system to ensure it is strengthened and fair for all Canadians. That would go along and support what the Conservatives' member for Surrey North introduced as Motion No. 514. Back in the middle of May, we debated the member's motion and the NDP supported it. Her motion read:

That the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security be instructed to undertake a review of the Criminal Records Act and report to the House within three months on how it could be strengthened to ensure that the National Parole Board puts the public's safety first in all its decisions.

We support the member's motion. We think that can happen over the summer, but in the meantime, we cannot wait to deal with the issue that the government identified a couple weeks ago, which it says is the reason for bringing in Bill C-23 in the first place.

Therefore, let us get immediate action on this. Let us support it—

• (1750)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Brant.

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I heard a question there, I think I heard a mini speech. I am wondering what the question might be, but let me state very clearly that our government believes that the system needs to be swung back, the pendulum needs to be swung back to protect the rights of victims instead of the rights of criminals. That is what the legislation is about. It is about a government agenda to do that. It is about numerous pieces of legislation.

It seems when we come to votes on many of these issues, the hon. member opposes us on many of these things, so I understand sometimes his party's frustration with the fact that we want to move ahead to get tough on crime. The NDP does not, but in any regard, we are moving forward. This is a good piece of legislation. This protects victims and we urge all members to support the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if he believes that for someone who has served his sentence and wants to live an honest life, the hope of obtaining a pardon after a reasonable timeframe would be incentive to maintain good behaviour?

[*English*]

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member and I know, serving on a common committee, these are the types of debates that need to happen in terms of situations where people can be rehabilitated.

This legislation is geared toward the most grievous types of situations, such as sexual offenders. I can never forget the image of parents coming before the public safety committee, telling us about how they lost their son, who was abducted from a mall, and about how he was tortured, put to death and dismembered. How shocking.

This is what this bill is intended to do. It is intended to take those individuals who are repeat serious offenders, not offenders who can be rehabilitated. Many of these individuals will unfortunately never be rehabilitated. We want to ensure that we swing that pendulum back to protect victims of crime, not the criminals who commit these grievous offences.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, listening to the debate so far, I am not sure that this is really an issue of protecting victims as much as it is dealing with certain situations where the exemptions would receive broad support in the House.



*Points of Order*

The issue here is probably more of the public understanding and knowledge. We could all have an opportunity to spend time debating what we might think and parrot some of the hotlines, but I have a question for the member. This bill seems to be fairly straightforward, but the facts have to be nailed down and the public has to understand that it is getting the right attention. I am a little concerned that the debate is going to stray.

Why would the government not simply have referred this bill directly to committee before second reading so that we could get the facts, get the witnesses, and deal with legislation that is necessary?

• (1755)

**Mr. Phil McColeman:** Mr. Speaker, our government feels it important to bring it into the House for debate and then move it to committee for the proper discussion at committee and hearing the witnesses. We would like the public to know that we are moving in this direction. These pardons have been recently publicized, as was mentioned by a fellow colleague here in the House. We are moving in a direction where we are addressing these issues.

Canadians need to know that. They need to know that there is support from both sides of the House on these issues to ensure that we develop the laws that bring that pendulum back in balance. There are situations, and names have been mentioned, such as the Karla Homolka situation and the Graham James situation, where the public is outraged and rightfully so. Many of the people on the opposite side have said that.

This is a public debate. We want it to be a public debate. We want it to be visible. We want to hear witnesses on this and we want speedy passage at the same time because this is important to Canadians.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

ALLEGED COMMENTS BY AN HON. MEMBER

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was away from my seat a few minutes ago. I understand that the member for Ajax—Pickering stood in his place, levelled an accusation against me, and asked for an apology. I am responding to that particular point of order right now.

I made no such comment as was alleged. Therefore, no apology is forthcoming.

The member for Ajax—Pickering, without proof and based on hearsay or something else, made a false accusation against me. I would call on him to stand in his place right now and instead apologize for making such a false accusation.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I sit about 10 feet from the member and he did not make any comment anywhere like that. The party across the way is being quite mischievous. Maybe you could ask the member for Wascana, who hears everything in the House, if he heard anything. However, I was definitely listening and the member did not say anything like that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I recognize the member for Ajax—Pickering.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will ask that you refer this matter to the Speaker. In *Hansard*, and attributed to the incorrect member, to the minister who rose earlier, it says, “Are they all yours?”

This is in *Hansard*. This is in the blues. I recommend the Speaker takes a look at it.

The Speaker had actually interrupted me. She said that the language was unparliamentary. I do not think there is any debate. There were many members who heard the statement, who are willing to come forward and they are from different parties. They said they heard a statement by the member for Essex to be clear.

In *Hansard* right now, as I am told, it is inappropriately attributed to a different member, the Minister of State for Science and Technology. That is inappropriately attributed to him.

I would ask that this matter be referred to the Speaker, and of course the Speaker can talk to the person who was in the Speaker's Chair at that time.

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am completely confused now. As I have risen, I do not know if the member is accusing me of saying that. He is shaking his head no. The member he is accusing has denied it. For the record, I never said that.

I think there is no issue here, except the member opposite is playing games.

**Mr. Mark Holland:** It is in *Hansard*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will allow the member for Essex to respond.

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, I would like this matter to be settled.

The honour of members is presumed in this place. I am telling the member very categorically, I did not say anything remotely resembling that kind of a remark. He can check any tape, any film he would like.

Perhaps there has been a mistake made in terms of the attribution to me, but I can say very assuredly that I never made anything even remotely resembling that remark. When it is proven as such, I want the member to stand in his place and to apologize for accusing me wrongly about that.

• (1800)

**The Deputy Speaker:** As I indicated earlier, the Chair will take this under advisement and examine what recordings are available.

I would just remind the House that the best way to avoid these types of things, these types of misunderstandings, is that when one member has the floor and is recognized by the Speaker, if all others were to remain silent and listen to the person giving the speech, then these types of things would not arise.

*Points of Order*

[Translation]

**ELIMINATING PARDONS FOR SERIOUS CRIMES ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by making it clear that I am absolutely convinced that all members of the House support public safety and want laws that keep people safe. However, we have differences of opinion about how to achieve that goal.

Our differences of opinion are reflected in North America as a whole. Down south, in the United States, those who supported extreme punishment won. Right now, their prisons are home to over one-quarter of the prison population worldwide. That is bankrupting some states. They have to release people from jail without even looking at individual cases because they simply do not have the space to keep them locked up. Their crime rate is much higher than ours. One is three and a half times more likely to be a murder victim in the United States than in Canada, and five times more likely to be murdered in the United States than in Quebec, by the way. It is a fiasco. I think that we need to adopt a more intelligent approach because the debate is lacking in intelligence.

