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Friday, February 7, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 7, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*English*]

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to rise to speak to this bill today. The cause of fair elections is one that is close to my heart, ever since Guelph became ground zero for a concerted and malicious campaign, in the last election, to wilfully mislead non-Conservative voters to the wrong polling locations on election day, May 2, 2011.

The subsequent investigation has demonstrated where we lack the ability to effectively pursue electoral fraudsters, yet it is as if the Conservative government and its minister have learned nothing from what happened in Guelph. Instead, it seems as if they are more interested in punishing Elections Canada and the Chief Electoral Officer for some imagined anti-Conservative transgression. How else could they explain that our top election official was left out in the cold and not consulted when it came to expansive legislation that would make significant changes to how we conduct our elections?

Frankly, over the past couple of days of debate and questions, the minister has seemed quite proud of the fact that he sat through a meeting with Mr. Mayrand, only to ignore his most pertinent recommendations and to go on to draft the same toothless bill they planned to draft before they met with him.

I know that the minister claims there was consultation. However, it is quite clear from the immediate comments from Elections Canada's spokesperson, John Enright, in the immediate wake of the minister's statement, that "the Chief Electoral Officer has not been consulted" and "there's been no consultation on the bill".

Had there been true consultation, the bill might have provided the resources and tools requested by Mr. Mayrand in October, when he said:

Without that power to compel it adds time and complexity to investigations and sometimes they get into a dead end for lack of co-operation from witnesses.

Similarly, this echoes the statement of the Commissioner of Canada Elections, Yves Côté, who asked for further investigative powers and the ability to compel the provision of information. He explained, in his first annual report:

It regularly happens, in the course of our investigations, that we approach individuals who we know will have information relevant to a file we are working on, only to be told that they do not wish to talk to us—they refuse to say anything.

We have all seen this to be the case in Guelph, where two and a half years later, we still do not have any more of an idea of who Pierre Poutine is and just how coordinated a plot it was to misdirect voters, forcing them to the wrong polling stations.

On election day 2011, a fraud was perpetrated across Canada, in over 200 ridings, and yet to this day, only one charge has been laid, in large part because Elections Canada lacks the teeth or the tools it needs to seize documents before they are destroyed or to compel testimony so as to advance the case and find the perpetrators.

The minister has stated that his reforms would enable the Commissioner of Canada Elections to seek stiffer penalties for a wider range of offences. However, what would that really accomplish, when there has been no augmentation to the commissioner's investigative powers? What good are stiffer penalties if one cannot find and convict the perpetrators?

Rhetorical flourishes such as "sharper teeth", "longer reach", and a "freer hand" may paint a delightful picture for government messaging, but they are hollow words in the face of an enforcement regime that has no ability to find those who perpetrate frauds or to effectively enforce the Canada Elections Act. It is like raising the fine for speeding but taking away the radar guns.

Equally concerning is the bizarre move of the Commissioner of Canada Elections from Elections Canada to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Not only does moving the commissioner's desk not increase his investigative powers, it effectively silos him off from Elections Canada and the data it possesses.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise you and ask your permission to split my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Frank Valeriote: I cannot square away how the members of the current government believe that a freer hand comes from changing the position of the commissioner to a government appointment and making him accountable not to Parliament but to the Attorney General of the day.

One can only hope that this is not a result of the frequent examinations of the Conservative Party by Elections Canada and its commissioner, be it on the in-and-out scandal; the sad tale of the former Conservative minister, the member for Labrador; the ongoing tale of the Prime Minister's former parliamentary secretary; or even the Conservative Party's connection, as stated by Federal Court Justice Richard Mosley, to the fraudulent election-day calls from the Conservative Party's CIMS database. From comments made by the minister and other members, it would almost seem as if they do not believe that the Chief Electoral Officer is impartial, something he is statutorily bound to be.

It was this paranoia that led the minister to proclaim that, “[t]he referee should not be wearing the team jersey”, as if it is some invisible bias that caused Elections Canada to enforce the provisions of the Elections Act when Conservatives did wrong. In effect, what the Conservatives are doing is punishing the guy who caught them, or at least his office.

Mr. Mayrand put it best yesterday, when he stated that these changes are taking the referee off the ice, sidelining him, so he cannot see what infractions may be going on. However, this is no surprise, coming from a party whose leader has called a former chief electoral officer “a dangerous man”, and whose members have accused the impartial body of carrying out a “vendetta” against them.

Perhaps we should have seen this coming when the Conservative government started cutting the organization's budget. When did it do that? It was in the midst of its robocalls investigation.

With the impending addition of 30 new ridings, already austere resources have been further constrained by these cuts. Perhaps that was all part of the plan, seeing as this piece of legislation also purports to muzzle Elections Canada's ability to promote voter turnout among youth, seniors, and other marginalized groups, which, on their face, represent the groups that tend not to vote Conservative when they vote.

It boggles the mind that Conservatives do not see increasing voter turnout as a priority but instead feel that mobilizing their own partisans is paramount, and they want to legislate this. It astonishes further that this advertising-happy government would restrict the ability of an impartial organization to communicate accurate, truthful, non-partisan information while it continues to roll out the Brink's trucks for its advertising campaigns on its non-existent job grant program. It is unfathomable that this bill would inhibit the organization we trust with the administration of our free and fair elections from communicating vital information that might encourage Canadians to fulfill their civic duty.

For all their hockey analogies, what the Conservatives would do is change the rules of the game without consulting any of the players, officials, or spectators, and they appear to be changing it to suit their own purposes. There are elements of this bill that are common-sense,

balanced reforms, but to include them with so many cynical attacks on Elections Canada, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the investigative process is not legislating in good faith. Somewhat predictably, though sadly so, this was reinforced when the government moved closure on the bill the day after it was read for the very first time. It seems as if the current government is as disinterested in consulting the people's representatives as it was in consulting the Chief Electoral Officer.

I certainly hope the Conservatives will accept amendments to this bill, should it reach committee, and that it might be open to more and better consultation with Canadians than they have had so far. Perhaps this was the only version of the bill that could satisfy the fears of the Conservative caucus. However, if the Conservatives and their minister are truly interested in reform, they will consider truly consulting with electoral experts, including the Chief Electoral Officer, and we can reshape the bill in the best interests of Canadians.

● (1010)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone in the House of Commons failed to see the irony of that member standing in his place to talk about infractions for robocalls. He will go down in history forever as the first person in Canada to be convicted of making an illegal robocall. In the last election, he put out an illegal robocall that gave a false name and a false phone number to thousands of his constituents in the riding of Guelph. He had to be found guilty by the CRTC. He may yet be investigated by Elections Canada. We do not know. However, we do know that he was the first ever, and that is the historical distinction he brings to this debate.

The second thing I want to address is that the member has come out today in opposition to making law enforcement independent, which would give it a freer hand. Why is it that the Liberal Party, through this member, has stated its opposition to allowing the commissioner to control his own staff and his own investigations and to have a fixed term so that he cannot be fired without cause?

● (1015)

Mr. Frank Valeriote: Mr. Speaker, no doubt the member opposite would love to discuss the error that caused my riding association to pay a fine to the CRTC. It was about a third of the fine his own member, the member for Wild Rose, had to pay for the same infraction. It was much less than the fines the Conservative Party had to pay for similar infractions under the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications legislation. Those errors, repeated by many in the House, were a result of accidental omissions. They did not put a name, address, and phone number on their calls.

Government Orders

However, that pales in comparison to the fraudulent day calls on May 2 made by that party to people in my riding telling them to go to the wrong place to vote. It was not just in my riding; it was in 200 ridings across this country. This matter was brought before the Supreme Court, and what did Mr. Justice Mosley say? He said that while he could not definitively make the connection, because there was not absolute evidence, he knew that it was Conservatives who did it, because they had access to their information system.

He dares stand in the House and accuse others of violations when that was the biggest fraud ever perpetrated on Canadians in election history.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the member for Guelph on the situation in 2006, when the Conservative Party was involved in the in-and-out scheme. Do members remember the in-and-out? The Conservative Party sent money to our ridings. It wrote cheques, and the cheques were returned to the Conservative Party, the national party, where it used \$1.5 million more of its funds that it could use during the election. It took Elections Canada to court, because it felt that Elections Canada was not fair to it. It fought with Elections Canada.

The Conservative Party has been fighting with Elections Canada since 2006 because of everything Elections Canada has done to try to have fair and honest elections. The Conservative Party is always putting sticks in its wheels.

This is really a bill to crucify Elections Canada. That is what the Conservative government is doing. It is putting a lock on the discussion we are having today, because it does not want the public to hear.

Mr. Frank Valeriote: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member's comments entirely. The Conservative Party is like those soccer players or hockey players who are indeed guilty of infractions who feign falling to the ice. They pretend that they have somehow been victimized and that it was someone else's fault.

I regret that the Conservative Party has avoided, not just missed but intentionally avoided, the opportunity to give this legislation the teeth and tools Elections Canada requires to find, convict, and punish perpetrators of fraud during elections. The omission is quite intentional.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to share my thoughts in regard to the fair elections act and the need for us to address what I believe is a fading confidence that Canadians have in Elections Canada's ability to properly investigate and ultimately come up with tangible consequences when there are violations of the election laws.

I listened to the minister's question to my colleague from Guelph and was blown away that he would have the tenacity to try to give the impression that the member for Guelph in some way tried to do something inappropriate in terms of an election law violation, to disenfranchise.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Let us take a look at the reality of the need for election laws and how important it is that we beef up the resources to Elections Canada. We can talk about the robocalls. The core issue of the robocalls is the unethical behaviour, which has been alleged by the Conservative Party in different ways.

One example is the mysterious calls being made, telling people that although it was voting day, they should be voting elsewhere. Who originated those calls? There is a huge question mark around that.

Then we have the calls that were being made late in the evening, past 11 o'clock and sometimes at 2 o'clock in the morning. Where were the targets of those phone calls? Liberals would not have been contacting Liberal supporters at 2 o'clock in the morning. That was an attempt to get Liberal supporters upset with the Liberal Party, maybe with the suggestion that they would not support the Liberal Party.

Those were the types of unethical phone calls being made. Where was that data bank that was being used to make those calls? The very serious allegations pointed to a political party, and it was not the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party that the finger was pointing at.

There was the in-and-out scandal. What kind of joke was that, in terms of a fine? The maximum fine that could be levied was \$50,000, and that is what the Conservative Party ultimately had to pay. It got off awfully lightly on that particular issue.

It was the Conservative Party that was caught this time and fined for inappropriately breaking election laws. There are candidates who overspend, some more than others. There have been consequences. In one situation, a member of the Conservative Party resigned and then ran again in a by-election. We know what happened in that by-election. It did not turn out well for the Conservative Party.

The Liberals and the New Democrats do not have to take any lesson at all from the Conservative government in terms of ethical campaigns. We need to watch what the Conservative Party is doing during elections.

That is why it is so disappointing, in terms of the manner in which we have seen this legislation brought in, which we are debating today. When it comes to election laws, given how important they are, and given that we should never take our democracy for granted, one would think that there would be some responsibility for the government of the day, which happens to be Conservative, to do the right thing when it comes to changing them.

It should be done on a consensus basis. The government of the day should be working with Elections Canada. It should be far more apolitical in terms of working with opposition parties, not only the Liberals and the New Democrats but also the Green Party and any other registered political party.

• (1020)

It should be based on consensus and consultation. There are many different stakeholders out there who have opinions on electoral reform and ways in which we could have improved democracy in Canada.

Government Orders

Why is it that we have a majority Conservative/Reform Party that feels it is the only party that knows how to change the election laws, when in fact it is likely the single greatest violator of the elections laws? It is the party that is responsible for bringing in this legislation, and then to add insult to injury, it brings in time allocation to prevent members of the House from being able to express themselves. That is the reason I only get 10 minutes as opposed to what would normally be given, 20 minutes, for members to speak. There is no lack of interest. Members, especially in the opposition parties, want to be able to express their concerns with regard to what the government is doing to our elections, and they are being denied that through time allocation.

We have a democratic bill that is supposed to be debated, but after three members have stood in their place to speak to the bill, the government has moved time allocation. The Conservatives are very good at time allocation. No other government in the history of our nation has introduced time allocation as much as the current government has done. Shame on the government.

If we look at the legislation itself, we see there are some positive aspects. We do see some increases in fines. That is a positive thing. There are some changes that are encouraging, but there are also some areas that are discouraging. If I look at this in a very simple manner, I would suggest that we want to see an Elections Canada that has the power to ensure that there is a consequence when there is a violation of an election law.

If I were to add something to that, I would suggest that it should be done in a timely fashion. It is not appropriate that we had a violation of an election law three years ago and it is still not resolved today. This is especially true in a number of areas, areas such as over-expenditure. If a campaign spends more than it was entitled to spend, that issue should be resolved in a timely fashion. If there has been inappropriate behaviour by a particular campaign or a party, there needs to be a consequence in a timely fashion. I would suggest that this does not happen today.

I was sitting at a PROC committee meeting yesterday and I had an opportunity to question Mr. Mayrand, the Chief Electoral Officer. One of the questions I put to him was if he believes he has the laws that are necessary to ensure that there is a timely processing of consequences for election infractions. The answer in essence is no; it is not there. The Chief Electoral Officer does not have the type of authority that is necessary to ensure that the integrity of our election laws is being maintained. This is where I believe the greatest flaw of the legislation is. It does not address that issue.

I asked the Chief Electoral Officer to what degree he was consulted. Imagine, this is the Chief Electoral Officer of Elections Canada, which is respected throughout the world by hundreds of different organizations and governments. It is a truly independent body. He said he was not consulted appropriately in dealing with this legislation.

• (1025)

I say shame on the Conservative government for not doing its homework, shame on the government for not being able to bring forward this legislation in a timely fashion, and shame on the government for not allowing members of Parliament and Canadians,

through their members of Parliament, to be able to contribute to the reform of our elections laws.

I see my time has expired. I am grateful for the opportunity to share a few thoughts.

• (1030)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the hon. member this. He pointed out a few items in the bill that raised some concerns with him. I wonder if he might comment on why he does not believe that taking the elections commissioner outside of the realm of the Chief Electoral Officer is a positive step. It would allow Elections Canada to focus specifically on running proper elections, on making sure elections are done with the highest of standards, so that people can get to the polls and access the vote quicker and in an easier fashion. Why does he not believe that is the most paramount function of Elections Canada? Why does he not see it as a positive step to review the investigative function and make it a separate and distinct unit, giving it the authority it needs to do these investigations properly?

I wonder if he might also comment on the provisions of the act pertaining to a cap on the amount that leadership candidates are allowed to raise and borrow on their own, so that we do not have the unfortunate instance, which we currently have within the Liberal Party, where hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal contributions sit unpaid and the candidates themselves are saying they have no intention of ever repaying those.

I wonder if he might also comment on the CRTC becoming the guardian of voter identification when it comes to telecommunications with voters.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, how wonderful it would have been if the government had sat down with opposition members to talk about some of these ideas it is now imposing. At the end of the day, when the Conservatives talk about this commissioner and they see that as a positive thing, they are wrong. It is not a positive thing. Canadians need to be aware that what the Conservative government is doing is saying, "Trust us. We will determine whether or not we want to prosecute an election violation. We are going to have more control over the independent commissioner. We're taking it away from Elections Canada".

Quite frankly, I have more trust in the Chief Electoral Officer ensuring that our system is fair than I do in the Prime Minister's Office and those guys running around in short pants. I say the government has made a mistake on this issue, and if it saw the error in its ways it would make the changes necessary and allow for an amendment that would put it back with the Chief Electoral Officer. That is the right thing to do.

Mr. Paul Calandra: You are actually lying to Parliament.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that if you check the blues you will find out that the government member called my good friend a liar. If I heard right, the expression he said is, "You are lying". I would ask the member if he would get up and apologize to my colleague from Winnipeg North. That is the only right thing to do.

Government Orders

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I was simply pointing out the fact that the member was not adequately or correctly talking about the act as it is written. He was misrepresenting the facts of the act, and I think that is inappropriate.

If the word “lying” is an inappropriate use of terms, then I will withdraw that term, but I will still stand with the fact that the member was completely misrepresenting the act and perhaps should do a better job and maybe might want to read the act.

The Speaker: I can assure the hon. parliamentary secretary that the word “lying” is unparliamentary, so I appreciate the fact that he has withdrawn it.

The hon. member for Louis-Hébert.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I find the tone of today's debate regrettable. After all, we are talking about democracy in Canada, how it should be implemented now and in the future and how it can be reformed. I am very disappointed to hear such partisan debate.

I am especially interested in public awareness about the right to vote, and in raising awareness among young people in particular, since that segment of the population is the least likely to vote. It worries me to see that that education will be scrapped. After all, a government is elected for the future, not just the present.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on the necessity and paramount importance of educating our youth about democratic rights.

• (1035)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North has just 30 seconds.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I sat on an election reform committee in the province of Manitoba and dealt with Elections Manitoba. We talked about how we could empower people to vote. We came up with ideas, such as allowing individuals to vote in malls, providing proper and adequate resources for advertising dollars, and so forth. We could have done many things with regard to the issue of empowerment and encouraging more people to vote.

I want to go back to the comments made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister because I am disappointed in them. I would suggest that he read the bill. If he wants to respect our—

The Speaker: I am afraid the hon. member has run out of time.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to return the attention of the House to some of the valuable aspects of this proposed piece of legislation, which would go a long way toward improving the quality of elections in this country.

Listening to some of the histrionics in what has been said earlier, one would think that Canada is a third world country in which elections are wildly abused. My hon. colleague for Guelph suggested that in 200 separate ridings there were investigations relating to

people being misdirected to the wrong polling stations. If this were the tip of some giant iceberg, he would be right; we would be unfit to be considered a part of the family of developed and democratic nations. However, on its face, that is a ridiculous assertion.

One of the ridings the member was referring to was my riding, in which an allegation was made by at least one person phoning the Chief Electoral Officer, which is what actually accounts for the 200 different ridings. I do not know if the member is suggesting that my riding, where I defeated the Liberal candidate by more than a three-to-one margin and the NDP candidate by more than a two-to-one margin, was one in which our party was attempting to misdirect voters because we were afraid we would otherwise lose the seat. If that is what he wants to assert, then he should come out and assert that, as opposed to using this sort of ridiculous innuendo and suggestion, when a clear counterfactual is the case.

Let me deal with three real benefits to the new legislation.

The first is a mandate to Elections Canada as to how it would direct its advertising revenue during and prior to writ periods. This is to be found in proposed section 18 of the legislation. I will read this legislation and then comment on it. Proposed section 18 would now read:

(1) The Chief Electoral Officer may provide the public, both inside and outside Canada, with information on the following topics only:

- (a) how to become a candidate;
- (b) how an elector may have their name added to a list of electors and may have corrections made to information respecting the electors on the list;
- (c) how an elector may vote under section 127 and the times, dates and locations of voting;
- (d) how an elector may establish their identity and residence in order to vote, including the pieces of identification they may use to that end; and
- (e) the measures for assisting electors with a disability to access a polling station or advance polling station to mark a ballot.

Proposed subsection (2) of that section says:

The Chief Electoral Officer shall ensure that any information provided [above] is accessible to electors with disabilities.

The Chief Electoral Officer has spent a great deal of money on advertising, but very little on these practical issues. This is despite the fact that many Canadians turn up at the polls, in some cases, as in a rural area, having driven a great distance, and discovering they do not have the necessary identification and are therefore unable to vote. Or, they find themselves in a situation in which they cannot vote at an advance polling station because they were not on the voter's list. This is a real problem.

I asked the Chief Electoral Officer in a meeting of the procedure and House affairs committee how big a problem there is with the voter's list. He hummed and hawed and did not want to answer the question. The answer is that there is a 20% rate of errors; one Canadian in five is not on the list or is on the list in the wrong way. That is a problem.

This legislation is designed to help people correct these problems for themselves. They can get on the list. They can find out how to vote. They can find out the methods available to them with whatever disability they may have, be it a mobility impairment, a visual disability, etcetera.

Government Orders

The CEO has to put in an effort to find out how to get those pieces of information to those communities, which is a challenge. I might add that this challenge has attracted no interest from the CEO until now, but now he will have to do that. That is a good thing.

Secondly, I want to talk a bit about voter identification and the issue of fraud. We have put in a lot of effort in this Parliament, and the previous one, into designing legislation in order to reduce electoral fraud. One of the key reasons this electoral fraud can exist is because Elections Canada has had to loosen the criteria for allowing people to vote and to identify themselves, given that Elections Canada has done such an unsatisfactory job in determining who is actually permitted to vote.

•(1040)

Mr. Speaker, I have just been passed a note. I am supposed to remind you that I am splitting my time with the member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale and not, despite his helpful suggestion, the member for Malpeque. He no doubt will have fascinating things to say when his time comes.

The situation with voter identification is a mess in Canada. We recently had a case adjudicated between the current member of Parliament for Etobicoke Centre and the former member. They were disputing whether people had voted validly in the election. In the end, the Supreme Court of Canada decided in favour of the present Conservative member and against the former Liberal member in that case. What was striking was that the issues revolved entirely around problems associated with voter identification, with the fact that people were not on the list properly. It all could have been resolved with better rules. Bill C-23 attempts to provide some of those rules.

One of the things that the bill would do is to specify that the voter identification card sent to a voter by the Chief Electoral Officer may not be used as a piece of identification for the purpose of voting. That is stated in proposed subsection 143(2.1):

The Chief Electoral Officer may authorize types of identification for the purposes of [voting]. For greater certainty, any document—other than a notice of confirmation of registration...may be authorized.

Why is this important? Let me give an example. My name is Scott Jeffrey Reid. In the 2004 election, I received three voter ID cards at my address. One was addressed to Scott Reid, one to Jeffrey Reid, and one to Scott Jeffrey Reid. Of course, all three voters are me. I can legally vote at the returning office at almost any point during the writ period. I can vote at the advance poll. I can vote on election day, in my case at a school near my house. I could have gone to all three of those places and voted, and there would be no record. They would take the voter ID card, but there would be no record that I had voted in multiple places.

I raised this matter with the former chief electoral officer, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, when he appeared before the procedure and House affairs committee. I said that this was not a very effective kind of identification. He responded that given the fact that I could go to these multiple places and engage in fraudulent voting anyway, what did it matter? I think that is not a very satisfactory response. Attempting to bring the issue of identification under control is very important. The elimination of vouching is a very important aspect of that.

I want to bring attention to, arguably, one of the most important aspects of the bill, which is the rule that from now on when the Chief Electoral Officer makes a ruling as to how the law is to be interpreted—and in some areas the law is ambiguous and will be found to be ambiguous in the future—he must apply the same rules to everyone. When we listen to the other side talking about the in-and-out scandal, they mean that a practice that was legal at the time was found afterwards by the Chief Electoral Officer, retrospectively, to be illegal in the preceding election. However, it was not found to be illegal in the election preceding that one, in which the other parties, not the Conservatives, had engaged in the practice. If we engage in that kind of retrospective ruling, we create a very unfair, unlevel playing field. That can no longer happen. No longer can retrospective rulings be imposed, and no longer can a ruling be imposed that does not apply universally.

A compliance agreement under the law is where a party violates the law. The New Democrats did this when they allowed sponsored advertising at their national convention, thereby allowing union contributions. It must be made public. They cannot keep it secret. When it is kept secret there cannot be precedents developed. There is no guarantee that the law will be enforced equally. That is a huge step forward. It is astonishing that Elections Canada did not undertake this on its own without encouragement from outside. However, having failed to do so, it will not be required to do so, and that is a very good thing.

•(1045)

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of anything more fundamental that we can do as parliamentarians than when we begin to change electoral laws. It is fundamental to our democracy.

One of the reasons I sought to be elected was that our democracy is fragile, and its legitimacy is also fragile. There is a lot of cynicism about the democratic process, and we need to address that. One of the ways we can address that is through electoral reform, ensuring that more Canadians can participate and that they want to participate.

I am personally concerned about those who have difficulties registering as voters. I have two first nations in my riding, and levels of poverty, and those individuals may have difficulties registering in their current state.

I wonder whether the government has addressed this problem and what its strategy is to ensure that all Canadians, particularly my constituents, can vote.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, if I may say, I did not agree with the first part of the question. I do not believe that the legitimacy of democracy in Canada is fragile, or indeed that our democracy itself is fragile. We are, with the exception of the United Kingdom, the United States, and Switzerland, the longest functioning democracy in the world, so I would disagree with the hon. member's question. If by that he meant it could be perfected and that there is much work we could do, then I think he is right.

I think what he really meant is contained in his reference to electoral reform. There are strong arguments to be made that certain kinds of reforms, such as the method by which we are elected, might improve things. My own preference would be for the alternative ballot, which is what is used in Australia.

Government Orders

However, I think that point is well taken. With regard to voter registration, the member is mixing his terms. In the United States, there is voter registration. An individual has to actually register as a voter in order to vote. They have to go through the process of registration. There was a restriction on registration for African-Americans, for decades, but particularly when it came to a head in the 1960s. It was a severe civil rights problem.

Let me be clear. He is talking about enumeration problems. The way to solve enumeration, in my opinion, especially when there are rapidly mobile populations or multiple people coming of age, is to have more on the ground enumeration that is administered by Elections Canada.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to what the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington had to say. He said at the beginning of his remarks that there are valuable assets in this legislation. No one is denying that.

The problem is that in the broad approach to the legislation, the ability of the Chief Electoral Officer, as we would say in farm terms, is having his or her legs cut out from under them. Their ability to do their job on overall elections concerns is being taken away from them. The good things in the bill are being nullified by the damage that is being done to the Chief Electoral Officer.

If the Commissioner of Elections Canada is no longer appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, who is appointed and accountable to Parliament, and instead would be a government appointee through the Director of Public Prosecutions, then that kills the whole ability for the Chief Electoral Officer to do the job of finding the many things that have been found in elections since 2006.

That is the problem. The assets are nullified by the broad approach that the government is taking in destroying the ability of the Chief Electoral Officer to do his job. Would the member not agree?

● (1050)

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I would not agree at all. The Director of Public Prosecutions, of course, is a public official. No one questions his integrity. He was appointed in the same way, and indeed most public officials at the highest level are appointed in this way. There is no inherent problem with the process itself.

It is my understanding that when the bill goes through the same individual would continue to be commissioner of elections. I do not think there is any suggestion that somehow his integrity would be compromised by that change. However, he would be in the right office. He would be a prosecutor, someone who is officiating and prosecuting in a prosecutorial office.

The investigatory and administrative arm of Elections Canada would be kept separate from the prosecution. This is the same practice that allows us to separate, at this level, the Parliament of Canada, which is legislative, from the executive part of government. This should happen here too.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to debate Bill C-23, the fair elections act, which would make it easier to vote and harder to break the law. It is a bill that would close loopholes to big money and give law enforcement sharper teeth, a longer reach, and a freer hand. This bill is another step in the proud legacy of Canadian

democracy. Step by step and generation by generation, Canadians have fine-tuned their electoral practices and procedures to make our system more representative, more responsible, and fairer.

I am delighted today to discuss the steps our government is proposing to improve the fairness of Canada's elections and how the rules are enforced. The fair elections act is a comprehensive bill designed to protect the integrity of federal elections in Canada by making the rules clearer, by reducing the influence of big money, and by giving real strength to the authorities that enforce the rules.

This bill would assure Canadian citizens that their votes count. Their votes and their contributions will not be nullified by the actions of cheaters who try to take advantage of loopholes in rules. The contributions of ordinary citizens will also not be diluted by the presence of big money from special interests or individuals who have been able to funnel great wealth into political campaign financing through existing loopholes.

Let me emphasize this. The bill before us would strengthen the penalties against those who abuse the system. When Canadians are cheated out of their votes through fraudulent acts or the system is abused when votes that had no right to be cast are counted, the integrity of democracy itself is put into question. Sadly, we have seen too many incidents in which that integrity and the strength of the foundation have been questioned.

The fundamental right of a citizen is the right to vote. One might even call it a responsibility to vote, or a duty to vote. It is a right, a responsibility, and a duty that was earned in blood during the world wars and during the constant vigilance to maintain freedom and the rule of law in the decades since then.

However, the voter turnout numbers tell us a different story. A generation ago, a large majority of voters went to the polls. In 1988, for example, 75% of eligible voters cast their ballots, or about 4 out of 5 voters. In the most recent election, in 2011, that number had dropped to 61%, or about 3 out of 5 voters. Most troubling is the decline in voter turnout for youth aged 18 to 24.

The bill before us introduces a series of amendments designed to restore confidence in the electoral system and provide voters with the assurance that their votes will count. It would introduce a response to changes in technology that have provided challenges that previous generations did not face, but which, if left unacknowledged, could undermine confidence in the integrity of our electoral system. This bill would give enforcement powers that send clear signals that cheating the system will not be tolerated.

Let me provide the House with an overview of what this bill contains. I will leave it for my colleagues to provide further information on the precise details.

Broadly speaking, this bill would bring fairness to Canada's federal election in eight areas.

Statements by Members

First, it would protect voters from rogue calls and political impostors. There have been serious allegations that telephone and telemarketing technologies have been abused in past elections, and we are taking steps to put a halt to the practice. The bill would establish a mandatory public registry, administered by the CRTC, for those who want to use robocall technology. At the same time, it would provide prison time for those who abuse the technology, including those who impersonate election officials. It would increase penalties for those who deceive people out of their votes, plain and simple.

Second, this bill would give law enforcement sharper teeth, a longer reach, and a freer hand. By sharper teeth, I mean that it would allow the commissioner of elections to seek tougher penalties for existing offences. A longer reach means empowering the commissioner with more than a dozen new offences to combat big money, rogue calls, and fraudulent voting. A freer hand means that the commissioner would have full independence, with control of his or her staff and investigations, and a fixed term of seven years.

Third, this bill would keep big money out of politics. It would prevent the use of loans to evade donation rules, and it would allow parties to fund democratic outreach with small increases in spending limits while imposing tougher audits and penalties to enforce those limits. It would make it easier for small donors to contribute more to democracy through the front door and harder for illegal big money to sneak in through the back door.

●(1055)

Fourth, the bill before us would crack down on voter fraud. It would prohibit the use of vouching and voter identification cards as replacements for acceptable identification papers. Elections Canada has found irregularities in the use of vouching and a high rate of inaccuracy in the National Register of Electors, which is used to create the voter information cards. I think my colleague earlier made this very clear with the example of his own personal situation. The bill would put a stop to the potential for these irregularities.

Fifth, the measures in the bill would make the rules easy to follow. Members on all sides of the House have complained that the current rules can be unclear. Complicated rules lead to unintentional breaches and intimidate everyday people from taking a more active part in democracy. The bill would make the rules for elections clearer, predictable, and easy to follow. In a fashion similar to the service provided by Revenue Canada, parties would have the right to advance rulings and interpretations from Elections Canada, which would keep a registry of interpretations and provide consultation with and notice to parties before changing any of these interpretations.

Sixth, the bill would enable the system to respect democratic election results. When members of Parliament and the Chief Electoral Officer disagree on an item on an MP's election expense return, the act would make it clear that MPs are able to present the disputed case in the courts before they are deemed ineligible to sit and vote as an MP.

Seventh, the bill would uphold free speech by repealing the ban on the premature transmission of election results. In the Internet age, this is as much a reflection of reality as anything else.

Finally, the bill before us would bring better service to voters, while focusing Elections Canada advertising on the basics of voting: where, when, and what ID to bring. It would explicitly require Elections Canada to inform voters with disabilities of the extra provisions available to help them vote.

Those are eight key areas in which we can build the democratic ideals that our country is known for around the world; the ideals that our soldiers in two world wars and since then have so sacrificed for.

I have served on the international human rights subcommittee of this House and listened to the testimonies of victims of various regimes in other countries that our freedom, democracy, and human rights are a big part of what makes Canada great.

Many people from across the political spectrum have underscored the importance of reforming our electoral laws and restoring confidence in Canada's democracy. I am confident they agree with me that these reforms are needed before Canadians return to the polls next year.

In fact, the bill would implement 38 of the recommendations that the Chief Electoral Officer made in his report on the 40th general election, which was tabled in 2010.

I urge hon. members—

The Speaker: It is time for statements by members. The member will have two minutes left to conclude his speech after question period.

Statements by members, the hon. member for Richmond Hill.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday our government unveiled the first comprehensive reform of the Citizenship Act since 1977. Bill C-24, the strengthening Canadian citizenship act, would increase the efficiency of the citizenship program, reinforce the value of citizenship, and combat fraud. It would promote Canada's interests by honouring those who serve Canada, and it would protect Canadians from foreign criminals and those who pose a threat to our national security.

As Canadians, we understand the value and sacredness of citizenship. This bill encourages new Canadians to form a stronger attachment to Canada and to embrace Canadian values and traditions and the Canadian way of life. We have welcomed 1.4 million new Canadian citizens since our Conservative government took office. We have welcomed more families and more permanent residents, and we continue to attract the world's most talented and innovative immigrants to Canada.

I encourage all members of the House to support this very important piece of legislation.

* * *

● (1100)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to express my concerns regarding the frequent ceasefire violations along the border of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan. These incidents have resulted in the tragic loss of life. Recently, an Armenian soldier, Armen Hovhannisyanyan, was shot and killed by Azeri troops.

At present, the envoys of the Minsk Group of countries are visiting the region and these violations serve only to complicate their work. As we are on the eve of a meeting of the foreign affairs ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Paris, it is essential that both sides exercise restraint and control of their militaries to ensure a productive atmosphere for this meeting and for the important work of the Minsk Group.

Canada has always been, and will continue to be, a supporter of peace talks between the parties. The OSCE Minsk Group should be the only venue for the resolution of this conflict. I am asking that we work to ensure that no future aggressive actions, such as the recent one by the Azeri military along the border, take place so that negotiations toward peace can continue constructively.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, next week the government will table a new budget. The Conservatives claim their priority is economic prosperity and job creation, but economic prosperity for whom, in whose interests, and for which economic sectors?

What Canadians want and deserve are policies and investments that foster job creation and business development in the communities and across sectors—in other words, economic diversity. Two sectors meriting greater attention and offering huge potential are the clean energy and energy efficiency sector and first nation energy enterprises.

Last month's International Indigenous Energy Summit, organized by the Calgary-based Indian Resource Council's National Energy Business Centre of Excellence, showcased inspiring models of investment ingenuity. Successful wind power, solar, run-of-river, geothermal, and biofuel projects are providing cleaner and more reliable energy sources for first nations and neighbouring communities, quality jobs, training, and dollars for expanded local enterprises.

Statements by Members

The choice is clear. The federal government can stick to the same old narrow path or embrace economic strategy for a cleaner, sustainable, more economically diverse Canada.

* * *

WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize some extraordinary individuals from my great riding of Red Deer.

On February 15, I will have the pleasure to celebrate the 100th birthday of Bill Wagstaff from Elnora. He has always been active and involved in our community and a great supporter of young people. Along with his family and friends, I look forward to celebrating his remarkable life.

Bill will be cheering alongside other central Albertans as we celebrate our local athletes at the XXII Olympic Winter Games. Zina Kocher will once again be competing in biathlon for Canada. We are also cheering for speed skater Danielle Wotherspoon-Gregg; Matthew Rowley, also from Red Deer; and Atsuko Tanaka, from Calgary. Both train in Red Deer as ski jumpers. We will once again be cheering for Lyndon Rush, who is back on the bobsled for Canada after winning a medal in Vancouver, along with Mellisa Hollingsworth, who is competing in her third Olympics in skeleton.

Central Albertans are proud of these athletes, and we wish all of them the best of luck in Sochi.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Rick Dykstra (St. Catharines, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada supports the advancement of democracy and human rights around the world. Since November, Ukrainians have been demonstrating across their country for the right to democratically decide the future of their nation. They have been met with violent repression and deplorable treatment by their own government.

Canada has already taken measures that show our support for the people of Ukraine, and we will continue to stand by them during this tumultuous time. As the situation unfolds and Ukraine moves forward in the struggle for democratic reform, we are reminded that issues of democracy, human rights, freedom, and the rule of law are issues that transcend party lines.