The fact that we are against anti-crime provisions does not mean that we are in favour of criminals' rights or that we do not care about public safety even though they say that this is about being tough on crime.

I believe that, in my career, I have done a lot for public safety. I think that I have done a lot more than many people here, and probably more than our Minister of Justice. I worked with chiefs Duchesneau and Barbeau to create the Carcajou squads. When we came up with that approach to policing, I believed that if police officers pooled their information about crime, they would make remarkable progress. I was not thinking just of what was part of the official record, but of the information in their heads. That is what made Carcajou so original, and it produced remarkable results with officers from different police forces working two by two on cases. That model has often been used in Canada and even in other countries.

At the end of this three and a half year process, 321 members of organized crime were arrested. There was never any criticism of the way the evidence against them was gathered and they were all convicted. They received various sentences depending on the seriousness of the crimes they had committed, but especially on their involvement. No one ever complained about this aspect.

I believe my past shows that I was concerned about and capable of fighting organized crime, but I remain convinced that imprisonment is a serious measure that needs to be used in moderation. There are certainly other ways to get people to correct their behaviour.

We are currently discussing pardons in this House. People commit crimes because they are not perfect. Nonetheless, we have to realize that it is also very important that people have a goal to achieve that provides some sort of benefit, that they not be guided solely by the fear of punishment.

Napoleon understood that. He handed out vast quantities of medals because he knew that people are motivated more by reward than by the fear of punishment.

When a person has been sentenced and has served that sentence and will have a hard time reintegrating into society, is it not good to think he could be provided a goal to achieve, the goal of being pardoned, which would be recognized by the community if he proves over a set period of time that he is worthy of it?

• (1805)

It is a long period of time nonetheless, much longer than what the previous speakers stated. We must consider that the clock starts once all conditions added to the sentence have elapsed.

In the majority of sentences handed down, if not all of them, the judges specify a term of imprisonment plus the requirement to keep the peace and to comply with certain conditions for a period of at least three years. In the case of criminal offences, where the time is five years, it is not five years after release from prison, but five years from the time all conditions have elapsed.

Very often, if a sentence of five years is handed down and parole is granted, the clock does not start at the end of the five-year sentence but at the end of the two additional years imposed by the judge. The same principle applies when it is three years.

In my career, I saw how the system worked when these laws did not exist. The law created the possibility of granting a pardon. I believe that is the term used in the first law, which was subsequently amended. This possibility was created because it was understood that it was very difficult for a person who had served time in jail or received a criminal conviction to reintegrate into society. They have difficulty finding work and face many obstacles on the road to rehabilitation. It was deemed to be a good idea.

Society believed that a pardon could be granted after a certain period of time, which was fairly long nonetheless. It is not five years. It is five years plus the period of time during which they must comply with certain conditions. Seven years is almost as long as the time required to complete classical studies, which last eight years. That is rather long. It gave the person a valid reason to respect the law and to change their behaviour.

They want to change the terminology again. We are now considering the term "record suspension". Why are they so afraid of the term "pardon"? As far as I know, forgiveness is a value that is taught by all major religions. I received a very religious education, but I am no longer religious. In fact, I have often described myself as being agnostic.

I am at a point in my life when I am beginning to have doubts. I wonder if I should continue to be agnostic or return to religion. At a certain point in my life, I was very interested in the origins of the world. Science gave more of an explanation than religion did.

The doubt sown in me by Albert Camus when I was young remains deeply entrenched. In *La Peste*, he wrote that God cannot be both infinitely just and infinitely powerful; otherwise, he would not allow children to suffer. When I was young I was told that the ways of the Lord were unfathomable.

*Points of Order*

I still have my doubts. I am not practising, even though I was married in the church and my children were all baptized and they, in turn, have had their children baptized.

● (1810)

Yet, I still remember that this religion was the foundation for my values, and I think it is the same for everyone. Does anyone here remember Christ's last words upon the cross? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Christ's last living words were words of forgiveness.

Another thing that left a significant impression on me was the film *Gandhi*, a wonderful film by David Attenborough, or perhaps his brother. At one point, someone reveals to Gandhi that he has done something horrible. During some sort of protest, he got carried away with hatred for the people of the other religion. He took a baby and hit it against a wall until it was dead. Obviously, it was a despicable act. Gandhi told this man that what he had done was horrible and that his punishment was to take an orphan Muslim child—the man being Hindu—and raise the child as his own son. Again, there was that belief that is espoused by all major religions.

During my life, in my travels and in the readings I have done before travelling, I have noticed that major religions—Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism—all preach not only love for one's neighbour, but also pardon. Why are we afraid of using that word?

It seems to me that telling someone that he can be pardoned after at least seven to nine years serves as a goal that promotes rehabilitation. I use those figures because there is the five-year period, plus the customary two- to three-year period during which the judge requires the offender to keep the peace, plus the investigations, which take from 18 months to 2 years. But honestly, now we are going to tell someone that we are going to give him a record suspension. Good God, the people who came up with that were not educators. I do not think it will encourage many people. Moreover, when people have been told the impact of a pardon and what comes from it, I have heard them ask themselves why they would apply for one if it has virtually no impact.

I believe that it does have an impact and that that positive goal acts as an incentive for rehabilitation.

The government has taken a specific case and, as it has done with so many bills during this session, it has extrapolated it to a large number of cases. The public may be concerned about the Graham James case, because it involves sexual offences. But I would remind the House that there is no absolute pardon in such cases, because records of sexual offences are kept apart and can be consulted if the offender wants to volunteer or work in a place where he would be close to children or even close to adults if he is working in a health care centre.

The government says that the automatic granting of pardons needs to be reviewed. Personally, I do not believe that pardons are granted automatically. Some are denied. We have been told that more than 800 are denied every year, after an investigation is conducted.

Once again, the government has taken a specific case and blown it out of all proportion. I can give at least two examples that I feel are more important. There is the supposed law against child trafficking.

● (1815)

Obviously, everyone thinks that someone found guilty of child trafficking must receive an extremely harsh punishment. However, if we actually read the bill, which very few people have done, we see that, other than in the title, it does not mention trafficking. It talks about the exploitation of persons under the age of 18 years. There is a minimum.

The minimum is certainly appropriate for child traffickers, but obviously it would not apply as well to all cases where persons under the age of 18 have been exploited. Exploitation can refer to the exchange of money as a salary— but few children earn a salary, and for income received for services. The law's target is a dreadful crime, but the legislation has not been carefully worded so that it specifically addresses this crime. Instead, all kinds of other crimes are being included.

The same thing is being done with Bill C-16, which would restrict the availability of conditional sentences for violent and dangerous offenders. Fine, but the legislation already allows for a judge to refuse to give a conditional sentence, to be served at home, if public safety is at risk. Am I the only one who thinks that granting a conditional sentence to a violent and dangerous offender jeopardizes public safety, and that judges should not do that?

I would like to come back to child trafficking. I recognize that this trafficking is a form of exploitation, but not all exploitation comes in the form of child trafficking. The sentence that is appropriate for child traffickers is not necessarily appropriate for other forms of exploitation, which can last a day or a few hours.

How is the success of a pardon project measured? We are told that 97% of people who benefited from this type of pardon, which is not actually a pardon because it involves public recognition of that pardon, have not committed other criminal offences and they respected the conditions imposed on them. That seems like a very good success rate, 97%.

Perhaps we are very different in Quebec. The Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms recognizes that we must not discriminate on the basis of a criminal record.

However, it is true that the case of Graham James is an example of leniency or premature pardon for people who have committed criminal acts of a sexual nature. As I said, we know that these files are under wraps. That is why they are approved. Part of the public seems outraged, but that is not the case with Manon Cornellier, who was so well quoted by the member for Ahuntsic, who spoke before me. I am convinced that people are outraged because they do not know the success rate and the time it takes. They are unaware of the minor nature of the material consequences of granting pardons.

● (1820)

If these people look at the basic tenets of their religion, whatever that religion may be, they will see that granting a pardon, after this time period and on these conditions, is a way to honour their religion and is good for public safety.

*Points of Order**[English]*

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague on the justice committee for his words and for sharing his spiritual pilgrimage with us. It is not something we hear that often in this chamber. He did quote Jesus Christ as saying that the individuals who were crucifying him did not know what they were doing and somehow that was forgivable. In fact, the member would also know that the Bible is very clear that there is a balance between justice and mercy. That is something the member may want to take to heart. I encourage him to continue to seek the truth.

As we balance mercy and justice, I would encourage him not to forget victims. That is something we do not often hear from the opposition benches, a focus on victims. It is not only the offenders that we have to deal with. We have to deal with justice as it is seen through the eyes of the victims.

Would the member not agree with me that when we are balancing justice and mercy we should also take into account the very real needs of the victims who have been aggrieved?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, our goal is to ensure that there are fewer victims, and rehabilitation is the best way to do that. The hon. member for Abbotsford said we do not often talk about the victims. That is not true; we talk about them all the time. I started by talking about everything I have already done to combat organized crime. There is absolutely no doubt that when we fight organized crime, we are helping reduce the number of victims.

Besides, he has seen the statistics, just as I have. In Quebec in 2001, after operation Carcajou was over, the number of gang murders went down from 38 to 7, and 15 the next year. Now those are results.

The government talks about victims all too often, and always in a way that plays with people's emotions. It is as though, if we do not say the word "victim", it means we do not care about them. Clearly, when we fight crime, we want fewer people to become victims. I completely agree that we need to balance mercy and justice.

*[English]*

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier when I asked a question I think in the back of my mind it was prompted by something a member said about certain members speaking in the House and shifting the debate to getting tough on crime and to protecting victims versus criminals, et cetera. I do not think that is what the bill is all about.

There is an issue here and it is one of the reasons that I thought this bill would have gone to committee before second reading if the government is convinced that it is necessary to respond to the public interest so that we do not get off track and use it simply as another political tool. I wonder if the member would care to comment.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with what was just said, and with what was said by the previous speaker. There needs to be a balance between justice and mercy.

Why was this bill introduced? Because one event was sensationalized and very poorly received. In showing that it is tough on

crime, the government is not looking for an appropriate way to reduce crime in the future; it is looking for more votes at election time. It is tough, but it need not be as tough as the United States, which has proven that it is tough on crime to the point of being stupid about it.

• (1825)

*[English]*

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to have the member comment on the Conservative government's new-found interest in the pardon system. Interestingly enough, in 2006 the former public safety minister conducted a review of the pardon system in response to the pardon of Clark Noble, a convicted sex offender. That led to a minor change, including a requirement for two parole board members to review the pardon applications from sex offenders. Ultimately, the minister gave the pardon system a clean bill of health and we moved merrily forward for another four years.

Just a month ago, the member for Surrey North introduced Motion No. 514, which we debated, in which she directed the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security be instructed to undertake a review of the Criminal Records Act and report back to the House within three months on how to strengthen the act and ensure that the National Parole Board puts public safety first in all of its decisions.

What did the government do? It took the rug right out from under her and brought in Bill C-23 as a response to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, because we will be studying it in committee, I believe we should study it thoroughly by looking at the success stories, the statistics, the jurisprudence in cases where it was granted and the jurisprudence established by the decisions of the National Parole Board. We have to look at the details so that the public understands how the system works rather than just remembering one thing, the Graham James case.

The public may perhaps compare the case of Graham James to that of Robert Piché, the pilot who was pardoned and today flies commercial aircraft. This excellent pilot who flew aircraft under difficult conditions was at one point a drug trafficker. However, he went back to work, and did an exemplary job when two of his airplane engines failed in mid-ocean. He managed to land safely and today they are making a movie about him.

That is one person who benefited from a pardon. It is not just about Graham James. I believe there are more people like Robert Piché who have been pardoned than there are people like Graham James.

**Mr. Marc Lemay (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague, with whom I sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I find him very interesting.

*Points of Order*

I would like my colleague to comment further on one point. I may not have heard him talk about this because I arrived after he began his speech. In Bill C-23, the government seems to want to photograph and fingerprint all people who get arrested, regardless of whether they are suspected of having committed a crime. The police arrest people, take them to the station and fingerprint and photograph them before they are convicted or found guilty by a court.

What does my colleague think about that, and what should the committee's position on this issue be?

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to be very brief and say that we will see once this goes to the committee. We should not go overboard with fingerprinting because we might end up fingerprinting everyone.

I am sure that Ms. Stoddart will explain to us in detail which rules apply. But I know that back in the day when I was practising law, when people were acquitted, they could have their fingerprints destroyed. I think that there were good reasons for that, and for those same reasons, we should not be fingerprinting everybody all the time.

• (1830)

[English]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and speak to Bill C-23 on behalf of the New Democratic Party.

In short, the New Democrats support the bill at second reading. We support the bill at second reading because we believe fundamentally in four critical and profound points.

One, New Democrats believe, given a lot of the attention given to the pardon system in this country over the last several weeks and months, that a thorough study of the pardon system is in order. Canadians want parliamentarians to take a close look at the way pardons are granted in this country, and New Democrats are ready and able to do that.

Two, New Democrats want to look at extending the ineligibility period for certain kinds of offences. As Canadians know, there are currently only two time periods in the Criminal Records Act that apply to someone seeking a pardon. They are three years for those convicted of a summary conviction offence and five years for those convicted of an indictable offence. New Democrats are again interested—

\* \* \*

### CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

BILL C-2—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I apologize to the member for interrupting his speech.

However, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-2.