In the coming days, we will be forging action plans to deal with the developments in Ukraine, and I hope that all members will continue to come together to contribute to a solution that promotes democracy and the safeguarding of individual freedoms for all of those in Ukraine.

Statements by Members

● (1105)

[Translation]

ENTREPREURSHIP IN GRANBY

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, PRINOTH, a Granby company, dominates the North American snow grooming equipment market.

With a \$20 million contract for 62 snow groomers, the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi are a high-profile international project for this Canadian manufacturer.

From the very beginning, PRINOTH has been synonymous with the highest quality vehicles. With over half a century of experience, PRINOTH continues to develop and perfect the drive wheel system invented by Bombardier in 1935. PRINOTH groomers are considered the best in the world.

The Granby facility employs no less than 350 workers, and 60 more are in charge of North American sales and distribution.

We are very proud of this local company.

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[English]

ELECTIONS IN THAILAND

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada and Thailand have enjoyed warm relations. Thailand held parliamentary elections this past Sunday. Despite actions by anti-government protestors intent on derailing the polls and the political process, 47% of Thailand's 43 million eligible voters came out to exercise their right to choose who will govern them. This sends a strong message to all political parties, the military, and the election commission that the people of Thailand value their right to vote.

The actions of protestors to block voters and prevent polling stations from opening are a cause of concern for Canada. It is worth noting the restraint shown by the Thai government, the military, and other authorities, which ensured mass-scale violence was averted and skirmishes and disruptions were kept to a minimum.

We now call upon the opposition to return to the talks and on the election commission to ensure the electoral process is carried out fully and expeditiously. That is the overwhelming desire of the Thai people and also of Canada.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday the U.S. State Department released its final supplementary environmental impact statement on the environmental effects of Keystone XL. This is the fifth environmental study that has been undertaken for this project. The state department study demonstrates once again what we on this side of the House have known for a long time and what so many of those in opposition feared: that the Keystone XL pipeline would not have a significant impact on the environment.

Would it not be great if the opposition members would stop campaigning against Canadian jobs and the Canadian economy?

Rather than accepting the scientific basis of this report, the New Democrats have once again put ideology before science.

The benefits of the Keystone XL pipeline project are clear. It is time for all members in this House to support this project, which will create thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity.

* * *

[Translation]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on January 24, 2014, the Province of New Brunswick and CN announced a total investment of \$55 million to upgrade the tracks between Campbellton and Moncton. The federal Conservative government was notably absent.

At the same press conference, it was also announced that the line between Miramichi and Bathurst would be eliminated, which is nothing to celebrate. To save passenger rail service in eastern New Brunswick and Quebec, VIA Rail and the government need to invest \$10 million.

VIA Rail says it does not have the money and is considering using CN tracks in the western part of the province. According to CBC, this option would cost \$50 million for the purchase of new land and to build new stations, and 50% of passengers would be lost.

The government says its hands are tied, since VIA Rail is a crown corporation, even though it has invested in VIA in the past. What is \$10 million to maintain train service from coast to coast?

I encourage everyone to sign the petition I have launched to maintain the rail line between Miramichi and Bathurst.

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[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in December, at CFB Trenton, I welcomed back members of the Disaster Assistance Response Team after the completion of their 40-day deployment to the Philippines to provide humanitarian assistance following Typhoon Haiyan, and we let them know how proud Canadians are of them.

Then in January, at CFB Trenton, I welcomed back 88 troops from Afghanistan. These soldiers served for several months in Operation Attention, Canada's contribution to the NATO training mission in Afghanistan. About 100 members of the Canadian Armed Forces are still serving in Afghanistan, and they will be returning home in March 2014 upon the conclusion of Operation Attention.

On this red Friday, and every day, we thank our Canadian men and women in uniform for their bravery and willingness to serve, both internationally and at home.

•(1110)

[*Translation*]

WINTER OLYMPICS GAMES

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all of our athletes who are proudly representing Canada at the Winter Olympics that are starting in Sochi today.

After so many years of training, hard work and effort, the time has come for our athletes to fully enjoy the Olympic experience.

Congratulations to all the athletes and their families. On behalf of all my NDP colleagues, I wish the athletes the best of luck. With their determination and courage, our brave athletes are role models for all of us.

[*English*]

New Democrats hope that these games will be inclusive, safe, and respectful of human rights, promoting the shared Canadian and Olympic values of justice and respect for all. Canadians across the country will be glued to their televisions to witness what will certainly be many memorable moments.

New Democrats join with our colleagues in this House in saying “Go, Canada, go”.

* * *

WINTER OLYMPICS GAMES

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opening ceremonies have just started in Sochi, and I want to acknowledge some remarkable Manitobans who will be going for gold in these 22nd Winter Olympic Games.

Megan Imrie of Falcon Lake will complete in the biathlon event. Brittany Schussler will give it her all in long track speed skating. Canada's women's curling team will be proudly represented by Winnipeg's own Dawn McEwan, Jill Officer, Kaitlyn Lawes, and Jennifer Jones. Jocelyne Laroque of Ste. Anne will compete in her first Olympic games as a member of the women's hockey team. Jonathan Toews will also be helping Canada defend our gold medal in hockey.

On behalf of all Manitobans and indeed all of Canada, I wish all our athletes good luck as they represent our country and remind us of what we can achieve as Canadians. Go, Canada, go!

* * *

WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of the 22nd Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, which will see thousands of athletes from 88 nations come together to participate in nearly 100 events to see who may fulfill the Olympic motto of “Faster, higher, stronger”.

From the opening ceremonies today right through to the closing ceremonies on February 23, Canadian athletes from coast to coast will take part in these games in the spirit of not just competition in athletic excellence but friendship, multiculturalism, and inclusion across race, creed, and orientation. All the way, the

Statements by Members

folks back here at home will be right there with them, if not in body then in spirit, as we cheer on our Olympians.

I join with all members in this House in wishing our athletes and athletes participating from all over the world a happy and safe Winter Olympics. We cannot wait until our athletes return home, their luggage just a little bit heavier from the weight of their medals.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to serving the Canadians who served us.

I would like to share a story from Stan Kenyon, a 95-year-old World War II veteran from Brantford, Ontario.

He recently stated in a local Brantford newspaper:

I am getting all of the benefits I need, I always have, and I've never once been to an office. Someone either comes to my home to see what I need or I get a letter in the mail.

This is exactly what Canadians and veterans expect, and I thank Mr. Kenyon for his contribution to Canada. It is an honour to serve him. I also thank the member for Brant, who sits right beside me, for his hard work on behalf of veterans in his riding and across this country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians demanded changes to the Canada Elections Act, they were wanting to ensure that there would not be a repeat of the Conservatives's fraudulent calls, the in and out scheme and the sectoral financing schemes in Quebec.

Elections Canada needed more power, not less. The government was supposed to encourage more voter participation, not try to suppress it. It should have encouraged young people and the first nations to vote, not try to suppress their right to vote.

The Conservatives chose to introduce an election bill tailor made to help and protect the Conservative Party. Now, investigations on Canada Elections Act infractions will be dealt with by the Director of Public Prosecutions, who reports to a Conservative minister.

Election rules are not like a plant that can be uprooted whenever they want.

Canadians deserve better than a government that attacks the Chief Electoral Officer just because he took the Conservatives to court. Electoral legislation is not meant to make cheating easier.

Oral Questions

• (1115)
[English]

CAREER COLLEGES

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the office of the Liberal leader attacked millions of middle-class Canadians, unfairly criticizing career colleges and those who attend them.

While the Liberal leader's office writes off career colleges, the facts are that it is because of the hundreds of extremely valuable career colleges that Canada remains one of the most educated nations in the world.

The average Canadian attending a career college is looking to make a better life. Many of the students have families. They are looking to get trained for the in-demand jobs of this economy.

Our Conservative government understands this. That is why we are working on initiatives such as the Canada jobs grant to ensure skills training actually leads to a guaranteed job and employers are putting more money into equipping Canadians for available jobs.

The out-of-touch elitists in the Liberal Party leader's office should be ashamed of themselves.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, section 18 of the Canada Elections Act states:

The Chief Electoral Officer may, using any...means that he or she considers appropriate, provide the public...with information relating to Canada's electoral process, the democratic right to vote and how to be a candidate.

The Conservatives are removing that section. This bill was supposed to target widespread election fraud during the last election, so why are they using it to stop the CEO from talking to the media?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has made a factual error in her question. Section 18 of the existing act deals with promotional advertising by Elections Canada and has absolutely nothing to do with communicating allegations of wrongdoing.

Sections 534 and 535, not section 18, require the CEO to report to the House of Commons on electoral events and any matters that arise from them. These automatically become public and the fair elections act does not change that.

Furthermore, the CEO will still have the ability to report any allegations he wishes to the commissioner, who has a legal responsibility to enforce the act.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister should read his actual bill, not the imaginary one that he uses to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Vancouver East has the floor.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, when we look at the actual bill, it does limit the Chief Electoral Officer's access to the media. Clause 7 of the bill severely limits what the CEO can talk about. For example, the minister is banning the head of Elections Canada from talking about the state of Canada's voting system. Why are the Conservatives using this bill to put a gag order on Elections Canada?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, clause 7 amends section 18, which has absolutely nothing to do with the reporting of allegations of wrongdoing. Section 18 deals with advertising.

The last time I checked, Elections Canada does not combat or report allegations by purchasing advertising. It reports allegations to the House of Commons, something that is not only allowed under the fair elections act but will continue to be required of it.

Furthermore, the CEO will still have the legal ability to report any allegations to the chief investigator, who is the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. Under the government's law, the Chief Electoral Officer's scrum outside committee yesterday would now be illegal. That is ridiculous.

Potential voters with no fixed address or government-issued ID will now find it harder to vote. First nations, young people, and lower income Canadians will be hurt. Elections Canada is banned from doing public outreach aimed at encouraging more people to vote. Why are the Conservatives using changes to the elections act to make it harder for people to vote?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, we are making it easier to vote by giving them an extra voting day and allowing resources to reduce congestion at the polls so that voting is faster for Canadians.

Furthermore, we are requiring Elections Canada to communicate to people the basics of voting, where, when, and what ID to bring, and to inform disabled people of the special tools available to help them vote. All of the data show that these are the main obstacles to voting. We are going to remove these obstacles by focusing Elections Canada's advertising on the basics of voting and providing better customer service to voters.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new bill allows local election campaign organizations to collect money from donors who have contributed at least \$20 in the past without that counting as an election expense. However, this clause is impossible to apply because Elections Canada does not keep a list of donors who have contributed between \$20 and \$200.

Oral Questions

What makes the Conservatives think that they will be able to enforce this clause of the bill?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the limits in question in the bill seek to limit the amount of money spent on election campaigns and not the amount of money spent on fundraising in the first place. That is a reasonable change. In fact, that same rule applied during the Liberal Party leadership race. This is not new. It will be clearly indicated in the law.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister is not very convincing.

The reality is that the exemption clause favours the Conservative Party. The former chief electoral officer is against this measure. He maintains that this is a roundabout way of raising the limit on election spending. Obviously, this measure was introduced after a number of Conservative members and ministers were found guilty of exceeding the spending limit.

Does the Conservative government realize that this measure is leaving the door wide open to abuse?

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker, the former electoral officer in fact gave the bill an overall A minus, which is pretty good, I think.

The bill will actually now go to committee after the vote next week, at which point, we can work hard with the former CEO, many expert witnesses, and all parliamentarians to turn that A minus into an A plus.

* * *

[Translation]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the IMF predicts that Canada's economic growth rate will be lower than the combined growth rate of the G7 in the next four years.

The last time this happened for four consecutive years was under the Mulroney Conservatives. The IMF also says that the government has some flexibility in how it makes investments if it really wants to improve the economy. Given all the challenges facing the middle class, will this government really table a budget that contains no new investments?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had actually taken the time to read the report, he would have seen that the IMF speaks strongly of Canada's economic performance. As the report clearly states, "...the IMF expects growth to accelerate above potential in 2014". Furthermore, the IMF praised our government's economic and fiscal management. In fact, it said, "Executive directors commended the authorities for their continued sound macroeconomic and financial sector management".

Clearly, our plan is working. In fact, just today, Statistics Canada announced that another 29,400 net new jobs were created in January.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the government created a big deficit and is now obsessed with eliminating it. However, middle-class households are struggling right now. In fact, household debt has increased 75% in the eight years the government has been in power. It is now almost 100% of GDP. Families owe \$1.64 for every \$1 they earn.

In light of this, is the government really planning to table a budget that would do nothing for middle-class families?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we clearly do not want Canadians to be over-extended. We have cautioned Canadians repeatedly that interest rates are now at an all-time low and will inevitably increase. Our priority is ensuring that Canadians can make informed financial decisions. Unlike the Liberals, who have voted against every piece of consumer protection legislation our government has introduced, we have taken concrete action to help Canadians better manage their money.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that this government is obsessed with eliminating the huge deficit that it itself created. However, middle-class families are still struggling under the Conservatives. Household debt has gone up 75% in the eight long years under the Conservative government. The national debt is almost 100% of our GDP and families owe \$1.64 for every dollar they earn. Why is this government planning another budget that will do nothing for middle-class families?

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of any G7 country by far.

As I mentioned, we have taken concrete action to help Canadians better manage their money. We introduced credit card reforms to ensure that Canadians have access to important information. We strengthened mortgage rules to protect Canadians buying a home. We cut taxes and created the tax-free savings account, the most successful savings account in Canadian history. Over 9 million Canadians now take advantage of it. To encourage Canadians to save for their future, we created a financial literacy leader to oversee our progress.

It is about time the Liberals get on side and support our successful policies.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform bizarrely claimed that giving the unelected and undemocratic Senate a veto over electronic voting was "...the best way to ensure the integrity of our electoral system."

Oral Questions

Why does the minister think that the Senate, which was created before the invention of the telephone and is exempt from ever facing voters, should have a veto on electronic voting?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP was not even able to run an electronic voting system for a thousand delegates at its convention. It shut down the entire convention for three or four hours. If that were to happen in a national election, imagine what kind of national crisis we would have.

The change in the fair elections act is to require that the CEO of Elections Canada at least secures the support of Parliament before he experiments with risky new methods of voting.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Senate does not even believe in having television in its own house.

Instead of giving the democratically elected House of Commons the ability to decide if an e-voting pilot project is worthwhile, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform has handed a veto to the unelected, undemocratic Senate.

It is not as if Elections Canada would be able to unilaterally change how voting works. That is a power the minister reserves for himself.

Why is the minister hell bent on giving this veto power to the unelected, undemocratic Senate?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member to read the Canada Elections Act.

In fact, the pilot project provision in the existing act allows the CEO to experiment with different methods of voting after consulting only the parliamentary committees responsible for that, which include, under the status quo, the Senate committee responsible for it. So there is already a Senate committee that oversees it.

What I am proposing in the fair elections act is that before the CEO experiments with risky methods of voting, we at least allow parliamentarians to consider whether those methods are safe.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative majority in the unelected, unaccountable Senate has no legitimate role to play in deciding how MPs are elected.

The Minister of State for Democratic Reform has made a number of bizarre claims in recent days, including implying that voter participation has declined because of efforts by Elections Canada to educate the public.

Does the minister have any evidence to support this claim, or does he really not understand the difference between coincidence and causality?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am the only who has actually presented any data on the question at all.

First of all, I presented the fact that since Elections Canada started its promotional campaigns, the voter turnout has plummeted by roughly 15 percentage points. Among youth, between 1984 and 2000 it dropped by 20 percentage points.

When we look at Elections Canada's own data, the principle reasons why Canadians do not vote are practical ones. They either do not have time or they are out of town, and many of them do not know of the many different opportunities they have to cast a ballot before elections day.

The fair elections act would require Elections Canada to give this basic information to voters so they have an opportunity to cast their ballots.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of State for Democratic Reform said that the decline in voter participation, which has fallen from 75% to 61% over the past few years, is due to Elections Canada advertising. That is the faulty logic he used to justify taking away Elections Canada's right to advertise.

Can he prove that Elections Canada ads prevented people from going to the polls?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has provided no evidence that Elections Canada ad campaigns work. Where is their data? They have not shown us anything to prove that.

[*English*]

I have demonstrated through the publicly available facts that not only are the publicity campaigns of Elections Canada failing, but also that one of the reasons why Canadians are not voting is that they do not have the basic information on how they can vote, for example, in advance ballots. We would require that Elections Canada focus its advertising on those important matters.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the minister understands the difference between correlation and causation, but that is not the only thing the minister is confused about.

Under this bill, the Commissioner of Canada Elections will have to answer to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who is appointed by none other than the Attorney General of Canada, who is a government minister.

Why not set it up so that the investigative branch is accountable to the legislative branch, not the executive?

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP obviously does not know how the Director of Public Prosecutions is named.

First of all, there is a committee that has representation from every single recognized party in the House of Commons, including the NDP. Then there are two independent, non-partisan public servants from the public safety department and justice department. They all recommend names, which are ultimately approved by a committee of Parliament.

Furthermore, the Director of Public Prosecutions can only be fired by a vote of Parliament, which, incidentally, is the same method that applies to all officers of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite what the Minister of State for Democratic Reform would have us believe, the power to compel witnesses to appear does exist in our system. Parliamentary committees and even the Competition Bureau have this right.

Why does the minister not think it is necessary to give the Commissioner of Canada Elections this power?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, even police officers investigating the most reprehensible crimes do not have the power the hon. member is referring to. Even for violent crimes, police officers do not have this power.

The commissioner already has the same investigative powers as police officers and the RCMP, and we are giving the commissioner additional powers by prohibiting people from obstructing investigations and lying to investigators.

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we already know that this bill will pave the way for the return of big money to our electoral system.

One proposal that is a little strange would allow candidates to give more money to themselves, and that amount will be higher than what another Canadian can donate.

How does the minister justify the clause that allows candidates to donate \$5,000 to themselves, which is three times the maximum that other people can give?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we introduced a bill prohibiting the use of other people's names to get around donation limits, the other parties said that this would prevent candidates from launching their own campaigns.

We are therefore going to allow candidates to give themselves enough money to get their campaign off the ground. After that, all donations collected must be under the donation limit.