Therefore, under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and the disposal of the proceedings at the said stages.

\* \* \*

### ELIMINATING PARDONS FOR SERIOUS CRIMES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was on the second point regarding what the New Democrats believe in.

We are prepared to look at extending the eligibility periods for certain kinds of offences, because it could be the case that we may need an offender to demonstrate a longer period of good behaviour before being eligible for a pardon. We are prepared to look at that.

The third point is that New Democrats believe that the National Parole Board needs to have more discretion when evaluating whether a pardon ought to be granted. It is our view that the current pardon legislation does not give the National Parole Board sufficient discretion. That results, we think, in there being certain injustices that may occur.

I will say right now that I think all Canadians will immediately think of people like Karla Homolka, who under the current pardon legislation, would likely be granted a pardon. We in the NDP do not think that this is a just or fair result. Certainly someone like Karla Homolka, in our view, should not receive a pardon in this country, and we are prepared to amend the pardon legislation to ensure that this does not happen.

As I will expand on a little later, New Democrats propose what is the toughest wording when it comes to preventing people who ought not to get pardons from getting them. I will say right now that the government has proposed legislation that contains words that would give the National Parole Board the discretion to refuse a pardon when to do so would “bring the administration of justice into disrepute”. That is the language proposed by the government. The NDP thinks that is good language.

However, New Democrats would go further. We would add the words, “or would shock the conscience of Canadians”. That would give two separate grounds under the Criminal Records Act for the National Parole Board to deny a pardon. We think that is important for ensuring that we have credibility and faith in our pardon system.

Fourth and last, New Democrats believe that we need to hear from correctional experts, victims, police, offenders, sociologists, and every single person who has expertise and knowledge about the current Canadian pardon system. They need to come to the committee and have a thorough and intelligent discussion about each one of these points to ensure that we strengthen our pardon system in this country and ensure that it is fair.

*Points of Order*

New Democrats last week drafted a motion, and presented it to all parties in the House, that would have allowed a particular amendment to the Criminal Records Act to pass through the House quickly, before summer. It is a surgical, targeted amendment that would simply change the Criminal Records Act to say that the National Parole Board would have the power to refuse or decline a pardon where to do so would bring the administration of justice into disrepute or would shock the conscience of Canadians.

The NDP has done this because the government has been asleep at the switch for the last four years. Karla Homolka is eligible for a pardon this summer. The government waited until June 7 to introduce legislation in the House that would prevent her from getting a pardon. Of course, the government will not be able to get that legislation through the House, so it has proposed Bill C-23, which proposes many changes to the pardon system, many of which are undesirable or misguided or require further study.

New Democrats came forward with surgical, targeted legislation that would allow us to make one change to the Criminal Records Act to ensure that pardons are not given to people in this country who ought not to get them. It could be done without moving precipitously and ending up harming the pardon system that plays a very important role, not only in the justice system in this country but in keeping communities safe.

This bill would do a number of things. Some things are good, some are questionable, and some are, without question, misguided and undesirable.

This bill would rename pardons and call them “record suspensions”. We will have to study that to see what the impact would be. At this point, it is hard to know exactly what that would do, good or bad. It could be a cosmetic change. It could be something that has ramifications. New Democrats want to study the impact of that change.

• (1835)

It increases the ineligibility period that must pass before a pardon application can be submitted to ten years from the current five years for indictable offences and to five years from the current three years for summary offences.

The New Democrats believe that there may be cause and good grounds to increase the probation period for some offences. I am thinking, for instance, of a repeat sex offender. It may be the case, once we hear from experts and people knowledgeable in the field, that we may want to have that person demonstrate a longer period of good behaviour before he or she is eligible for a pardon. We are prepared to look at that. However, to have a blanket rule that extends the time period for every single person in all circumstances represents the kind of blunt instrument the government uses for an issue that requires intelligence and nuance.

It prohibits those convicted of three or more indictable offences from ever receiving a pardon. This shows the government's continuing attachment to the American, U.S.-style approach to justice that does not work. This is a “three strikes and you are out” policy. That is what it is. I think everybody in this House who is paying attention and most Canadians know that most of the U.S.-style approaches to justice issues brought in by right-wing

Republicans during the 1980s and 1990s are now being rejected by Americans across that country, because they are bankrupting the country, and more importantly, they are not having any impact whatsoever on making U.S. communities safer.

I will give an example. There could be a 19-year-old young offender who steals a car, who, in the course of being arrested, may resist arrest and may end up with an assault charge from resisting arrest. That kind of person, at 19 years old, under the government's legislation, would be prevented from ever receiving a pardon. That is obviously not an intelligent approach to a pardon policy in this country.

This legislation would prohibit anyone convicted of one or more offences, from a designated list of sex offences, from ever receiving a pardon.

Currently, under the eliminating pardons for serious crimes act, anybody who receives a life sentence is prohibited from ever receiving a pardon. The government proposes to expand that list. New Democrats are prepared to look at that.

With respect to pardon applications for indictable offences, the parole board would be required to deny a pardon if granting it would bring the administration of justice into disrepute. Once again, this is the kind of section that would be used that would otherwise prevent someone such as Karla Homolka from getting a pardon. However, it is too little, too late from the government. I wish it had brought in this legislation a year ago or two years ago, because it was no secret that Karla Homolka was approaching the fifth year after the conclusion of her sentence. Again, this government is a bad legislator and a bad policy-maker. It was asleep at the switch and is playing politics with crime.

I do not know whether the government understands that the pardon system plays a critical role in our justice system.

**Mr. Jim Maloway:** They reviewed it in 2006.

**Mr. Don Davies:** One would think that the government would know that, because as my hon. colleague from Elmwood—Transcona has pointed out very accurately, the government, two public safety ministers ago, looked at the pardon system in a circumstance very similar to the one we have today. There was a convicted sex offender who was granted a pardon, and the government, again, in a knee-jerk reaction, sprang into action and did a quick review of the pardon system. However, it did not do it in an intelligent, policy-oriented way. It did not put it before the public safety committee, which has 12 MPs from all parties on it. It did not hear from sociologists, academics, corrections officers, and parole officers, the people with knowledge of the criminal justice system. It just reviewed it.

What did the former public safety minister do after that review? He did virtually nothing. What the former public safety minister did was make a couple of changes. He increased the number of people on the National Parole Board reviewing certain kinds of offences from one person to two people. That is about the net sum of what the government did.

Therefore, I ask, and Canadians ask, if the Conservative government reviewed the pardon system in 2006, found it fine, and made just a slight change, what is the difference now? Again, it is politics. Canadians know that the government uses public safety and crime as a political issue. It does not really care about making a criminal justice system in this country that works, keeps Canadians safe, is fair to victims, and is fair to everybody involved in this system.

• (1840)

The pardon system is an important part of our justice system. It is an important part of keeping us safe. It balances the punitive aspects of the penal system with the redemptive aspects of the pardon system. This helps because, as New Democrats say time and time again in the House, when an offender comes out of prison, we want the offender never to reoffend again.

Once someone has offended and has been given a sentence, the only intelligent, wise approach to take as policy makers, the only wise and reasonable approach to take to keep people safe in this country is to do what we can to make sure the person does not reoffend. Part of that process is to give the person who offended a reason, an incentive, a carrot for good behaviour. It is not just punishing bad behaviour which is important. It is ensuring that the person has an incentive and is rewarded for good behaviour. The pardon system is part of that. It allows a person to come out of prison and engage in good behaviour and respect the law and reintegrate into society as a law-abiding citizen. At the end of that, it allows the person to get the benefit of a pardon. That is an important part of our system. If we get rid of that or make changes to that system that are counterproductive, it will make people less safe in this country—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member will have six and a half minutes to finish his remarks the next time this bill is before the House.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT

The House resumed from June 4 consideration of Bill C-9, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Groups Nos. 1 and 2.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6:44 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motions at report stage of Bill C-9.

Call in the members.

• (1900)

**The Speaker:** The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 2.

• (1905)

[*English*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negatived on the following division:)

#### Points of Order

(Division No. 56)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Brunelle
Cardin	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Demers
Desnoyers	Dewar
Donnelly	Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Freeman
Gagnon	Gaudet
Godin	Gravelle
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hughes	
Hyer	Julian
Lalonde	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Ménard
Mourani	Mulcair
Nadeau	Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelega)	Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
Plamondon	Rafferty
Savoie	Siksay
Stoffer	Thibeault— 62

#### NAYS

##### Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashfield
Baird	Bélanger
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coady
Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Folco
Foote	Fry
Galipeau	Généreux
Glover	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoeyppner
Holder	Holland
Jean	Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy	Kenny (Calgary Southeast)

*Points of Order*

Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McLeod	Mendes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliphant
Paradis	Pearson
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Proulx	Raiitt
Rajotte	Ratansi
Rathgeber	Regan
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Savage
Saxton	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms
Simson	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Szabo	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Trudeau	Tweed
Uppal	Valeriotte
Van Kesteren	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Woodworth	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich	Young
Zarac— 177	

**PAIRED**

## Members

Bachand	Bigras
Boughen	Braid
Carrier	DeBellefeuille
Deschamps	Gallant
Guay	Hawn
Paquette	Payne
Strahl	Van Loan— 14

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 1 lost. I therefore declare Motion No. 2 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 16. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 17 and 18.

● (1915)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 57*)

**YEAS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
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Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Brunelle
Cardin	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Demers
Desnoyers	Dewar
Donnelly	Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Freeman
Gagnon	Gravelle
Godin	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hughes	
Hyer	Julian
Lalonde	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Ménard
Mourani	Mulcair
Nadeau	Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
Plamondon	Rafferty
Savoie	Siksay
Stoffer	Thibeault— 62

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashfield
Baird	Bélanger
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coady
Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Folco
Foote	Fry
Galipeau	Généreux
Glover	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoeggner
Holder	Holland
Jean	Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney



MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McLeod	Mendes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliphant
Paradis	Pearson
Petit	Poilevre
Prentice	Preston
Proulx	Raiitt
Rajotte	Ratansi
Rathgeber	Regan
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Savage
Saxton	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms
Simson	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Szabo	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Trudeau	Tweed
Uppal	Valeriot
Van Kesteren	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Woodworth	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich	Young
Zarac — 177	

**PAIRED**

## Members

Bachand	Bigras
Boughen	Braid
Carrier	DeBellefeuille
Deschamps	Gallant
Guay	Hawn
Paquette	Payne
Strahl	Van Loan — 14

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 16 lost. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 17 to 18 lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 19. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 20 to 38.

● (1920)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 58*)

**YEAS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Brunelle

Cardin	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Demers
Desnoyers	Dewar
Donnelly	Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Freeman
Gagnon	Gaudet
Godin	Gravelle
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hughes	
Hyer	Julian
Lalonde	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Ménard
Mourani	Mulcair
Nadeau	Ouellet
Pailé (Hochelaga)	Pailé (Louis-Hébert)
Plamondon	Rafferty
Savoie	Siksay
Stoffer	Thibeault — 62

*Points of Order***NAYS**

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashfield
Baird	Bélanger
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coady
Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Folco
Foote	Fry
Galipeau	Généreux
Glover	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Holland
Jean	Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McLeod	Mendes
Menzies	Merrifield

*Points of Order*

Miller	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Olipphant
Paradis	Pearson
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Proulx	Raït
Rajotte	Ratansi
Rathgeber	Regan
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Savage
Saxton	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms
Simson	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Szabo	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Trudeau	Tweed
Uppal	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	
Woodworth	Wong
Yelich	Wrzesnewskyj
Zarac— 177	Young

**PAIRED**

## Members

Bachand	Bigras
Boughen	Braid
Carrier	DeBellefeuille
Deschamps	Gallant
Guay	Hawn
Paquette	Payne
Strahl	Van Loan— 14

**The Speaker:** I declare motion No. 19 lost. Consequently, I declare Motions Nos. 20 to 38 lost.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 39. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 40 to 62.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

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

*(Division No. 59)***YEAS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Brunelle
Cardin	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Demers

Desnoyers	Dewar
Donnelly	Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Freeman
Gagnon	Gaudet
Godin	Gravelle
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hughes	
Hyer	Julian
Lalonde	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Ménard
Mourani	Mulcair
Nadeau	Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
Plamondon	Rafferty
Savoie	Siksay
Stoffer	Thibeault— 62

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashfield
Baird	Bélanger
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coady
Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Folco
Foote	Fry
Galipeau	Généreux
Glover	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Holland
Jean	Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McLeod	Mendes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nicholson

Norlock  
O'Neill-Gordon  
Oda  
Paradis  
Petit  
Prentice  
Proulx  
Rajotte  
Rathgeber  
Reid  
Richardson  
Ritz  
Saxton  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Shory  
Simson  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Szabo  
Tilson  
Tonks  
Trudeau  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Verner  
Warawa  
Watson  
Sky Country  
Weston (Saint John)  
Woodworth  
Yelich  
Zarac— 177

O'Connor  
Obhrai  
Oliphant  
Pearson  
Poilievre  
Preston  
Raiitt  
Ratansi  
Regan  
Richards  
Rickford  
Savage  
Scheer  
Sgro  
Shiple  
Simms  
Smith  
Stanton  
Sweet  
Thompson  
Toews  
Trost  
Tweed  
Valeriote  
Vellacott  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Wong  
Wrzesnewskyj  
Young

#### PAIRED

##### Members

Bachand  
Boughen  
Carrier  
Deschamps  
Guay  
Paquette  
Strahl

Bigras  
Braid  
DeBellefeuille  
Gallant  
Hawn  
Payne  
Van Loan— 14

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 39 lost. Consequently, Motions Nos. 40 to 62 are lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 3.