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2002, Conservatives supported the NDP's call to make financial documents from political parties available upon request. They even agreed to our motion to make this happen.

Currently, while local candidates must make every last receipt and claim public, which is good, political parties only have to release summaries. Why do Conservatives not want Canadians to see spending details in their campaigns?

• (1135)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary. The fair elections act creates new provisions that would require political parties to be subjected to tougher external compliance audits before they can be reimbursed. Furthermore, the CEO has the power to ask parties to provide financial information, and he can also refuse to provide

Oral Questions

millions of dollars in campaign reimbursements to those same parties until they comply with his request.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of State for Democratic Reform runs in the next election, he will have to register all of his expenses and remember to include all receipts.

Why does he think this rule need not apply to the Conservative Party of Canada? What is he trying to hide and why does he want to protect his party?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, our bill requires that political parties be subject to independent audits to show that they have obeyed the rules and that every penny is counted. At the same time, the Chief Electoral Officer has the power to ask the parties for more details before they are reimbursed.

* * *

[*English*]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2007, wait times for citizenship applicants have doubled from 15 to 31 months, and the department admits it is because of the government's own funding decisions. Now it is tripling the fee to apply to be a citizen. The government is simply punishing those who wish to become Canadians, for its own mistakes. How can the government justify these fee hikes while service standards have dropped so drastically?

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are misleading Canadians again. The citizenship fee has not been updated in 20 years. Now citizenship application fees will be better aligned with the actual cost of processing, relieving the burden on Canadian taxpayers who currently subsidize 80% of the cost.

With our government's changes in the strengthening Canadian citizenship act, citizenship processing times would drop to less than a year. The Liberals had 13 years to make these changes, and they did nothing about it.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, abysmal service levels are not exclusive to immigration. Over at Service Canada, departmental statistics show that the percentage of callers who have been hung up on is the worst they have been in seven years. In fact, 12 million callers were hung up on last year. The government has turned Service Canada into no-service Canada.

My question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Is this the level of service Canada's veterans can now expect?

Oral Questions

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that Service Canada is working hard to continually make sure the service is up to the standards Canadians expect. It is there to work hard for Canadians, whether they need it for employment, passports, or veterans affairs services. Service Canada is there.

We want to ensure that it continues to have a high standard, and that it what we are working toward.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister boasted that there are over 650 points of service for veterans. We have first-hand accounts from veterans that they faced long waits, only to be told to call the 1-800 number to get assistance. Veterans have invited the minister to go with them to Service Canada centres to see the lack of service.

When will the Prime Minister fire his minister and reopen the nine VAC centres? If he does not, we will in 2015.

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Liberal Party over there. Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You should. You should.

The Speaker: Order, please. The member for Scarborough—Agincourt needs to come to order while the parliamentary secretary answers his question.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, we till take no lessons from the Liberal Party over there until the leader of the Liberal Party fires the member for Scarborough—Agincourt for disrespecting veterans on Remembrance Day, for saying that giving money to veterans is like hanging a case of beer in front of a drunk; they go and spend it either trying to buy a house or buying a fast car, or spend it on booze or addiction. That is what the Liberals—

The Speaker: The hon. member for York South—Weston.

* * *

• (1140)

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in my riding of York South—Weston and across the country are increasingly worried about rail safety. As it turns out, they are right to be concerned. Instead of putting safety first, the minister has let big rail companies cut corners, skip safety inspections, and be exempt from some brake tests. In one case, they went six months without a complete brake test.

Why were these exemptions allowed, and why is the minister refusing to come clean with Canadians?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member will know that Transport Canada, in 2012, did more than 30,000 inspections on rail safety. Our government has invested over \$100 million in our rail safety system. We continue to hire more inspectors as we speak, increase fines for companies found to break our regulations, and

create a whistleblower protection that requires each railway to have an executive legally responsible for safety. The list goes on.

The member should get on board with this rail safety regime.

[Translation]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Vaudreuil—Soulanges want to see some transparency, not listen to more rhetoric. This is important information.

After what happened in Lac-Mégantic, we expect and are calling for more transparency from the minister.

Transport Canada chose to grant exemptions to rail companies on matters as crucial as brake tests and safety inspections.

Is the minister going to keep withholding information about the number of exemptions granted and which safety regulations were involved?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the numbers on rail safety inspections. There are some 30,000—a historic level, I would add—on our rail safety system. There are major investments in our rail safety.

Since Lac-Mégantic, as the member referenced that particular tragedy, there have been ongoing actions by the minister, such as new sharing of information with municipality directives, proper classification and better classification of what is travelling by rail, new recommendations to the minister on emergency response action plans for flammable goods, and the list goes on and on. The member should support that.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives refuse to invest in order to save trains in eastern Quebec and New Brunswick. Voting for the right party does not even help. We have not heard a peep from the members for Moncton, Miramichi and Madawaska—Restigouche.

We need to work together to ensure the future of VIA Rail. It is essential to economic development in the east and the rest of Canada.

Are the Conservatives going to stay asleep at the switch or are they going to do something to save the trains?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member will know that this was a business decision made by a private company, CN. There is a regulatory process in place, which the company is currently following. While the discontinuance process is under way, CN is responsible for maintaining its track infrastructure.

Oral Questions

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our rail service is collapsing, and the Conservatives are still refusing to act. The railway in New Brunswick is crucial. It is the only direct line for thousands of people in eastern Quebec. It is the only route that links Canada from coast to coast.

Will the minister come to our community and explain to the people why they are losing this service, a service that Canadians are proud of? Shame on the Conservatives.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently the member opposite does not know that Halifax is on the coast and the *Ocean* line continues to run from Halifax to Montreal and to points well beyond that.

When it comes to VIA Rail and support for VIA Rail, we have invested \$1 billion since 2007 in capital investments and \$275 million across the network in 2013. What did that member say in the House last night? He said he was proud to vote against every dollar of it. Shame on him.

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HEALTH

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have read several disturbing reports about heroin emerging as the new drug of choice for addicts in Canada. This potent drug has potentially deadly consequences for addicts and severe impact on the people around them. I am proud to stand with our government's stance on taking heroin out of the hands of addicts and not putting it into their arms.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health please inform the House what the government is doing to keep our streets and communities safe from this threat?

• (1145)

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has closed loopholes that allowed for the feeding of addiction under the guise of treatment. Treatment should be focused on ending drug use and helping people recover to drug-free lives. While the Liberals and the NDP want to continue providing heroin to people suffering from addiction, our government will support treatment that ends drug use.

Our government is focused on standing with Canadian families and communities against dangerous and illegal drugs.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week dozens of iron workers in northern Alberta were laid off, only to see their jobs filled temporarily by foreign workers being paid less than half what they were making.

The Conservatives know full well that some companies are continuing to abuse the temporary foreign worker program.

What is the minister doing to investigate and to help these iron workers get their jobs back?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the allegations in question are very troubling. We have instructed officials to review this case on an urgent basis.

Our government wants to make sure Canadians get first crack at any job that is available. That is why we have made important changes to the temporary foreign worker program, and that is why we continue to review it.

Make no mistake. Any employer who tries to abuse the temporary foreign worker program will be held to account.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is what some of those changes have caused.

The abuse of the temporary foreign worker program has become a fiasco under the government. It created the Alberta occupation specific pilot project, which allows companies to hire foreign workers without accurate labour market opinions. These giant loopholes allow companies to abuse the program.

When will the minister stand up, apologize to these workers for failing to protect their jobs, and fix the temporary foreign worker program?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we are the government that is making changes to the temporary foreign worker program to make sure it is more accountable.

It does not help when NDP members continually ask us to bring temporary foreign workers into their ridings. The NDP deputy leader and MP for Vancouver East has been asking us to do that. The NDP MP for Halifax, the MP for Ottawa Centre, and the MP for Thunder Bay—Rainy River have been asking us to do that. I have a whole list. That is not helping.

We want Canadians to get first crack at every job that is available in this country.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives like to keep a very close eye on those who criticize them, to the point where the RCMP and CSIS spied on law-abiding citizens simply because they oppose the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline and the Conservatives' irresponsible policies. What is worse, the Conservatives shared that information with the oil companies.

Can the minister explain why he is using such radical tactics to control Canadians?

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the safety of Canadians is a priority for our government. As part of this commitment to safety, the National Energy Board may conduct a security assessment prior to a regulatory hearing.

Oral Questions

The NEB will often work with the RCMP to protect the safety of everyone involved. No member of the department gave any instruction to any federal agency on this matter.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, protecting the safety of Canadians also means protecting their democratic rights. We are talking about sending RCMP and CSIS agents into church basement meetings, where people are doing such dangerous things as painting protests signs.

The freedom for people to peacefully raise concerns is a core Canadian democratic value, and this kind of government surveillance is more about silencing and intimidating pipeline critics than it is about protecting national security.

Canadians deserve answers. Did the minister approve these operations, yes or no?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP takes steps to protect Canada's assets and resources, and safety will continue to be a number one priority of this government, but as the member well knows, we will not comment on operational matters.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been quoted in a Saskatchewan newspaper that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food “might very well go down as the worst ever to hold the job”. Canadian farmers are well aware of the reasons. First was the mishandling of food safety, then it was the slashing of agriculture programs, and as we found out all this week, there is a disaster in grain handling.

His biggest failure is today, with the signing of the U.S. farm bill, which includes country of origin labelling, which will continue to cost our livestock producers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Will the minister finally stand up and do something for the farmers?

• (1150)

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am actually surprised that this member is attacking our minister on this file. Our minister has taken the lead in defending our livestock farmers on the COOL file. We have personally been down to the United States. We have interacted with some politicians down there, defending our farmers time and again.

I would ask this member and his colleagues to get on board with this government putting farmers first.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's answer shows his dissociation with reality and how it has devastated farmers.

Today is not the first day the Conservative government has heard about the United States' plan to solidify country of origin labelling into law the President will now sign. Today is not the first day the Conservative government has been asked to act. Yet the government is still fiddling while farmers in our agricultural sector lose billions.

The Conservatives have gotten really good at threatening to act. When are they going to act and finally protect Canadian farmers?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to show how out of touch the member is with farmers, I will read a quote from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association:

The CCA fully supports the Government of Canada's efforts to pursue WTO approval to impose retaliatory tariffs.

As I just explained, our minister has been front and centre in defending our livestock farmers, our beef farms, and our pork farmers against the COOL legislation. We will continue to act in their best interests, and I would ask the opposition to support us in this very important work.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board has waged a lengthy misinformation campaign against public servants about their sick leave. The problem, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirms, is that what he says is not true. Public sector employees take as much sick leave as private sector employees.

Will the minister apologize, correct his false statements, and admit that he misled the House?

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer for his report. His report confirms that public servants take, on average, 18 days of paid and unpaid sick leave per year. This rate of absenteeism is unacceptable. This is why we are committed to introducing short- and long-term disability plans, which will help public servants get healthy and back to work. This gives public servants the safety net they need while also protecting the taxpayer who pays the bills.

This is a win-win for taxpayers and public servants. Shame on the NDP and their big union boss friends for misleading Canadians.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what taxpayers want is for this minister to actually work with the public service to deliver the services Canadians rely on.

Does the minister really expect us to believe he does not know the difference between paid and unpaid sick leave? The Parliamentary Budget Officer is clear on this. The minister is twisting the facts and trashing hard-working public employees.

Why will he not admit what is now obvious to everyone, and that is that his accusations against public workers were unfair, and most importantly, were untrue? He really should apologize.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer for his report. On page 3 of his report, it confirms that public servants take, on average, 18 days of paid and unpaid sick leave per year. This rate of absenteeism is unacceptable. That is why we are committed to introducing short- and long-term disability plans, which will help public servants get healthy and back to work. This gives the public servants the safety net they need while also protecting the taxpayer who pays the bill. It is a win-win for taxpayers and for public servants.

Shame on the member. Shame on the NDP and its big union boss friends for misleading Canadians on this issue.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian grain farmers had a record harvest this past year. This bumper crop is testing our supply chain, as producers are depending on the railways to efficiently move the crops to market.

This week, grain farmers faced the threat of a CN Rail strike. I understand that there is now a tentative agreement with the Teamsters. What concerns me is that while Conservative members were standing in the House defending farmers, an NDP member attacked the government for doing so.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary please tell the House how our government is continuing to put hard-working Canadian farmers first?

• (1155)

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his excellent question. The threat of a CN strike would be disastrous for the grain sector. That is why our government will, if necessary, introduce back-to-work legislation.

However, while our priority is to protect farmers and the economy, the NDP member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie had the audacity to attack the government for doing just that. The member's suggestion that the government should do nothing if a strike occurred is completely offside with farmers. The railways are facing challenges moving grain to port. Canadian farmers are paying the price, and that is unacceptable.

Our government has always put farmers first, and I ask the NDP to put farmers first.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tragically, Lucia Vega Jimenez, a Mexican woman being held in detention under the authority of CBSA, hanged herself on December 20. She died in hospital eight days later. This is a sad, unnecessary loss of life, at age 42, while being held by Canadian authorities.

Oral Questions

My question is not about why she was being deported but about just how is it possible that a woman, naturally despondent over her situation, could commit suicide while under CBSA authority. Why was monitoring and supervision contracted out at this detention centre, and why this failure under the minister's watch?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, privacy legislation prevents me from discussing the details of this case, in fact any case. However, I do agree it is important to determine the circumstances surrounding any loss of life. CBSA is assisting. I want to assure members of the House and the Canadian public that CBSA is assisting the RCMP and the British Columbia coroners' office by providing all of the information it has on this case.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, I asked the Minister of Employment and Social Development to explain why it is taking so long to process the skills link program applications from organizations in my riding.

The minister said that he could not be up on every file. However, I am not talking about a specific file. This is a general problem across Quebec.

Do these delays have anything to do with the fact that the minister wants Ottawa to be in charge of employability measures again?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the skills training programs we have, and there are so many communities across the country that have applied for them. We are working with communities, employers, and non-profit organizations to deliver programs like this and services to Canadians. EDSC does receive many proposals, and unfortunately, not all can be selected. There are several organizations that do important work, some that are receiving government funding and some that are not.

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Minister for International Development recently returned from a productive visit to Africa, where among other accomplishments, he was able to see first-hand some of the important work being done by Canada. The flagship priority of our government, as outlined in the Speech from the Throne, is maternal, child, and newborn health, along with achieving real results for those living in poverty abroad by engaging private sector expertise.

Privilege

Notwithstanding that the NDP oppose Canadian businesses at every opportunity and refuse to support any of our initiatives, would the minister offer an update on his most recent engagement in Africa?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the excellent question.

I returned to Canada with great hope for a bright and self-sufficient future for Tanzanians. During my visit, I was able to underline Canada's full support in encouraging sustainable economic development to create prosperity in Africa, which will reduce poverty. On maternal, newborn, and child health, Canada is working to save thousands of mothers during pregnancy and childbirth as well as to prevent millions of children from dying before their fifth birthdays.

The theme of International Development Week this year is “We are making a difference”, and Canada certainly is.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Agriculture has made a fool of himself by using the Canadian charter to explain his government's lax approach in dealing with the porcine epidemic diarrhea issue.

In his view, respect for individual freedom would preclude the cleaning of trucks that cross the border. Pork producers have had enough obstacles to overcome over the past few years. There is no need for the minister to laugh at them too.

If there is one serious member in this government, could he or she confirm that biosecurity measures, such as truck cleaning, will be mandatory, as demanded by MAPAQ, the Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec, swine veterinarians in Quebec and, finally, the Government of Quebec?

Could anyone give an answer without invoking the Canadian charter to prevent the cleaning of trucks?

• (1200)

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this virus does not pose a risk to human health or food safety. However, the virus is certainly a serious risk for the industry. That is why our government has announced that the CFIA will issue permits to authorize the administration of the iPED+ vaccine to pigs. The minister has asked the CFIA to work with the provinces and assist them if necessary.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, Ivonne Hernandez, a victim of domestic abuse, spoke out against her attacker.

He allegedly demanded that she keep quiet and threatened to have her deported. Ms. Hernandez does not have status in Canada. She has a Canadian child with her husband. After March 6, she could be

deported and have her child taken away, because she dared to speak out against her abusive husband.

Will Canada protect this woman, or will it send a message to all women without documentation that they are at the mercy of their abusive spouse?

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I cannot discuss the actual details of this particular case, as it is before the courts, I would like to inform the members of this House and the Canadian public that Canada Border Services Agency's officers are mandated to remove those who violate our Canadian laws.

Again, it is my understanding that this is before the courts, that there has been a decision made, but I cannot discuss those details at this time.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA.

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 2012-2013 annual report of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

I am proud that the Government of Canada is able to support the commission's important work and I would like to acknowledge the achievements articulated within this year's annual report.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE**BILINGUALISM IN CANADA'S LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we heard a question of privilege from an NDP member with respect to a briefing that the Privy Council Office gave to members on the fair elections bill.

I spoke to my assistants to find out all of the details. The question of privilege was related to the interpretation services that are generally provided. The NDP members claimed that the service was not available.

I learned that instead of having professional interpreters, the representatives of the Privy Council Office gave their presentation in both official languages. These public servants were bilingual; some were bilingual anglophones, while others were bilingual francophones. This ensured that they were able to provide all the information in both of our national languages.

For briefings given to MPs and the media, all of the information sheets, press releases and the bill itself were provided in both official languages. The minister's office did not receive any complaints from the people there. I will add that the presentation given to the media, immediately after the one for the MPs, was very well received by those who attended. Furthermore, the francophone journalists had positive comments. I would like to share the comments that were made publicly by these francophone journalists.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how interesting to hear from the minister. It is unbelievable. He was here. He heard all of the problems and lapses that were observed during that briefing. That is not an option, and the minister has to understand that. It is not optional even if someone might be able to speak English or French. The member clearly told the minister that some questions were asked in just one language and that the answers were given in just one language. Both francophones and anglophones observed that.

The minister said that the departmental officials were bilingual, so that makes everything okay. That is completely irresponsible. That is not an option for him. Frankly, this is not the first time the government has done this kind of thing.

MPs cannot do their work if they do not understand the language. There is confusion not only with respect to the briefing on this bill, but also about the bill itself, which is not written properly.

It is unbelievable that the minister thinks it is optional for him to give information to members here in the House of Commons. Imagine if the anglophones here were given a briefing entirely in French, with questions and answers in French, and imagine the minister saying that is okay, it is not a problem.

Some francophone journalists commented on it, and that is enough. It is unbelievable. This minister seems unable to understand the rules. This kind of thing is not optional.

I had hoped the minister would have a good answer for us, or maybe an apology or an explanation about problems getting interpreters for the briefing or some other kind of problem for members, but here he is saying that there was no problem. This minister does not believe in bilingualism in the House or in government. Judging from his bill, he does not believe in this country's democracy either.

* * *

● (1205)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, entitled "Bill C-15, An Act to replace the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other Acts and certain orders and regulations".

Routine Proceedings

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House of Commons with amendments.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the various parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the hours of sitting and the order of business of the House on Thursday, February 27, 2014, shall be that of a Wednesday;

that the Address by His Highness the Aga Khan, to be delivered in the Chamber of the House of Commons at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014, before Members of the Senate and the House of Commons, together with all introductory and related remarks, be printed as an appendix to the House of Commons Debates for that day and form part of the records of this House; and

that the media recording and transmission of such address, introductory and related remarks be authorized pursuant to established guidelines for such occasions.

The Speaker: Does then 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)

* * *

PETITIONS

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents and Canadians from Alberta regarding impaired driving causing death. These citizens want to see tougher laws and the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentences for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death.

● (1210)

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition. It calls for the creation of a legislated ombudsman mechanism for responsible mining.

VIA RAIL

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of residents of New Brunswick, I present this petition to implore the Government of Canada to undertake all measures to reinstate daily round-trip VIA Rail passenger service between Montreal and Halifax through the cities of Campbellton, Bathurst, and Miramichi, New Brunswick. I note that this petition is presented in both official languages.

Government Orders

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to be kind of a pan-Canadian politician, as I think we all desire to be in this place, looking out for the good of all Canadians.

The first petition I present, like one that was previously presented, is with respect to the drunk driving laws. These petitioners from Nova Scotia indicate that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient. They want to see that changed and toughened up so that we have some new mandatory minimum sentences for persons convicted of impaired driving causing death. They want the Criminal Code to be changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death to vehicular manslaughter. They have some other good suggestions in their proposal as well.

It certainly is my privilege to present this good petition from citizens of Nova Scotia.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition from the other end of the country, Victoria, noting the fact that in our country sex selection is condemned by all of our national parties. The public is against it as well. The petitioners are offended by the fact that people can use an ultrasound to tell the sex of an unborn child and can terminate the pregnancy of that unborn child if it is a girl. They want a change in respect of that and a condemnation of that by all parties in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the last petition is similar, but it also specifically asks for a motion in the House, Motion No. 408, and it condemns sex selection when baby girls are aborted.

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions.

The first is from people in my riding representing the agency Development and Peace. They are calling for legislation to create an ombudsman position to ensure that mining projects are conducted responsibly. Of course, they are concerned about the actions and behaviour of Canadian mining companies abroad.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition concerns the need for a national public transit strategy. There is an urgent need, and Canada is already lagging far behind.

[*English*]

DEMENTIA

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted today to be presenting petitions from many of my constituents and other residents in Ottawa regarding what is now a nationally urgent matter, and that is a national strategy for dementia.

They want Parliament to pass Bill C-356, which was presented by my colleague from Sudbury. The petitioners want this measure to be passed because we need to initiate a discussion about this terrible

disease and have support from provinces by being coordinated with a national strategy by the Government of Canada.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Braid (Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

FAIR ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale has two minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the two minutes that I have left, I will make two points.

Something unique and seriously consequential to our electoral system and democracy was articulated yesterday by my colleague, the member for Calgary Centre-North. She was the singular voice so far in informing the members of the House of our responsibility to be always reaching out to Canadian citizens to participate in our democracy. We should be allowing Elections Canada to focus on those things that will assist all Canadians to vote and we should be reaching out to our constituents to give the a good reason to vote. I thought she articulated that very well yesterday.

Finally, I want to reaffirm the fact that this bill implements 38 of the recommendations that the Chief Electoral Officer made in his report on the 40th general election, which he tabled in June 2010. I would encourage all hon. members to join me in supporting this bill and in working toward its swift passage in the House.

● (1215)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the problems with this bill is that it is being put forward as a bill to deal with election fraud. It is true that it includes a number of recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer, but contained within the bill are some terrible provisions that would actually make it much more difficult for people to vote, and I want to ask the member about this aspect.

In my community, where there are homeless people and people who do not have ID, the vouching system has been very important, and it is very strictly applied.

Government Orders

In Bill C-23, the vouching system would be eliminated. I do not know if the member is aware, but in a riding like mine, that is going to disenfranchise thousands of people. I feel very suspicious about what this bill is actually about. It seems to be more about stopping people from voting and disempowering people than it is about encouraging people to vote.

I wonder if the member would respond by explaining why the vouching system was eliminated.

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we have to understand is that we have an obligation not only to make it easy for people to vote but make it secure for people to vote as well, in the sense that someone does not cast a vote that is not eligible and thereby cancels out somebody else's vote that is eligible.

In this case, vouching is one of the areas for which we have very serious empirical evidence. In vouching, errors happened 25% of the time, and even when there was extra effort put toward that situation, errors happened 21% of the time.

There are 39 different items that can be used for identification when people go to the polls and capitalize on their franchise to vote. The bill would also implement measures that would make it easier for people to vote, such as an extra day of advance polling, and would have Elections Canada focus on outreach to disabled people so that they know how they can vote and can go to places where it will be easy for them to do that.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

I have seen a lot of legislation come and go in this House in almost 17 years. I have participated in vigorous debates in the House where we have opposed legislation, and some occasions where we have supported government legislation.

However, I have to say that this particular bill before us today, Bill C-23, the so-called fair elections act, is something I feel angry about.

First of all, it is being debated under a closure motion. We have now had over 50 different times in this House that the Conservative government has used closure, in effect to limit and gag debate. That, in and of itself, is very offensive.

However, what I find very problematic about the bill is that Canadians are being told that it is a fair elections act and that it would deal with, for example, the election fraud that was so widespread in the last election.

Let us remember that it is the Conservative government and the Conservative Party who have the worst track record on breaking election laws in this country, whether it was the in-and-out scheme, or the robocalls that were designed to suppress opposition votes.

The guise of the bill is to deal with elections fraud. However, when we examine the bill, we can see that there are so many other elements of the bill that are designed to undermine the role of Elections Canada and the Chief Electoral Officer.

I have dealt with Elections Canada many times over the years, in six different elections. I have often heard criticisms about how the voting worked, particularly in my community, in the Downtown Eastside, where people are sometimes turned away from polls

because they do not have ID. I have had an ongoing relationship with Elections Canada and have pointed out concerns about lack of training and issues in my local community. I have always found them to be responsive to those issues when I have raised them after an election.

In fact, Elections Canada has a worldwide reputation as a first-rate organization and is used as a model globally of what an independent electoral organization can be.

It is very dismaying and concerning to see that the bill would in effect undermine the power of the Chief Electoral Officer. It would create a new entity. It would remove general public education.

In fact, in questions in the House this week, even today, we heard the minister for democratic reform blaming Elections Canada for a lower voter turnout.

This is a complex issue. To have this simple fix by removing the role of education and talking to voters about voting, whether it is young people, first nations, students, new Canadians, from the role of Chief Electoral Officer, it is inexplicable in terms of the rationale. One can only come to the conclusion that the current government has basically brought forward a bill—it did not even consult the Chief Electoral Officer, by the way—that would undermine the role and mandate and the foundations of Elections Canada.

That is one element in the bill that I think is hugely problematic.

The other element is that the bill would remove a number of provisions whereby people who are not normally on the electors list and have difficulty voting, because they do not have the proper ID, would now find it very difficult, if not near impossible, to vote. I am speaking in particular about what is called the “vouching system”.

This is something that various organizations in east Vancouver have used extensively. For example, we had lawyers on East Hastings Street who would help people determine whether they were on the voters list. They would help them figure out whether they had enough ID, and if they did not, they would help them in the process of what was called an “affidavit vote”.

All of that would be removed.

We used to have the vouching system, where somebody who knew somebody in the community who was homeless or on the street but eligible to vote, a Canadian citizen, living in Vancouver, who was 19 years of age, would make sure that information was provided to people.

● (1220)

There were many organizations that did an incredible service in vouching for people, by saying, for example, “Yes, we know that person. They come to the Carnegie Centre at Main and Hastings every day. We know who that person is, and they should be able to vote”. On that basis, a person was able to demonstrate their eligibility and would be able to vote. Sometimes there were problems, and the deputy returning officers would turn people away. There were issues and we did follow them up. However, the system of vouching has been an important democratic tool for people in my community to be able to vote.

Government Orders

In a previous Parliament, Bill C-31 severely restricted the vouching system. I fought tooth and nail against that. I thought it was a terrible proposition. Again, it was designed to hurt people, particularly those of low income.

Now we get to Bill C-23 and the vouching system is completely eliminated. I feel extremely worried about the impact that will have in the next federal election, in 2015, as there were about 100,000 people who used the vouching system in the last election.

We have just heard from one member that there was a 25% error rate and therefore it is a terrible system that has to be thrown out. However, if one reads the details, one would find that most of the errors occurred because there was a lack of adequate training for poll clerks and deputy returning officers in administering the vouching system. Therefore, it is a question of better training.

The bill would throw out the whole system. I feel we are now setting up an election process that has two-tiers. If one is a property owner, one is guaranteed to be on the voters list, to get a voter card in the mail. A property owner would probably have a driver's licence or some other identification, and there would not be an issue. However, in Vancouver, 50% of residents are not property owners. They are tenants, students, low-income families, seniors, and people who may move because the housing costs are so high people. People are always seeking more affordable housing. Those people end up not being on the voters list, not getting the information they require. Therefore, having provisions that would allow people to be eligible to vote on election day, even if they are not on the list, is extremely important.

I am very distressed about Bill C-23.

If we look at this historically, we have come far on a spectrum of disenfranchising people. I do not know about other members in this House, but I remember the days when people could walk down their street and see the voters list tacked up on the telephone poll. People could look at the list and see if they were on it. I remember the days when an enumerator would come door to door asking who lived in the household, who was eligible to vote. They would go through the criteria and people would get registered. All of that is gone. However, it was not the current government that did that; it was a Liberal government.

I want to make this point because I think it shows us how much our electoral system has been eroded in terms of its primary function, which is to enfranchise people who are eligible to vote, and to make sure they have the information, tools, and the system in place to make that process smooth and as accessible as possible. The key word is "accessible".

We have come so far along that road. Here we are debating the bill on the opening day of the Olympics. Who the heck is even going to be watching this debate? The Conservatives brought in a closure motion yesterday, so we have a few hours of debate and the bill will be rushed off to committee. Before Canadians even know what is happening, the bill will be approved, yet it would impact every single voter in this country.

I am very glad that as many members of the NDP as possible are taking the opportunity to speak about the bill, to get the information to the public, and alert people that Bill C-23 is not a fair elections

act. The bill is actually about voter suppression. It is about gagging the Chief Elector Officer. It is about undermining a democratic election system.

This is a thoroughly bad bill, and we will do everything we can to stop it.

● (1225)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the member for standing on a Friday afternoon to defend democracy. When we look at Canada, we are like a referee around the world. We monitor elections.

It is with great shock that we saw what happened in the last election. It happened in my riding. People were told to go to the wrong polling booths. We had misinformation, and it was quite shocking.

Does the member perceive that what the Conservatives are doing is hypocritical? Is it a smokescreen to take the heat off what happened in the last election? Is this legislation going to do anything to stop what happened in the last election, in my riding and many ridings, across the country?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member has some of the same concerns I have, that the bill is not going to stop the kind of fraud we have seen in terms of robocalls. We hope that it does. The problem is that within the bill there are so many elements that are going to suppress voters. I would agree with the member. Elections Canada has a fantastic international reputation; it does monitor elections around the world. However, we are here undermining the very institution that other people try to model.

Yesterday in the debate some of the Conservatives members said they wanted to have a truly independent commissioner and investigator, as though we do not have that now, as though Elections Canada is not an independent organization. What causes us so much concern is that the bill is designed to give a government, with its conservative ideology, more control over the electoral process. That has to be bad. This is not about a temporary change; this is a permanent change that would take place in this country in terms of the way Elections Canada operates and the way voting takes place. That is why it is such a serious debate.

● (1230)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I first went to the briefing on this piece of legislation, I was very impressed. I looked at the opportunities to move the issues around compliance to the Director of Public Prosecutions, which made perfect sense. I looked at the issues around robocalls and moving that under the CRTC. I heard the interview where the former chief electoral officer gave it an A minus. I want to congratulate my hon. colleague, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform, for the very excellent work he has done on this piece of legislation.

Government Orders

I think my colleague who just spoke has not looked at the piece of legislation in terms of the whole picture of what it would do for fairness in our system. I would like her to talk about the issue of voter fraud and how important it is that we have 29 pieces of ID, I believe, that would be acceptable. Could the member speak about the important role that maybe she will have as a member of Parliament, as will I, who perhaps will run in the next election, in partnership with Elections Canada, to let people know where they can vote, how they can vote, and the pieces of identification they will need.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would point out that the former chief electoral officer who gave it an A minus has moved off that now that he has looked at the bill in detail. When he comes to committee, it might be a different story.

However, let us talk about election fraud. There is election fraud. There is fraud everywhere, whether it is in the banks, in the insurance companies, wherever it is. We have systems in place to deal with that. However, when we bring in a sledgehammer and knock out a whole group of people from voting, in effect, then we are not dealing with fraud; we are actually disenfranchising people.

That is the problem. It is something that underlies so much government legislation from the Conservatives. They perceive a problem and they take this sledgehammer approach that ends up causing harm to people's rights and accessibility, whether it is health care, voting, or whatever it might be. That is the problem. There is fraud, but the system is there already to deal with that, and there is nothing wrong with it.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this will be quick. Right from the very beginning with this bill, we have been getting something that has become customary from the government over the years. When I walked by where the announcement was made, over a blue background was written "Fair Elections Act". Even the naming and propaganda is entirely wrong in the way the government has approached this.

This is the Government of Canada and it should be seen as such, rather than trying to propagandize the way it does. Would the member not agree?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, I do agree. The government has a responsibility to bring in legislation based on the public interest, but here we have a government that has an unfortunate pattern of bringing in legislation based on its own partisan political interests.

Nothing more clearly demonstrates this than this particular legislation. It is not about a fair elections act, it is about voter suppression and undermining Elections Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am truly honoured to rise today to speak to Bill C-23.

To begin, I would like to point out that as soon as the minister introduced his bill, all potential for non-partisan debate went out the window. I will explain why.

The minister is trying to justify the relevance and validity of his bill by casting doubt on the impartiality of a democratic institution that is accountable to Parliament and that, by its very existence and creation, must be impartial.

When the minister said that the Chief Electoral Officer should not wear a team jersey, that not only made Canadians question whether there are some flaws in the bill, but it also made them question the impartiality of the electoral system as a whole.

It is unacceptable that the Minister of State for Democratic Reform is treating Canadians and our democratic and electoral institutions so condescendingly. That is no way for a minister to act. Despite my respect for him, I want to make my point because a minister must show respect for our institutions, not attack them.

After hearing the minister's comments, the Chief Electoral Officer gave this response:

Listen, the only team jersey that I think I'm wearing—if we have to carry the analogy—I believe is the one with the stripes, white and black. What I know from this bill is that no longer will the referee be on the ice.

This bill should be making the electoral system more democratic and transparent. My speech will demonstrate that, instead, it will completely destroy all of our institutions. I acknowledge that the bill includes some interesting points that we do not object to. I will not talk about those aspects, however, because I believe my colleagues have already done a good job of highlighting them.

Canadians deserve better. The Conservative Party's problem is that it has lost Canadians' trust. The record of its nine years in power goes something like this: in and out scandal, fraudulent calls, Senate scandals. The people of Canada and Quebec no longer trust this government.

This bill once again shows that the Conservatives have absolutely no intention of improving our democratic system or making our institutions more transparent. As the official opposition, it is our duty to highlight the flaws in the Conservatives' bill.

The minister can rhyme off all the statistics he wants. His job was to consult the opposition parties and the Chief Electoral Officer. Statistics Canada does not give him licence to hide or shirk his responsibilities.

Let us not forget that there was a cabinet shuffle. We have been waiting for this bill for two years. It is finally here, but there was no consultation. The minister can try to have us believe that there was. That is true, but I do not think he engaged in the type of consultation that should have been done to make such radical and important changes to such a fundamental aspect of our Canadian democracy as our electoral system. I do not need to tell you how extremely important this is.

● (1235)

In 2015, I know that Canadians and Quebecers are going to vote for change and kick out this government that is worn down by fraud and scandals. This bill shows that the government cannot even let people decide for themselves anymore. They want to control the Chief Electoral Officer and Canadians. It is atrocious. I am outraged as I stand before the government to tell Canadians that it is time for a change.

Government Orders

Unfortunately, the government is refusing once again to allow Canadians to decide for themselves. The Minister of State for Democratic Reform tells us that young people do not vote, which is true. He shared statistics showing that fewer and fewer young people have been voting in recent years.

Why, then, prevent a democratic institution known by all Canadians from encouraging people to exercise their right to vote?

None of the minister's statistics can justify this measure. This is nothing but nonsense and lies, because the fundamental role of Elections Canada is to encourage people to vote, to exercise their right to vote.

Why are the Conservatives taking away Elections Canada's investigative powers? They are not happy with how Elections Canada's decisions and investigations have affected them. It is as simple as that. They can say that my speech was lacking facts and statistics, but there are no facts or statistics to justify this bill and this reform of the electoral system.

Every time I rise in this House, my colleagues accuse me of being too partisan and not presenting any actual facts in my speech. That is the only thing they can find to fault me for, because there are no facts or statistics that justify taking away the Commissioner of Canada Elections' investigative powers.