[*English*]

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it I believe you would find agreement to apply the vote from the previous motion to the current motion.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 60*)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Allen (Welland)  
Angus  
Atamanenko  
Bellavance  
Blais  
Bouchard  
Cardin  
Chow  
Comartin  
Cullen  
Davies (Vancouver East)  
Desnoyers

André  
Ashton  
Beaudin  
Bevington  
Bonsant  
Brunelle  
Charlton  
Christopherson  
Crowder  
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
Demers  
Dewar

#### Points of Order

Donnelly  
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
Gagnon  
Godin  
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)  
Hughes  
Hyer  
Lalonde  
Lemay  
Lessard  
Malo  
Marston  
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)  
Mathysen  
Mourani  
Nadeau  
Paillé (Hochelaga)  
Plamondon  
Savoie  
Stoffer

Duceppe  
Freeman  
Gaudet  
Gravelle  
Julian  
Layton  
Leslie  
Lévesque  
Maloway  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
Masse  
Ménard  
Mulcair  
Ouellet  
Paillé (Louis-Hébert)  
Rafferty  
Siksay  
Thibeault— 62

#### NAYS

##### Members

Abbott  
Aglukkaq  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Arthur  
Baird  
Benoit  
Bezan  
Blaney  
Boucher  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Brown (Barrie)  
Byrne  
Calandra  
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Carrie  
Chong  
Clement  
Crombie  
Cuzner  
Day  
Del Mastro  
Dreesen  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Easter  
Finley  
Fletcher  
Foote  
Galipeau  
Glover  
Goodale  
Gourde  
Guarnieri  
Harper  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
Holder  
Jean  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kennedy  
Kent  
Komarnicki  
Lake  
Lebel  
Lee  
Lobb  
Lunn  
MacAulay  
MacKenzie  
McCallum  
McLeod  
Menzies  
Miller  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)  
Murray  
Norlock

Ablonczy  
Albrecht  
Allison  
Anders  
Armstrong  
Ashfield  
Bélanger  
Bernier  
Blackburn  
Block  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Cadman  
Calkins  
Cannon (Pontiac)  
Casson  
Clarke  
Coady  
Cummins  
Davidson  
Dechert  
Devolin  
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
Dykstra  
Fast  
Flaherty  
Folco  
Fry  
Généreux  
Goldring  
Goodyear  
Grewal  
Hall Findlay  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hill  
Hoepfner  
Holland  
Jennings  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Kerr  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lauzon  
LeBlanc  
Lemieux  
Lukiwski  
Lunney  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Mayes  
McColeman  
Mendes  
Merrifield  
Minna  
Murphy (Charlottetown)  
Nicholson  
O'Connor

*Points of Order*

O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliphant
Paradis	Pearson
Petit	Poilievre
Prentice	Preston
Proulx	Raiit
Rajotte	Ratansi
Rathgeber	Regan
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Savage
Saxton	Scheer
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms
Simson	Smith
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Szabo	Thompson
Tilson	Toews
Tonks	Trost
Trudeau	Twweed
Uppal	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Woodworth	Wrzesnewskyj
Yelich	Young
Zarac— 177	

**PAIRED**

## Members

Bachand	Bigras
Boughen	Braid
Carrier	DeBellefeuille
Deschamps	Gallant
Guay	Hawn
Paquette	Payne
Strahl	Van Loan— 14

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 3 defeated. The next question is on Motion No. 4.

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it I believe you would find agreement to apply the vote from the previous motion to the current motion.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1930)

(The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 61)***YEAS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Beaudin
Bellavance	Bevington
Blais	Bonsant
Bouchard	Brunelle
Cardin	Charlton
Chow	Christopherson
Comartin	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Demers
Desnoyers	Dewar
Donnelly	Duceppe
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Freeman
Gagnon	Gaudet
Godin	Gravelle

Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hughes	
Hyer	Julian
Lalonde	Layton
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Winnipeg Centre)
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)	Masse
Mathysen	Ménard
Mourani	Mulcair
Nadeau	Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
Plamondon	Rafferty
Savoie	Siksaya
Stoffer	Thibeault— 62

**NAYS**

## Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Arthur	Ashfield
Baird	Bélanger
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Boucher	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Byrne	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Cannon (Pontiac)
Carrie	Casson
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coady
Crombie	Cummins
Cuzner	Davidson
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Fast
Finley	Flaherty
Fletcher	Folco
Foote	Fry
Galipeau	Généreux
Glover	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Guarnieri	Hall Findlay
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Holland
Jean	Jennings
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	LeBlanc
Lee	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunnay
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McLeod	Mendes
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Minna
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliphant
Paradis	Pearson
Petit	Poilievre

Prentice  
Proulx  
Rajotte  
Rathgeber  
Reid  
Richardson  
Ritz  
Saxton  
Schellenberger  
Shea  
Shory  
Simson  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Szabo  
Tilson  
Tonks  
Trudeau  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Verner  
Warawa  
Watson  
Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Woodworth  
Yelich  
Zarac— 177

Preston  
Raitt  
Ratansi  
Regan  
Richards  
Rickford  
Savage  
Scheer  
Sgro  
Shipley  
Simms  
Smith  
Stanton  
Sweet  
Thompson  
Toews  
Trost  
Tweed  
Valeriote  
Vellacott  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Wong  
Wrzesnewskyj  
Young

### PAIRED

#### Members

Bachand  
Boughen  
Carrier  
Deschamps  
Guay  
Paquette  
Strahl

Bigras  
Braid  
DeBellefeuille  
Gallant  
Hawn  
Payne  
Van Loan— 14

**The Speaker:** I declare Motion No. 4 defeated. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 5 to 15 defeated.

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it I believe you would find agreement to apply the vote on this motion with the Conservatives voting yes.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party will be voting against.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be voting against this motion.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, the members of the NDP will be voting against this motion.

**Mr. André Arthur:** Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of this motion.

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

(*Division No. 62*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Abbott  
Aglukkaq

Ablonczy  
Albrecht

Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Arthur  
Baird  
Bernier  
Blackburn  
Block  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Carrie  
Chong  
Clement  
Davidson  
Dechert  
Devolin  
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
Fast  
Flaherty  
Galipeau  
Glover  
Goodyear  
Grewal  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hill  
Hoepfner  
Jean  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kent  
Komarnicki  
Lake  
Lebel  
Lobb  
Lunn  
MacKay (Central Nova)  
Mayes  
McLeod  
Merrifield  
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
Moore (Fundy Royal)  
Nicholson  
O'Connor  
Obhrai  
Paradis  
Poilievre  
Preston  
Rajotte  
Reid  
Richardson  
Ritz  
Scheer  
Shea  
Shory  
Sorenson  
Storseth  
Thompson  
Toews  
Tweed  
Van Kesteren  
Verner  
Warawa  
Watson  
Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Woodworth  
Young— 137

### Points of Order

Allison  
Anders  
Armstrong  
Ashfield  
Benoit  
Bezan  
Blaney  
Boucher  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Brown (Barrie)  
Cadman  
Calkins  
Cannon (Pontiac)  
Casson  
Clarke  
Cummins  
Day  
Del Mastro  
Dreeshen  
Dykstra  
Finley  
Fletcher  
Généreux  
Goldring  
Gourde  
Harper  
Hiebert  
Hoback  
Holder  
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Kerr  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Lauzon  
Lemieux  
Lukiwski  
Lunney  
MacKenzie  
McColeman  
Menzies  
Miller  
Norlock  
O'Neill-Gordon  
Oda  
Petit  
Prentice  
Raitt  
Rathgeber  
Richards  
Rickford  
Saxton  
Schellenberger  
Shipley  
Smith  
Stanton  
Sweet  
Tilson  
Trost  
Uppal  
Vellacott  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
Wong  
Yelich

### NAYS

#### Members

Allen (Welland)  
Angus  
Atamanenko  
Bélanger  
Bevington  
Bonsant  
Brunelle  
Cardin  
Chow  
Coady

André  
Ashton  
Beaudin  
Bellavance  
Blais  
Bouchard  
Byrne  
Charlton  
Christopherson  
Comartin

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Crombie	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Demers	Desnoyers
Dewar	Donnelly
Duceppe	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Easter
Folco	Foote
Freeman	Fry
Gagnon	Gaudet
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Guarnieri
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Hall Findlay	
Holland	Hughes
Hyer	Jennings
Julian	Kennedy
Lalonde	Layton
LeBlanc	Lee
Lemay	Leslie
Lessard	Lévesque
MacAulay	Malo
Maloway	Marston
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
McCallum	Ménard
Mendes	Minna
Mourani	Mulcair
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murray	Nadeau
Oliphant	Ouellet
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
Pearson	Plamondon
Proulx	Rafferty
Ratansi	Regan
Savage	Savoie
Sgro	Siksay
Simms	Simson
Stoffer	Szabo
Thibeault	Tonks
Trudeau	Valeriotte
Wrzesnewskyj	Zarac — 102

## PAIRED

## Members

Bachand	Bigras
Boughen	Braid
Carrier	DeBellefeuille
Deschamps	Gallant
Guay	Hawn
Paquette	Payne
Strahl	Van Loan — 14

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

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

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

● (1935)

[*English*]

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 14, I asked a question of the President of the Treasury Board about why the government was under so much secrecy, why it was refusing to be transparent, as requested under the Access to Information Act. In fact, the Information Commissioner, who was interim at the time, reported that the right of Canadians to timely access to information was at risk of being totally obliterated because delays threatened to render the entire access regime

irrelevant in our current information economy. In fact, she said that she had seen “no evidence” of a culture of transparency in the government.

My question as well was prompted by the fact that the Prime Minister's chief of staff had refused to provide a response to the House ethics committee as to whether political staff had intervened with access to information requests to stop information from being released.

At the time, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board assured the House that the government was working to improve its numbers on responding to access to information requests within 30 days. However, the critical problems of censorship, secrecy and blocking the release of information have only escalated in recent weeks.

The Prime Minister made a commitment to an open, transparent government when he campaigned in the last federal election. However, it is impossible to find any area of his administration where that commitment is indeed being upheld. The Prime Minister prorogued his government to avoid testimony concerning allegations of torture of Afghan detainees. Despite countless requests, he refuses to tell Canadians why he fired a cabinet minister and referred the matter to the RCMP.

The Prime Minister has muzzled staff members, blocking their appearances at committees and the delivery of a subpoena to political staff has been blocked, including to the PM's director of communications. The bailiff has been prevented from entering offices in order to do his duty.

Withholding information appears to be the top priority for the Conservative government. Canadians want to know what the government is trying to hide. The recent report of the Information Commissioner, “Out of Time”, indicates that access to information processing times have exploded under the government. The law says that access to information requests are supposed to be completed within 60 days, however, nearly 60% of requests take up to 120 days to complete under the government. A full 13% of them take more than 121 days.

For example, the March 2008 access to information request by the National Liberal Caucus Research Bureau for all documents concerning Canada's decision to stop Afghan detainee transfers was denied in December 2009, a staggering 639 days later, only after the issue had become a full-blown political controversy for the Conservative government.

As well, a senior aide to the former public works minister stopped the release of a sensitive 137 page document that had been requested by the media. The aide ordered officials to unrelease the report after the access to information office at Public Works had already determined that there was no legal base for withholding it. What the media got instead, 82 days later than allowed under the law, was a heavily censored version that had been reduced to 30 pages. The House ethics committee's efforts to question the senior aide about his actions have not been able to proceed, as the Conservative government has barred staff members from appearing at parliamentary committees.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Canadians have a right to information. The Conservative government has an obligation to be responsible and responsive to requests—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since this government came to power in 2006, we have fought to strengthen the openness and transparency of public institutions in Canada. Since then we have not backed away from our commitment one bit. If anything, we have strengthened it. We believe Canadians have a right to know what goes on behind the scenes in government, departments and agencies. Our record demonstrates our commitment to that principle.

In 2006 the first thing we did in coming to power was to introduce the Federal Accountability Act, the toughest anti-corruption legislation in Canadian history. That act made public institutions in Canada more open, accountable and transparent than at any other time in this country's history. Through this act we broadened the Access to Information law to include crown corporations, foundations and agents of Parliament.

As a result, 70 more institutions are now accountable to Canadians through the Access to Information Act, a step the Liberals never took. That means that more than 255 federal institutions are now subject to the act. For the first time, Canadians can see how these institutions spend their tax dollars.

Some of these institutions are finding it challenging to adapt to the requirements of the act as the Information Commissioner noted in her report last week. But overall we think this is a step in the right direction and we did not stop there.

While we took steps on the front end to increase transparency, we acted to improve things on the back end as well. Expanding access to so many new institutions means that staff need proper training. We needed to have the right policies and directives in place to ensure that right decisions are made by the right people. Of course, I am referring to the designated officials across the government who actually make decisions when it comes to access to information; people like Denise Brennan, Ann Wesch and Tom Makichuk who process these requests every day.

Let us be clear, each of those officials I just named clearly told the ethics committee that they do not encounter political interference in their work. The member opposite may be confused by that as she thinks back to the practices during the previous Liberal era. But our record speaks for itself. Is the system perfect? No, but few things are.