No matter what they say, they cannot justify that the Commissioner of Canada Elections will no longer be part of an independent democratic institution, but will instead be under the Attorney General of Canada. The government appoints the Attorney General of Canada. That is fine, but why take an impartial investigative body that was transparent, democratic and accountable to Parliament and have it report to the Attorney General, who is appointed by the government? Is there a reason that is not ideological and completely partisan?

We have known for a long time that the government really likes to emulate the underhanded tactics of the Republican Party in the United States. Several Conservative members are enrolling in Karl Rove's summer school. Karl Rove is George W. Bush's American strategist, known for his master strokes in committing election fraud. Perhaps it is time to let go of the "Rovian" ideology that brought our Pierre Poutine into the world.

I will not talk about the team jersey, as did the Minister of State for Democratic Reform, who is trying to make us believe that there are plots everywhere. We must look at the Prime Minister's Office first, because that is where the plots come from.

Federal Court Justice Richard Mosley said that striking at the integrity of the electoral process by attempting to dissuade voters from casting ballots for their preferred candidates is a form of vote suppression. The Conservatives can go ahead and call me names and say that I have no evidence. That is what they are doing.

I would simply like to ask Canadians who are watching today to understand that the sole intent of this partisan piece of legislation is to favour the Conservatives. Regardless of the statistics the Conservatives might get from Statistics Canada, those numbers cannot in any way justify the destruction of a democratic and transparent institution.

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am listening to my colleague's speech, and it strikes me that it is not the bill that is partisan, but a speech like that is partisan. It would be more profitable to the House and to Canadians if the member actually made some well-reasoned suggestions on how to improve the act, rather than just launching ideological attacks.

Just as an example, the commissioner, whose responsibility it is to enforce the law, would now be under the public prosecutor. He would be completely independent and he would act accordingly to enforce the law. That is not a partisan move. That is actually a good move, and a move toward accountability. We would like the Chief Electoral Officer to focus on the administration of running elections and ensuring that Canadians have the information they need to vote and to vote properly; so they know where to vote, when to vote, and what identification to bring when they vote.

That is not ideological either. These are very practical, concrete suggestions that are contained within this bill, and I would like to hear her comment on that and the fact that this would improve elections here in Canada.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, if the government really wanted our opinion and that of the Chief Electoral Officer, it would have consulted us before introducing the bill.

We made some proposals, we had some motions adopted and my hon. colleague from Toronto—Danforth introduced a bill before Parliament. Unfortunately, the Conservatives will not listen to anyone else. I am sorry, but that is no excuse.

The member asked me a question, so I would like him to listen to my answer. The Chief Electoral Officer himself has even said that he laments the loss of his freedom of expression.

Why is it that he will no longer be allowed to speak to the media or inform the public about an investigation into fraudulent activities? Why is the government no longer allowing the freedom of expression of an impartial, democratic institution?

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the first of the member's remarks, she accused the government of being infused with scandal and fraud, and I would definitely agree. There was the in-and-out scandal, and the Conservatives paid a fine in that one; and there is the electoral robocalls scandal. That is just to name two.

However, the really serious part of the act relates to basically cutting the legs out from under Elections Canada itself, by separating the commissioner and putting it under public prosecutions. Let us not fool ourselves; that is really under the Attorney General.

Government Orders

To give an example of what could happen, a few years down the road it might be a different Attorney General. It could be somebody named Pierre, or something like that. Can members imagine the commissioner calling? He might say, “Yes, hello, Pierre; we have one of your members who sits three rows back behind you there, who we believe may be caught in election fraud. Should we press charges?”

Come on. What would happen here, under this, is that they would put the fox in charge of the chicken coop, if I could put it that way. The people who are involved in the wrongdoing would have a say as to whether there are charges laid. That is not the way to protect our election system in this country. Could the member confirm that?

The Speaker: The parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, the member might table the section of the act specifically that states what he just said. I wonder if he would table that for us, so that we could have better—

The Speaker: Order, please. That sounded a bit more like debate. I believe the bill is before the House, so there is no need to table it. Perhaps the section is contained in the bill. It is probably a good point for a future question and comment, or for another opportunity to debate, but not on a point of order.

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, investigations by the Chief Electoral Officer will no longer necessarily be a priority. This is like taking away the RCMP's power to investigate Criminal Code offences.

Not only will the Chief Electoral Officer no longer be transparently and democratically accountable to Parliament, but he also will no longer be able to talk about potential investigations or fraudulent activities. He is being stripped of not only his integrity, but also his freedom of expression.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to stand and address the House today on the fair elections act.

I want to inform the House that there are a lot of great things in the fair elections act. All of us have been talking about the need to crack down on rogue callers, impersonations, and people who have committed fraud, and we want to make sure those things are cleared up.

We also want to talk about modernizing, making some minor increases in donations, again focusing on those small donations and keeping out unions, businesses, and big corporations, so they do not take over the financing of political parties, local candidates, and their campaigns.

We want to make sure we continue to uphold free speech, provide better customer service, and increase voter opportunities to participate in the electoral process.

I do want to focus on my recent ordeal with Elections Canada, which I had to go through over the last 14 months. As I have said

right from the beginning, my legitimate right to take my place here in the House of Commons as the elected member of Parliament for Selkirk—Interlake was never in question. The writ came in. It is secure. I was overwhelmingly supported by the constituents of Selkirk—Interlake.

We have to remember that the dispute was about my campaign election return and the financing of that campaign. It came down, specifically, to my member of Parliament highway signs. At the get-go, I just want to say I am a member of Parliament who represents a riding that is geographically larger than Nova Scotia. It is necessary, as members of Parliament, to try to reach out to our constituents in every way possible.

I used highway signs, large billboards that I own, paid for with my operating budget. These signs were built over a number of years, going back to 2005. We used different contractors and different materials. It creates a little confusion about the invoices: who did what, what sign is in what location, and which sign is made out of what? That became a bit confusing for everyone involved: Elections Canada, my campaign, and even my office, in trying to provide all the details and going over that timeframe.

Elections Canada knew about those signs. In 2008, we claimed those signs in our return on a formula that had been discussed with local Elections Canada officials and through the audit process. Not only did Elections Canada know about those signs in the 2008 general election, but it determined that they were not a campaign expense and moved them out of our return into a non-contribution expense to the campaign.

That, in itself, provided us with some idea of what Elections Canada was thinking about member of Parliament signs back in 2008.

In 2011, we used the same formula because we thought it was okay. It had been audited and approved in our official return of 2008. Then there started to be some questions, back and forth, with Elections Canada.

While we were able to provide Elections Canada with the information detail it needed, all of sudden the Chief Electoral Officer made the decision that it wanted all production costs in, even though the other formula we had before was approved in the past.

This speaks to why we need to have a rule system that everybody can follow and that cannot be changed on a whim. If it has been accepted in one election, then there needs to be proper notification if it is going to be changed in the future. We thought we were within the rules.

Based on hearing it was not applicable, we looked at the Elections Canada campaign handbook. In there is the guideline that says:

Some signs can be used for more than one election. If a campaign...in a second or subsequent election, the amount that the official agent shall record as a non-monetary contribution or transfer from an election expense is the current commercial value for similar signs. If the campaign refurbishes, restores or repaints used signs, the value that the official agent should record is the amount it would cost to purchase a sign similar to the restored sign.

Government Orders

That is right out of the handbook. The Chief Electoral Officer said no, even though we were able to prove what a commercial sign would cost using our own experience from recovering and refurbishing those signs and having those production costs right there. He refused it, even though that is what I filed in our corrected return on May 5.

• (1250)

That subsequently resulted in his writing to you, Mr. Speaker, saying that I should not be allowed to sit for a vote in the House of Commons.

It is an affront to democracy when the Chief Electoral Officer tries to take away the voice of the people of Selkirk—Interlake. He tried to quash the democratic will of the constituents of Selkirk—Interlake. That should never be allowed to happen unless something extremely fraudulent arises that tampers with the election result. When we are having a dispute over accounting practices, an interpretation of guidelines, and the act, that should be resolved in a formal discussion process between Elections Canada and our campaigns.

Let us remember that our campaigns are run by volunteers. The local Elections Canada staff are temporary staff. They are there just during the writ period. It becomes quite difficult to have a discussion with Elections Canada in Ottawa when it is overturning everything that is happening at the local level.

Just to make things clear, we were able to settle this dispute out of court. Even though I did exercise my right under the act to pursue this in a court of law, we were able to resolve it out of court.

Elections Canada accepted the commercial value of my signs, which we submitted on May 5, at \$518 per sign, and I was under my expense limit. The difference between the return I filed on May 5 and the return we filed last month was only \$458.

Let me repeat that. For \$458, and when I was below my Elections Canada allowable expense limits for my campaign and for me personally, I would have been removed from this House of Commons because of a cynical question of privilege that was dealt with through the procedure and House affairs committee.

The bill is about making a change, through the fair elections act, to respect democracy and respect voters wishes and to try to resolve these administrative issues without having to be bullied or forced into embarrassing situations. This is about tarnishing one's reputation, especially when other members in this place and in the media start making accusations that have no basis whatsoever. We want to make sure that changes.

One of changes, which I think all of us should support, would be modernizing Elections Canada. Right now Elections Canada is the only government agency where all the powers are concentrated in the hands of one person. It is very monolithic.

Elections Canada is the administrator, the educator, the adviser, the adjudicator, and the enforcer. I do not know of any other government agency that has everything wrapped up in one monolithic structure without an appeal mechanism. In every organization we have, whether it is CRA, government departments, ombudsmen, who are independent, appeal boards, tax courts, and

things like that, people have their rights protected, but not under Elections Canada.

I really feel, through my personal experience, that some of my rights were not respected, not just here in the House but in the course of due process and the rule of law.

The bill would split the elections commissioner from the Chief Electoral Officer and make two independent bodies. We have to remember that currently not only does the Commissioner of Canada Elections have to report to the CEO but his staff, for all actions, are under the control of the Chief Electoral Officer. It is important that we provide independence and a situation whereby they work not only independently but without bias and that they are able to make the correct decisions on enforcing these rules.

We would be providing more power to the commissioner to punish true fraud and rule-breaking. As the Minister of State (Democratic Reform) has said, the legislation gives sharper teeth, a longer reach, and a freer hand to the commissioner.

• (1255)

I want to close by saying that we should look at what I have gone through and why it is important that we need to change it. It can happen to any one of us over a dispute about something as small as \$500. It should never happen that any one of us could be taken out of here and the will of our constituents not be respected.

• (1300)

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found my hon. colleague's speech quite revealing. It seemed that he was using the opportunity to in some way defend himself against the letter written by the Chief Electoral Officer.

I am not sure why he believes that taking the commissioner of elections out of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and putting him under the ministry of justice is suddenly going to change the situation he has described. The reality is that when elections occur, there are rules. The Chief Electoral Officer was ensuring that everyone followed those rules, and he had cause to be concerned that those rules had not been followed and was perfectly within his authority to send a letter to the Speaker.

What is really required are the teeth that my colleague is talking about. That is where the government has singularly failed to come up with the kind of legislation we need. What matters is not moving the commissioner out of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, but giving him more teeth.

What are those teeth he is talking about?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that the Chief Electoral Officer was just following the rules. Yesterday, the Chief Electoral Officer appeared at the procedure and House affairs committee and was asked by the member for Winnipeg North on a number of occasions how many times he had had to send a letter to the Speaker requesting that the House not allow a member to sit or vote. He revealed that he has only done it a couple of times. He says it is a common practice and something that has been going on since this rule came into effect in 2001.

Government Orders

I can tell the House that his answer is revealing. It has only been done twice, with me and the member for Saint Boniface. That was revealing, as it only happened in one month out of that entire 14 years. That is disturbing in itself.

Usually, Elections Canada—

The Speaker: I will stop the member there because I see other members rising.

The hon. member for York South—Weston.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member opposite, but I heard him suggest to the House that the Chief Electoral Officer bullied him. As was the case in Toronto with the mayor when he was threatened with removal from office, the law is a clumsy and sometimes forceful animal, so if the law says the mandatory minimum for a particular breach is a letter to the Speaker saying a person cannot sit, then the Chief Electoral Officer was merely acting according to the law. That is not bullying.

I regret that the government seems to have taken the same position as a hockey team would when it does not agree with the decision of a referee and does not like the referee, but most hockey teams do not have the authority to remove the referee and fire him. However, that seems to be what the government is doing in response to this activity.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, the Chief Electoral Officer is not the referee but the scorekeeper. The referee is the commissioner. Let us make sure that we get the game straight: the scorekeeper should not be interceding in these affairs.

Yes, I do feel like I was bullied and intimidated. On page 113 of O'Brien and Bosc, Speaker Bosley is cited as saying:

The intimidation by government officials of Members and their staff in carrying out their parliamentary functions has been considered a *prima facie* breach of privilege.

Therefore, it is our right to be here and government officials should not intimidate us as members of Parliament in doing our jobs.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that members opposite understand the current system right now. The commissioner of elections does not lay a charge; it is the Director of Public Prosecutions who lays charges under the Canada Elections Act currently. I would point to a case in 2013, where a Liberal candidate did not file an election return. All we are doing is formalizing that relationship.

In this act, the CEO of Elections Canada cannot direct an investigation, but he can still seek it from the elections commissioner. Is that not true?

• (1305)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that the Chief Electoral Officer can refer cases, or things that he thinks should be investigated, to the commissioner, and the commissioner would have more power and more opportunities to investigate and charge individuals who violate the act.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege and pleasure to join the discussion on a bill that is very important to all Canadians. Bill C-23, purportedly the

fair elections act, seems to improve in some ways the electoral system for all Canadians, but in other ways there are some significant shortcomings.

The good news is that after repeated calls by our party, repeated promises by the government, and repeated pleas from Elections Canada, the government has finally tabled a bill. We hope the bill will proceed and that it becomes law before the next election. Of course, only the Prime Minister knows exactly when that will be.

We are pleased that the bill is finally before us, but what we are not pleased with is that the government has called closure on this very extensive bill. The current Canada Elections Act is over 300 pages long. These amendments are comparable in length. It is clearly a complex bill and one of great importance to all Canadians in ensuring that they have equal rights to vote and that any voter fraud is prevented, first and foremost, and then responded to.

Now we have this fast-tracked debate. I will do my best in my 10 minutes to raise some of the issues that have been raised by Canadians.

What is equally important, though, is that it is one thing to pass a law but another thing to put in place the administrative system so that the law will be in place and that Canadians will actually be supported to vote.

There are a number of measures in the bill. As a former enforcer, I am pleased that the government has chosen to increase the penalties to \$50,000. We had proposed \$500,000 because there are some egregious potential offences under this law, and Elections Canada had called for \$250,000. It is nice to have an increase, but regrettably, the proposed penalties remain too low.

Some of the proposed measures that are causing concern are the changes to the powers and the mandate of Elections Canada. One of those areas is the power of Elections Canada to promote electoral engagement, to encourage and enable Canadians to vote.

The bill would significantly narrow the education mandate of the head of Elections Canada. Right now, that mandate is very broad. For example, he can implement public education information programs in order to make the electoral process better known to the public, particularly to persons who experience difficulties in exercising their voting rights.

He may also use any means to provide the public, inside or outside of Canada, with information on the electoral process. That is being removed. As well, the educational mandate of the Chief Electoral Officer would be significantly reduced. It would be reduced to simply letting people know where, when, and how to vote. It is definitely a step backwards.

One of the most important measures we need to take is to encourage Canadians to vote and to tell them ways that would make it easier for them to be enumerated. Then, when they get to the polls, they have to be able to exercise their right to vote.

I am very concerned about this backpedalling.

Government Orders

Voter disengagement is a very serious problem as well. The government, in its wisdom, because it had found a relatively higher error in vouchers, has therefore decided it will just throw the baby out with the bathwater. However, we are told that the reason some vouchers were judged invalid was simply that elections officers lacked experience, not that the person seeking the voucher support was unqualified to vote.

As a result, we are very deeply concerned. That measure would potentially disenfranchise more than a hundred thousand voters, particularly youth and first nations. At a time when we are trying to get youth more engaged in elections, we should not be increasing barriers to their voting rights.

I can certainly testify to the many incidents we found in my own riding when I ran for office. Not only students but also many long-time residents found that they had not been enumerated or had been put on the wrong list. They spent the day running from voting poll to voting poll. Some just gave up and were not able to vote.

With regard to students, in many cases advance polls are held during exams, which makes it difficult for students to get to those polls, or are held in places with no bus service. My volunteers actually set up a votemobile that helped students, no matter how they were voting, to get to those polls.

• (1310)

Therefore, there are a lot of very pragmatic measures as well as legal changes that the country really has to dedicate itself to.

The government in its wisdom says it is going to add additional days to vote, but student exam time, as I am sure the parliamentary pages will testify, spans quite a long time period. They will be so preoccupied with trying to get the best marks possible and a good job when they graduate that they may be distracted. We need to make sure that those advance polls are readily available to students who are studying and can vote.

One area that I want to speak to in particular is the enforcement regime. In speaking to this legislation, government members have said that it would implement a system that would ensure a more effective enforcement compliance regime. Nothing could be further from the truth. The government is going to move the office of the commissioner into the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, but strangely, this will be the only enforcement office reporting to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

I fully applaud the government for understanding the important concept of separating the administrative and the permitting functions of a government regulatory agency from the enforcement and compliance functions. The norm in this country for quite some time has been for the enforcement and compliance entity to report to the relevant minister, and in this case it would be the Chief Electoral Officer. There is absolutely no rational reason for moving this office to the office of the public prosecutor.

I would like to point out that the mandate of the Director of Public Prosecutions has not been changed whatsoever. His mandate already includes advising law enforcement agencies or investigative bodies in respect of prosecutions. He does not advise them in the course of investigations; that is still the duty and function of the investigative unit of Elections Canada.

Personnel in an enforcement office should be well informed on the legislation they are going to enforce, in this case the elections act, and also well informed and trained in investigative and enforcement mechanisms. In this case, we would be separating the commissioner for elections completely from the office of elections. As I understand it, the government wants to make sure that the commissioner has not been employed by Elections Canada. This is possibly a big mistake. We need to make sure there is a closer linkage. That is a deep concern to me.

In addition, this legislation would not deliver the new enforcement powers that the Chief Electoral Officer has understandably called for. As a former enforcement officer, I fully understand why he has asked to have the power to compel witnesses to come forward and to provide testimony, and the power to demand financial documents from political parties. It is absolutely absurd that investigators, in order to do an effective investigation, will need to seek a court order each time they want information or approach someone to provide important information. That barrier is not in place for any other regulatory enforcement agency. The government is taking a step backward rather than a step forward to ensure effective enforcement.

Secondly, the government is not talking about having an enforcement and compliance strategy and policy for more effective and consistent delivery of its powers. We heard a Conservative member complaining about how he felt he was being prejudicially treated by Elections Canada in its exercise of its powers. The best remedy for that is to have a public and consistent enforcement and compliance policy.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we heard the member for Selkirk—Interlake's story earlier.

I have a question on some of the problems under the elections act that need to be solved.

I had an incident in my riding in the last election as well. The chief of staff of former minister of public safety Vic Toews spent three weeks in my riding working on the campaign. He lived in a basement, yet we know he is paid \$160,000 per year—

An. hon. member: It is leave without pay.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I do not know, because we never applied under access to information whether or not he was on leave while he was there.

The fact of the matter is that we knew that through a minister's office that a certain candidate in an election was being targeted.

Is there any way under the elections act that should be covered?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Wayne Easter: I hear heckling from the other side, Mr. Speaker. I know the name. I know where he stayed. I know what he was being paid, when he was on official salary, and I know my riding was targeted.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: And he was unpaid.

• (1315)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, we do not know that for sure. We will check.

I wonder if there is or should be any way of dealing with that kind of thing, or do we just accept it as it is?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, a number of personal cases have arisen in the House concerning how certain members feel that they or their colleagues' campaigns were targeted. I cannot speak specifically to what measure would be in place, but I would hope that giving extended powers to the Chief Electoral Officer or the commissioner of elections would enable those matters to be investigated.

One thing we absolutely need to make sure of is that there is no political interference in the delivery of elections.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her speech and point out that the Conservative Party is hurting our democracy. There have been over 50 time allocation motions, and one of them is for Bill C-23.

My colleague talked about the new voter identification rules that will prevent thousands of people from voting. Because of this bill, a person willing to vouch for someone they know and who is entitled to vote will not be able to do so.

Can my colleague explain to the government how this bill can possibly be democratic and protect the rights of those who are far away?

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, one area I did not have a chance to speak to, and an area that the hon. member mentioned, is that our legislation and policy at the federal level should absolutely move toward ensuring that all Canadians have the right to vote and that they are enabled to do so.

One of the powers that would be removed from Elections Canada is its ability to contact first nations band offices to offer assistance in organizing on-reserve voting and to make sure that staff are available. From my own personal experience in having gone to the Samson band prior to an election, I saw that this assistance helped to bring them out and it helped them to identify that their elders could not get access to polls, so the chief made a bus available. Radio announcements were also provided so that people knew exactly when and where to vote.

I am very deeply concerned that instead of moving forward to give even more powers to Elections Canada to engage and inform electors, this bill would reduce them.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague touched on some of the new powers that she was hoping to see in this bill. I wonder if she might comment on some of the powers that actually would be given to the commissioner. These powers would include steeper fines, as she mentioned. They would also include fines or penalties related to political financing rules; to

registration on polling day and advance polling day; to non-compliance with the proposed voter contact registry and failing to keep scripts and recordings, which is at the heart of the robocall investigations; and to voter deception.

There are a number of areas where we would give the commissioner more powers. I wonder if the member would comment on those areas as well.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the penalty provisions would be extended to those kinds of offences. The problem is that the necessary powers to investigate those offences would not be extended to the officers. Therefore, the government can have all the penalties it wants, but if officers cannot investigate properly, they are not going to bring forward any charges.

• (1320)

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today to Bill C-23, the fair elections act, introduced by the Minister of State for Democratic Reform.

Let me start by saying that the fair elections act would ensure everyday citizens are in charge of democracy, by putting special interests on the sidelines and rule-breakers out of business.

The bill would also make it harder to break election laws. It would close loopholes to big money, impose new penalties on political impostors who make rogue calls, and empower law enforcement with sharper teeth, a longer reach, and a freer hand.

The fair elections act would, among many things, protect voters from rogue calls, with a mandatory public registry for mass calling, prison time for impersonating elections officials, and increased penalties.

Second, it would give more independence to the Commissioner of Elections Canada, allowing him or her control over staff and investigations, empowering him or her to seek tougher penalties for existing electoral offences, and providing more than a dozen new offences to combat big money, rogue calls, and fraudulent voting.

The act would also crack down on voter fraud by prohibiting vouching or voter information cards as acceptable forms of identification.

It would also make the rules for elections clear, predictable, and easier to follow.

The act would also ban the use of loans used to evade donation rules.

It would further repeal the ban on premature transmission of election results, thereby upholding free speech.

It would provide better customer service to voters and establish an extra day of advance polling.

Also, in the case of disagreements over election expenses, it would allow a member of Parliament to present the disputed case in the courts and to have judges quickly rule on it before the CEO seeks a member of Parliament's suspension.

Government Orders

This last provision, ensuring that democratic elections are respected, will be the focus of my remarks today.

Members of Parliament and the Chief Electoral Officer sometimes disagree on an MP's election expense return. When that happens, the Canada Elections Act provides that the MP can no longer sit or vote in the House of Commons until the expense return is changed to the CEO's satisfaction. The removal of a democratically elected member of Parliament reverses the decision of tens of thousands of voters. No one should have the power to reverse a democratic election without first convincing a judge.

Subsection 463(2) of the act currently provides for the following:

An elected candidate who fails to provide a document as required by section 451 or 455 or fails to make a correction as requested under subsection 457(2) or authorized by 458(1) shall not continue to sit or vote as a member until they are provided or made, as the case may be.

In other words, if an MP has not provided his or her election expense return within a prescribed deadline or has failed to make a correction to the return requested by the Chief Electoral Officer, the act states that a member cannot vote or sit.

A provision requiring that members not be eligible to sit if they are late in filing a return has existed in the act since at least 1920. Provisions governing corrections to returns were first introduced in 2000, at which point the provision in subsection 463(2) was extended to cases where members have refused to make corrections requested by the Chief Electoral Officer.

All members will agree that this is an extraordinary provision, as it can prevent an MP from exercising his or her parliamentary duties and from representing his or her constituents. This provision provides a powerful incentive for MPs to ensure their returns are filed in time and to ensure their returns are accurate. However, we have to keep in mind that the suspension of a democratically elected MP reverses the decision of tens of thousands of voters.

It is essential, therefore, that the law be clear on how such a suspension should be applied. Any ambiguity from the process ought to be removed. Unfortunately, as we saw in two cases this spring, it is not clear how this aspect of the law ought to be applied.

• (1325)

Mr. Speaker, on June 18, 2013, you ruled that there was considerable ambiguity in both the act and in the procedures of the House of Commons.

The Speaker ruled as follows:

The current situation—and the various interventions on the matter—points to a serious gap in our procedures here in the House in cases where an impasse is reached in a dispute between a member and Elections Canada. The Canada Elections Act provides that the Chief Electoral Officer inform the Speaker when key milestones have been reached in the course of a dispute. Thus, as I explained earlier, I received a letter from the Chief Electoral Officer informing me that a member had not complied with his request for corrections and informing me of the suspension provision of the act applicable in the circumstances. Also, while elsewhere in the act there are provisions for a member in those circumstances to apply to the courts for relief, the act is silent on the effect of such an appeal on the suspension provision.

He continues:

I am not the only one left with questions about how to respond to this situation. Some argue that the provisions in subsection 463(2) demand immediate action—namely, the suspension of a member who has not complied with the Chief Electoral Officer in his application of subsection 457(2) of the Canada Elections Act—even as

they acknowledge that there is no procedure for operationalizing such a suspension. Others hold that since the Canada Elections Act provides for an application for relief from the provision in subsection 457(2), any suspension is held in abeyance until the court makes its decision.

It is clear that there is considerable ambiguity as to how the provision of the act ought to be applied. The procedure and House affairs committee has been reviewing this issue and may come forward with proposals to change the Standing Orders to clarify how the House deals with such issues.

While the fair elections act cannot propose procedures for the House to apply this provision, it could seek to remove the ambiguity in the law. The fair elections act would allow an MP to present the disputed case in the courts and to have judges rule on it before the CEO seeks the suspension of the MP.

To avoid long delays in resolving disputes, the MP would have just two weeks to apply to a judge to resolve the matter. The courts can treat such cases through an expedited hearing, which would allow the case to be heard on a priority basis. The MP could still be removed if the judge determines that he or she has failed to make a necessary correction to the return.

Proposed subsection 477.72(3) would provide that where a correction to an election return was not made within the prescribed timeline, an elected candidate would not be not entitled to continue to sit or vote as a member of the House of Commons as of the end of the two-week period after the deadline to make the correction. This is the amount of time the candidate would have to apply to a judge for an order to relieve the official agent from the obligation to comply with a request from the Chief Electoral Officer to make a correction to his or her return. If after this two-week period the candidate has not made an application to a judge, it could be presumed that he or she would not be challenging the Chief Electoral Officer's proposed corrections in court.

Alternatively, if the candidate or his or her official agent applies to a judge for an order to relieve him or her from the obligation to comply with the request from the CEO to make a correction to his or her return, the elected candidate would not be entitled to continue to sit or vote as a member of the House of Commons, as of the day on which the application was finally disposed of so as to deny the member's application to the court. As a result, with the fair elections act, it would become clear that a member is not to be suspended solely on the basis of a dispute with the Chief Electoral Officer. If the member has brought the dispute to court for a resolution, he or she could only be suspended if the court upholds the Chief Electoral Officer's position.

The fair elections act would also provide that if an elected candidate has challenged the CEO's proposed correction in court, the judge would hear the matter without delay and in a summary manner. This is provided for in the new subsection 477.68(7) of the act.

Should there be any dispute that calls into question the ability of an MP to perform his or her parliamentary duties, it is only appropriate for the court to consider the matter in an expeditious manner.

Mr. Speaker, are we running out of time?

• (1330)

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary is in fact out of time, and unfortunately we will not get to questions and comments until the bill is put again before the House, because it is now 1:30 p. m. and the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

The House resumed from November 21, 2013, consideration of the motion that Bill C-483, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (escorted temporary absence), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pickering—Scarborough East had the floor the last time the bill was before the House, and he has four minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to continue to speak in the House today in support of Bill C-483, the private member's bill that proposes to amend the current scheme for escorted temporary absences. Bill C-483 proposes to grant the Parole Board almost exclusive decision-making authority for escorted temporary absences.

Ultimately, the goal of Bill C-483 is to give the Parole Board greater authority over escorted temporary absences for murderers. Our Conservative government is pleased to support the efforts of the hon. member for Oxford.

Investing in crime prevention efforts, holding prisoners accountable, supporting and protecting victims of crime, and providing opportunities and programing that help prisoners move away from criminal behaviour and become productive, law-abiding citizens are the elements that help form a strong foundation on which we can build safer communities.

The message in the most recent Speech from the Throne was clear: Canadians expect safe and healthy communities in which their children can play safely and in which our most vulnerable citizens can feel safe when they walk down the street.

Canadians deserve no less than our full attention to these issues. That is why we continue to push ahead with a number of initiatives and measures that support victims.

We have recently announced the coming into force of the Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act, which holds prisoners more accountable to victims by doubling the victim surcharge that prisoners must pay.

We intend to introduce legislation to create a victims' bill of rights, which will enshrine victims' rights in law and give them a greater role in the criminal justice system. Bill C-483 will add to our efforts to address victims' concerns.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great interest that I see another one of these private member's

Private Members' Business

bills coming from the Conservatives. It is one of many we have seen over the years. I guess we could call it one of those backdoor bills.

If the justice minister and the Conservative members over there really believe in whatever legislation they are bringing forward, and I think we have seen some 15 or 16 such bills over the years, why do they not have the minister bring it forward in the proper way? It is, of course, the proper way Parliament should work.

We should take a bill before committee and go through it. The committee could travel, digest it, and have stakeholders from around the country come in and talk about it. We could visit other countries and see what they are doing in these situations. However, right now, we have political statements from a backbencher, and one wonders if they come from the backbencher or where they come from, at the end of the day.

Maybe there have to be changes in the judicial system. Should we be like the United States? I doubt it. Should we be more like Europe? Maybe, in some ways. However, this is not the way to have legislation.

It is interesting that the Conservatives talk about getting rid of more laws and rules and regulations. Then they turn around and throw out these private member's bills, which waste a lot of time in this House, because many times, private member's bills do not go anywhere. If the government were really serious, it would put forward the legislation.

I do not know how many people at home are watching this, but many know that I am a farmer. I am not a judge, a police officer, or a warden, but I do know what happens in the community. If we are going to have a safe and more just society, the resources have to go to the community.

A friend of mine was a police officer, and he worked at our local high school. He was a young police officer who worked undercover. I think he prevented more crime than all the rules and regulations put forward, because he was working on the ground. He saw where there was trouble in families. He saw troubled kids. That is the philosophy I believe in: We can make this a safer country by putting our resources where they should be.

We start handcuffing judges to make sure they have certain rules and regulations and mandatory sentencing, and we tell our wardens what they can and cannot do. We have these important people in our society, with very important jobs, to maintain our justice or improve it.

What is the next private member's bill that will come forward? Maybe it will be that anyone in prison should not have a TV or computer. Of course, everyone may agree that it sounds good, as a private member's bill, but does it really help us make a more just society?

We can see what is happening in the United States. They are trying to keep fewer people in prison and are trying to have more intervention before that happens.

Private Members' Business

We have to wonder where these private member's bills come from. If we are not going to look at them and go through them the right way, what is the sense of it?

Of the legislation I have seen the Conservatives bring forward, one that really bothered me was on closing the farm prisons. The member for Malpeque was with me when we visited those farm prisons. They were very well-run farms. Yes, they were criminals, and maybe they did wrong in their lives, but seeing them working with the animals and seeing them on these farms, we were seeing them become better citizens.

How much did it cost the government to keep these prison farms open? It did not cost very much. They were producing good products. They were also rehabilitating men and women who were in trouble, who may have done wrong.

At the end of the day, when we look at other systems around the world where they have the lowest crime, the two things those societies focus on is prevention and rehabilitation. That is where the focus has to be.

If everyone in between is going to be handcuffed and told what to do and not do, we might as well have the whole judicial system run by a computer, because local police officers, judges, or wardens have no say in anything they do.

● (1335)

When it is all said and done, eventually the Conservatives are not going to be running this country, but how much damage will they have done to our system? How much will they have made our streets any safer? How many fewer criminals will be out there? I do not think there will have been any improvement. However, they might have struck a cord with a few people and had a few cheap political points, and it might work for them a bit.

It is interesting how the Americans are even changing their philosophy. It is noted that prisons in California are full and overflowing. They have no more room. If a kid is caught with a few joints, all of a sudden that person is in jail. Is that really going to change that young person? They say that the person should have a warden to make sure that young person does not go out. There is no doubt that they are talking about people with serious crimes, but there is no warden who is going to let out somebody who is dangerous. Surely, wardens are going to do due diligence and check it with the judge.

I was not brought up as a lawyer or police officer, but I see what happens on the ground. In my community in Cape Breton, the chiefs of police would like to see more resources, especially for preventing crime. That is key with today's society. We have situations with broken families and young people who are unemployed. If the Conservatives were serious about making a safer country and safer communities and having fewer people in jail, because we want fewer people in jail because we want less crime, they should focus on investing in the communities, in the areas that need it.

When we look at young people, they are watching movies that influence them, and there are gangs around. How do we change that? As a farmer, I used to have a lot of young people working for me. A lot of them were going through hard times, in single-parent families, and it was sometimes difficult working with them. Sometimes they

needed a break. Sometimes they needed to feel that they could accomplish something. It was interesting. A lot of them were in trouble but they were getting a second chance. The probation officers used to visit my farm because I had so many young people who were in trouble. They had a second chance. The system helped them out. We gave them a job. They pulled up their boots and their socks and got things going, and we all can do that more.

I know the Conservatives are not going to take my suggestions, as they do not usually. However, they should look at the amount of money they are spending. Instead of building more jails and prisons and handcuffing the judges and wardens so that everybody is locked up, getting only bread and water, if they think we are going to have a better and more just society, they should look at all those billions of dollars. Why not encourage and expand on the things that have worked? We will be in power, but it would be almost impossible to open up those prison farms because they have been taken down or dismantled. It would be almost impossible. That is the Conservative way: to destroy everything that another party might have put in place that makes any sense so the Conservatives can continue with their ideology.

They should take a visit to our friends down south. They are changing their ideology and they know things are not working. We do not want to get into the marijuana debate, but there are states down there that are dealing with it in a different way. Locking them up is not going to solve the problem. Locking them up at a very young age, where maybe there could have been intervention, help, or rehabilitation, is not going to make our society any safer. It is not going to make us a better society.

Why would the member for Oxford come forward with this bill? I wonder if he really believes in it. Did it come from the centre, the PMO? Maybe it did not want to put the work into getting the Minister of Justice out there and having him put it before a committee. This is a nice back-door way to get it out there. Everybody talks about it and changes the channel from all the other problems they have. However, is it really going to make a safe society? Is it going to make a better society?

● (1340)

I am on the agriculture committee. I would like to see the members of the justice committee go and see what other countries are doing. They should see what they are doing in Scandinavian countries and European countries, see what they are doing with their justice systems. Let us see why all their jails are not plugged up. Let us see what the Americans are doing to change things.

That is not going to happen. We are going to continue to see, on top of these 16 bills, another 16 bills—

The Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Liberal member obviously took to heart what a former Trudeau-era Liberal solicitor general said, that the protection of society was secondary to the rights of criminals.

Private Members' Business

That is what the member's speech was clearly all about. I wonder if the member actually read what the member for Oxford put forward. First, I want to commend the member for Oxford, a police officer and a former police chief.

The Liberal member who just spoke clearly did not actually read the bill, because had he read the bill he would have known what this was actually about. He would have known that it was about protecting victims. The member said that he doubts that a warden would let a dangerous offender out.