We should not let that blind us to how good our access to information system is and how much work the government has put into making it that way. I am proud to be part of a government that fought for the right of Canadians to know how their government operates, that can point to solid achievements in access to information, and that is committed to making the system even better.

Our record is clear. Our commitment has not evaporated. We will continue to uphold this fundamental pillar of Canadian democracy.

● (1940)

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, as I listened to what my colleague across the way had to say, I could not help but wonder whether or not he actually heard what had been said at the ethics committee. It is clear and it was made clear that day that, in fact, political staff did tell bureaucrats and officials to unrelease a report.

When we have people who are responsible for ensuring that the Access to Information Act is followed, how is it possible we can have political staff tell them to unrelease a report? That information was already deemed to be something that should be in the public domain, but again we have political staff saying that is not the case.

How can the Conservatives possibly say that the government is being open and transparent, and have political staff do that? It is not what is happening under the government. Again, I can only repeat what the Information Commissioner has said, that there is no evidence of a culture of transparency in the government and she cited example after example.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, I find this rather ironic coming from the member opposite. The Liberals opposed efforts to expand access to information when they were in government, opposing even their own members' bills.

In 2005 the Liberals voted against a Conservative Party motion to extend access to information laws to crown corporations.

Our government passed historic changes to the Access to Information Act making 70 new crown corporations and institutions accountable to Canadians. We got rid of the system used by the Liberals to centralize control of access to information.

Our government also increased the Information Commissioner's budget from \$8.5 million to \$10.7 million a year. That is a 25% increase.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Information Commissioner to improve access to information for Canadians.

● (1945)

## STATUS OF WOMEN

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for taking the time to respond to questions on the very important matter of funding decisions regarding Status of Women Canada's two programs: the women's community fund and the women's partnership fund.

On April 27, I asked the Minister for Status of Women to tell the House who was responsible for the funding decisions made by her department and why groups with projects that met the funding requirements and were eligible for funding were denied. In her response, the minister avoided the topic of the funding distributed by her department and insisted on speaking about the current situation regarding women in Afghanistan.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

While the topic of women in Afghanistan is very important, it was not the subject of my question. On May 26, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women began its study on the funding decisions of Status of Women Canada. At this meeting, we heard from four organizations whose projects met the program criteria yet were still denied funding by Status of Women Canada.

The groups that appeared at the meeting were CRIAW, or the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail, the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity and Womanspace Resource Centre. These are all very credible organizations and I do not think that anyone would question the work that they do for women in this country.

Some of these groups spoke of the influence of Status of Women Canada on their creation and development as women's organizations. For example, in a special publication on the 20th anniversary of CRIAW, the president at that time noted that had it not been for the financial support of Status of Women Canada over the years, CRIAW undoubtedly would not exist. Status of Women Canada has provided these organizations with some funding for an extensive period of time. It has provided CRIAW's funding since its creation in 1977.

Over the years, these organizations have proven their value and demonstrated expertise in the field. Their programs are highly reputable with proven results and have truly bettered the lives of women. Yet this year, the government decided to deny funding to CRIAW, the council, the coalition and Womanspace for the first time in their histories.

For most, this is a death blow. Because of these decisions, most of these organizations will shut their doors and cease servicing the women who have come to rely on them. The Minister for Status of Women has said that her department is choosing to fund new organizations over old. While I agree that the funding of new organizations is incredibly important, I do not agree that their funding should come at the expense of older organizations with proven track records.

If there is a greater need for funding from Status of Women Canada, then the budget of the program should be reviewed or the amount of funding allotted to each organization should be reconsidered to accommodate both new and existing organizations. However, I do not believe that this is the sole reason that these organizations were refused funding. The significance of these decisions runs much deeper than a choice between old and new. It is part of the mounting evidence that the government does not seem interested in funding programs for women equally or in funding feminist organizations with a track record for advocacy.

I will ask my question again. Could the parliamentary secretary tell us who is responsible for the arbitrary allocation of funding from Status of Women Canada and why funding has been denied to eligible groups?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government remains firmly committed to promoting women's equality and their full participation in the democratic, social and economic life of our country. We have

taken concrete measures to achieve that goal, including increasing the financial resources available to the women's program at Status of Women Canada. Our funding levels are unprecedented. Funding through the women's program supports programs that promote women's equality.

Funding from the women's program cannot be used to finance the operating expenses of organizations working in this field.

Since 2007, 372 projects have received a total of nearly \$67.5 million in funding from the women's program.

The latest call for proposals issued by the women's program resulted in an unprecedented number of project proposals. The response was remarkable.

There is no doubt in my mind that these projects have positive aspects and that they have the potential to improve women's lives.

However, for a project proposal to be eligible for funding, the organizations must show that the proposed project meets all the eligibility and evaluation criteria, including the criterion that the project address one or more of our funding priorities, which are as follows: increasing women's economic security and prosperity; ending violence against women; and encouraging women's leadership and democratic participation.

Even though it is simply not possible to fund all projects, as deserving as they may be, we have supported many important projects, including the project to disseminate CEDAW tools to improve the economic security and opportunities of women living in northern Canada; WEConnect Canada's project to open doors to corporate markets through education, training, coaching and mentoring to improve women entrepreneurs' business literacy; the Women in Municipal Government National Program of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; and the Uniting to End Violence against Women project, whose goal was to bring together provincial and territorial shelter organizations across the country to improve services for aboriginal, immigrant and rural women who experience abuse.

If the hon. member really wants to do something for the women and girls of this country, she should applaud our efforts and achievements instead of criticizing them and voting against all the measures that can help Canadian women.

● (1950)

[*English*]

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that these decisions by Status of Women Canada are simply a matter of choosing between old and new. It is an example of the government's agenda to silence women in this country. We have witnessed this silencing since 2006 with cuts to Status of Women Canada's budget, the changes to Status of Women Canada programming, the closure of 12 regional offices, the abandonment of the court challenges program, and the list goes on.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

Through the government's policies and actions we are witnessing the systematic death of the feminist movement in this country. We see the stifling of some very important voices, especially those who speak for the poor and marginalized women. This is the effect of what is happening. The government may insist that it is not the intention, but it is the effect.

When will the government cease its ideological attack on women in Canada and women abroad?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Mr. Speaker, first, as I already said, this government has increased funding for the women's program to an unprecedented level.

The two parts of the women's program, the women's community fund and the women's partnership fund, have had a direct impact on

the lives of over 175,000 women and an indirect impact on the lives of over 1.8 million women.

With all due respect to my colleague, she is seeing what she wants to see. On this side of the House, we are working with Status of Women Canada to implement programs to serve all Canadian women, whether they are rich or poor, to help them move forward and achieve their dreams.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** A 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 7:54 p.m.)

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