Let me tell the House who this bill was for. This bill was for somebody named Kim Hancox. Who is Kim Hancox? Kim Hancox is the wife of an officer in Toronto who was brutally murdered one night when he was investigating or trying to keep our community safe. That is who Bill Hancox was. He was a hero who was slain trying to keep our community safe.

I had the honour of knowing Constable Hancox and his family. I was actually a political assistant working in the same community where this officer was brutally murdered. I knew the family. We often saw Constable Hancox with his two very young children at the Legion for Canada Day and other celebrations in the community. People who worked with me in the office of the member of the provincial Parliament were very close friends with him.

We were all shocked when we learned one night that the officer had been murdered. Even more shocking to the family members was when they then learned, as time went on, that the person who brutally slew this officer was then going to be released temporarily into the community, despite the fact that the Parole Board did not agree with those releases. This person was going to be released into the community, and Kim Hancox and the family were not going to be given notice of these releases.

When the hon. member from the Liberal Party gets up in his place to defend the rights of criminals, he might want to think of people like Kim Hancox, like the Hancox family, like the children of this slain police officer who never heard their father's voice, who do not know what their father sounded like, because they were never given the opportunity.

Before the member gets up in this House and talks about prison farms, the rights of criminals over the rights of victims, and the fact that he doubts the warden would let people out if they are not responsible, he might want to consider for one second the families of the victims and what they have gone through, time and time again, because of a justice system that we are still trying to repair, a justice system that put the rights of criminals ahead of victims under the Liberal government, for decades.

That is what the hon. member might want to reflect upon.

• (1345)

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The crime rate went down when the Liberal governments were in power, and we do not defend criminals.

The Speaker: That is not a point of order but a matter of debate, it sounds. The hon. parliamentary secretary still has six minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the Hancox family, which is undoubtedly watching this debate, appreciates the ridiculous and silly intervention of the member for Malpeque, who should be listening to the debate and not making fun of what happened.

Let me tell the House what happened in 1998. Officer Hancox was investigating undercover in a plaza late at night, trying to keep the community safe, when he was brutally stabbed. He bled out and died on the ground of a plaza that a lot of us have known and attended. It was a very busy plaza. He is a hero for our community and his family. His children will never hear the sound of their father's voice. While the member for Malpeque stands and makes idiotic and silly interventions, he might want to take a moment to listen to the victims of crime who have to relive this constantly.

It is inappropriate that people like Kim Hancox have to relive this. It is inappropriate that she should not be made aware of the fact that the people who did this to her husband, to the children's father and his father's son, are being released into the community. I do not think it is funny, I do not think it is appropriate, and I do not think Canadians think it is appropriate.

The hon. member who spoke before me got up and talked about prison farms and how he had people working on his farm and that probation officers would come by. I do not think it gives the people who have suffered any comfort knowing that the Liberal members opposite want to talk about prison farms, that somehow the rights of criminals are put ahead of the rights of victims.

The member talked about this side of the House. I can say that the member for Oxford worked as a police officer for some 30 years. He was the chief of police in his community, a very well-respected member of his community, someone who mentored a lot of us when we came to this place. After years of working, he brought forward a bill that he thinks will address victims' rights in the community and the grievances that have been brought forward by people like Kim Hancox and others who have to suffer this constantly.

I know the family is in the riding of the member for Ajax—Pickering. This is something that he has also talked a lot about. He gave a very eloquent speech in this place. Perhaps it is not the usual course of action, and we certainly know it was not the usual course of action when the Liberals were in power, to ever allow their backbenchers, those of us who do not have the honour of serving on the front benches or government benches, to allow us to bring forward legislation that is important for our constituents, allowing us to get things done for the reasons we came to this place.

Private Members' Business

Many of us came to this place because we wanted to reverse the chaotic system of criminal justice that the Liberals brought in. Many of us were elected for that reason and the member for Oxford, having served for 30 years, saw an area that he wanted to improve. He has brought a bill to the House, and despite all of the nonsense that we have heard from the Liberal Party on prison farms, I bet that when the camera is on and it comes time to vote, the Liberals are going to stand in their places and vote in favour of this bill, not because they believe in it but because they know that Canadians believe in it. Somehow between now and when that vote is held, Canadians will contact them and shame them into doing what Canadians want, which is putting victims ahead of criminals, so that we can finally put an end to the Trudeau-era edict, when Solicitor General Goyer said that victims' rights are secondary to the rights of criminals.

We would all agree that one of the primary roles of our justice system has to be the rehabilitation of criminals. We would all agree to that. We always want to release people back into society as better persons than when they went in, but at the same time, in those instances where the actions are so grievous, in an instance like this, we need to inform families by letter that a person will be released. Not informing the families will not give Canadians across this country confidence that the justice system is looking after the rights of victims.

●(1350)

I will be very proud to stand in my place and support this, not just on behalf of the Hancox family but on behalf of all victims of crime in this country who for years have had to suffer under the delusions of the Liberal Party, which still thinks that the rights of criminals trump the rights of victims. I hope the members of the Liberal Party will take the opportunity over the weekend to reflect on this and on what victims of crime, across the country, have been saying.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

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

The Speaker: It being 1:54 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, 10 February, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:54 p.m.)

APPENDIX

**ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS WITH THEIR
CONSTITUENCIES, PROVINCE OF CONSTITUENCY
AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS;
COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE,
THE MINISTRY AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. JOE COMARTIN

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BRUCE STANTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

HON. JOHN DUNCAN

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

MR. PHILIP TOONE

MS. NYCOLE TURMEL

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	Ontario	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albas, Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alexander, Hon. Chris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Health	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Armstrong, Scott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	Québec	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	NDP
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	NDP
Bergen, Hon. Candice, Minister of State (Social Development)	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture)	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	Québec	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Block, Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	Québec	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	NDP
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	Québec	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	Québec	NDP
Braid, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	Québec	NDP
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	Ontario	CPC
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	NDP
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	Ontario	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	NDP
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Choquette, François	Drummond	Québec	NDP
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crockatt, Joan	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	Ontario	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	NDP
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	Ontario	Cons. Ind.
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	NDP
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	NDP
Dubourg, Emmanuel	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	Québec	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Falk, Ted	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Vaughan	Ontario	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Minister of National Revenue	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Freeland, Chrystia	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	NDP
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	NDP
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	Québec	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	NDP
Gill, Parm, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	CPC
Glover, Hon. Shelly, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	Québec	NDP
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	NDP
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	NDP
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	GP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	NDP
James, Roxanne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	CPC
Jones, Yvonne	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	Ontario	NDP
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	Alberta	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Manitoba	Lib.
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	Québec	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	Québec	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	Québec	NDP
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Ontario	CPC
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	Québec	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	Québec	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	New Brunswick	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	Québec	NDP
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	Yukon	CPC
Leitch, Hon. Kellie, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women	Simcoe—Grey	Ontario	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	Ontario	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	Nova Scotia	NDP
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	Ontario	CPC
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	Québec	NDP
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	Ontario	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	Ontario	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	Saskatchewan	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	British Columbia	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Central Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	Ontario	CPC
Maguire, Larry	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	Québec	NDP
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	Ontario	NDP
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	Manitoba	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	Ontario	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	Ontario	NDP
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	British Columbia	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	British Columbia	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Ontario	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	Ontario	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Ontario	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Ontario	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	British Columbia	CPC
Menegakis, Costas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Richmond Hill	Ontario	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	Alberta	CPC
Michaud, Élane	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Ontario	CPC
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	Québec	NDP
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Industry	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick	CPC
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	NDP
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Québec	Ind.
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	Québec	NDP
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil—Soulanges	Québec	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of National Defence	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	Québec	NDP
Obhrai, Hon. Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights	Calgary East	Alberta	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	Ontario	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	Ontario	CPC
O'Toole, Erin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Durham	Ontario	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Québec	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie	Mégantic—L'Érable	Québec	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	BQ
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	Alberta	CPC
Péclet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	Québec	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	Québec	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Hon. Pierre, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Ontario	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	NDP
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Transport	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Alberta	Ind.
Ravignat, Mathieu	Pontiac	Québec	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	Québec	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Rempel, Hon. Michelle, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Hon. Greg, Minister of State (Science and Technology, and Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Québec	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	Ontario	CPC
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	NDP
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
ShIPLEY, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	NDP
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Hon. Kevin, Minister of State (Finance)	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	Lib.
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	Ontario	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	CPC
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	NDP
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trottier, Bernard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	Ontario	CPC
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	NDP
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	CPC
Valeriotte, Frank	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	British Columbia	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
VACANCY	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	
VACANCY	Macleod	Alberta	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (26)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Health	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Crockatt, Joan	Calgary Centre	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Hon. Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	Ind.
Rempel, Hon. Michelle, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification)	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Hon. Kevin, Minister of State (Finance)	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Multiculturalism)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
VACANCY	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	
VACANCY	Macleod	
BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)		
Albas, Dan, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Hon. Kerry-Lynne D., Minister of National Revenue	Delta—Richmond East	CPC
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	Lib.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	CPC
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	CPC
Lunney, James	Nanaimo—Alberni	CPC
May, Elizabeth	Saanich—Gulf Islands	GP
Mayes, Colin	Okanagan—Shuswap	CPC
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Industry	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	CPC
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	Lib.
Rankin, Murray	Victoria	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	North Vancouver	CPC
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	NDP
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	NDP
Strahl, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	CPC
MANITOBA (14)		
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	NDP
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	CPC
Bergen, Hon. Candice, Minister of State (Social Development)	Portage—Lisgar	CPC
Bezan, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Selkirk—Interlake	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	CPC
Falk, Ted	Provencher	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	CPC
Glover, Hon. Shelly, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages	Saint Boniface	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin	Winnipeg North	Lib.
Maguire, Larry	Brandon—Souris	CPC
Martin, Pat	Winnipeg Centre	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	CPC
NEW BRUNSWICK (10)		
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith	Fredericton	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency)	Fundy Royal	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Madawaska—Restigouche	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)

Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	NDP
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Jones, Yvonne	Labrador	Lib.
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)

Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
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NOVA SCOTIA (11)

Armstrong, Scott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP

NUNAVUT (1)

Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council	Nunavut	CPC
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ONTARIO (106)

Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Mississauga—Brampton South	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alexander, Hon. Chris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Ajax—Pickering	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter, Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Communities	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Comeliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean	Peterborough	Cons. Ind.
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Freeland, Chrystia	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	NDP
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	GP
James, Roxanne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Scarborough Centre	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter	Thornhill	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Hon. Kellie, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	CPC
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
Menegakis, Costas, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of National Defence	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Oritz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	CPC
O'Toole, Erin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade	Durham	CPC
Poillievre, Hon. Pierre, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raïtt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Transport	Halton	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Hon. Greg, Minister of State (Science and Technology, and Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)	Kenora	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Trottier, Bernard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	CPC
Troupe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	CPC
Valeriotte, Frank	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport	Essex	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)		
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans	Egmont	CPC
QUÉBEC (75)		
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	NDP
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture)	Beauce	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	NDP
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	NDP
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	NDP
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	NDP
Choquette, François	Drummond	NDP
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	NDP
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	NDP
Dubourg, Emmanuel	Bourassa	Lib.
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	NDP
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Lib.
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia	Saint-Lambert	NDP
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	NDP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	NDP
Lapointe, François	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup	NDP
Larose, Jean-François	Repentigny	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine	Louis-Saint-Laurent	NDP
Laverdière, Hélène	Laurier—Sainte-Marie	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean	CPC
LeBlanc, Hélène	LaSalle—Émard	NDP
Liu, Laurin	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles	NDP
Mai, Hoang	Brossard—La Prairie	NDP
Michaud, Élane	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier	NDP
Moore, Christine	Abitibi—Témiscamingue	NDP
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	NDP
Mourani, Maria	Ahuntsic	Ind.
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	NDP
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	NDP
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval	NDP
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie	Mégantic—L'Érable	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	BQ
Péclet, Ève	La Pointe-de-l'Île	NDP
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	BQ
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	NDP
Ravignat, Mathieu	Pontiac	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	NDP
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Lib.
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	NDP
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Lib.
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord	NDP
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Lib.
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
SASKATCHEWAN (14)		
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	CPC
Block, Kelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	CPC
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	CPC
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River ..	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Lib.
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food	Battlefords—Lloydminster	CPC
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	CPC
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular)	Blackstrap	CPC
YUKON (1)		
Leef, Ryan	Yukon	CPC

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 7, 2014 — 2nd Session, 41st Parliament)

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Mr. Erin O'Toole	to the Minister of International Trade

CONTENTS

Friday, February 7, 2014

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Fair Elections Act

Bill C-23. Second reading	2729
Mr. Valeriote	2729
Mr. Poilievre	2730
Mr. Godin	2731
Mr. Lamoureux	2731
Mr. Calandra	2732
Mr. Blanchette	2733
Mr. Reid	2733
Mr. Ravignat	2734
Mr. Easter	2735
Mr. Sweet	2735

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Citizenship and Immigration

Mr. Menegakis	2736
---------------------	------

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Karygiannis	2737
-----------------------	------

The Economy

Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	2737
--	------

Winter Olympic Games

Mr. Dreeshen	2737
--------------------	------

Ukraine

Mr. Dykstra	2737
-------------------	------

Entrepreneurship in Granby

Mr. Genest	2738
------------------	------

Elections in Thailand

Mr. Obhrai	2738
------------------	------

The Environment

Mrs. Block	2738
------------------	------

VIA Rail

Mr. Godin	2738
-----------------	------

Canadian Armed Forces

Mr. Norlock	2738
-------------------	------

Winter Olympics Games

Mr. Cullen	2739
------------------	------

Winter Olympics Games

Mr. Bezan	2739
-----------------	------

Winter Olympic Games

Mr. Valeriote	2739
---------------------	------

Veterans Affairs

Mr. Lobb	2739
----------------	------

Democratic Reform

Mr. Giguère	2739
-------------------	------

Career Colleges

Mr. Chisu	2740
-----------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Democratic Reform

Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	2740
Mr. Poilievre	2740
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	2740
Mr. Poilievre	2740
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	2740
Mr. Poilievre	2740
Mrs. Groguhé	2740
Mr. Poilievre	2741
Mrs. Groguhé	2741
Mr. Poilievre	2741

The Budget

Mr. Garneau	2741
Mr. Saxton	2741
Mr. Garneau	2741
Mr. Saxton	2741
Mr. Garneau	2741
Mr. Saxton	2741

Democratic Reform

Ms. Charlton	2741
Mr. Poilievre	2742
Ms. Charlton	2742
Mr. Poilievre	2742
Ms. Charlton	2742
Mr. Poilievre	2742
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	2742
Mr. Poilievre	2742
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	2742
Mr. Poilievre	2742
Ms. Péclet	2743
Mr. Poilievre	2743
Ms. Péclet	2743
Mr. Poilievre	2743
Mr. Bevington	2743
Mr. Poilievre	2743
Mr. Genest-Jourdain	2743
Mr. Poilievre	2743

Citizenship and Immigration

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	2743
Mr. Menegakis	2743

Veterans Affairs

Mr. Cuzner	2743
Ms. Bergen	2744
Mr. Karygiannis	2744
Mr. Gill	2744

Rail Transportation

Mr. Sullivan	2744
Mr. Watson	2744
Mr. Nicholls	2744
Mr. Watson	2744

Mr. Godin	2744
Mr. Watson	2744
Mr. Godin	2745
Mr. Watson	2745

Health

Mr. Woodworth	2745
Ms. Adams	2745

Employment

Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	2745
Ms. Bergen	2745
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	2745
Ms. Bergen	2745

National Defence

Mr. Cullen	2745
Mrs. Block	2745
Mr. Cullen	2746
Ms. James	2746

Agriculture and Agri-food

Mr. Eyking	2746
Mr. Lemieux	2746
Mr. Valerioté	2746
Mr. Lemieux	2746

Public Service of Canada

Mr. Ravignat	2746
Mr. Albas	2746
Mr. Dewar	2746
Mr. Albas	2747

Agriculture and Agri-food

Mr. Dreeshen	2747
Mr. Lemieux	2747

Public Safety

Mr. Easter	2747
Ms. James	2747

Employment

Ms. Brosseau	2747
Ms. Bergen	2747

International Development

Mr. Sweet	2747
Mr. Paradis	2748

Agriculture and Agri-food

Mr. Bellavance	2748
Mr. Lemieux	2748

Citizenship and Immigration

Mrs. Mourani	2748
Ms. James	2748

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Ms. Adams	2748
-----------------	------

Privilege

Bilingualism in Canada's Legislative Process

Mr. Poilievre	2748
Mr. Cullen	2749

Committees of the House

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Mr. Boughen	2749
-------------------	------

Business of the House

Mr. Van Loan	2749
Motion	2749
(Motion agreed to)	2749

Petitions

Impaired Driving

Mr. Dreeshen	2749
--------------------	------

Mining Industry

Mr. Dreeshen	2749
--------------------	------

VIA Rail

Mr. Sullivan	2749
--------------------	------

Impaired Driving

Mr. Vellacott	2750
---------------------	------

Sex Selection

Mr. Vellacott	2750
---------------------	------

Mining Industry

Mrs. Groguhé	2750
--------------------	------

Public Transit

Mrs. Groguhé	2750
--------------------	------

Dementia

Mr. Dewar	2750
-----------------	------

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Braid	2750
-----------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Fair Elections Act

Bill C-23. Second reading	2750
Mr. Sweet	2750
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	2750
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	2751
Mr. Eyking	2752
Mrs. McLeod	2752
Mr. Easter	2753
Ms. Péclet	2753
Mr. Lemieux	2754
Mr. Easter	2754
Mr. Bezan	2755
Mr. Garneau	2756
Mr. Sullivan	2757
Mr. Watson	2757
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	2757
Mr. Easter	2758
Mrs. Groguhé	2759
Mr. Calandra	2759
Mr. Watson	2759

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Corrections and Conditional Release Act

Bill C-483. Second reading	2761
Mr. Chisu	2761
Mr. Eyking	2761
Mr. Calandra	2762

Motion agreed to.....	2764
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) .	2764

APPENDIX

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