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Friday, February 1, 2008

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 1, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*English*]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

The House resumed from January 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: When the House last debated the bill now before us, the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior had the floor and there are 17 minutes remaining in the time allotted for his remarks.

I therefore call on the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was at the point where I was discussing the biofuel example in Manitoba. Manitoba wants to get concrete results for farmers. The introduction of co-ops is also being considered, which is the way to go. If farmers can somehow get involved in the whole aspect of the industry, not just as suppliers, that is the way to go.

Both the federal and Manitoba governments have a subsidy for blenders. Federally, it is 10¢ per litre for ethanol and 20¢ per litre for biodiesel, guaranteed for three years. A \$20 million biofuels opportunities for the producers initiative program runs from April 1 of this year until the March 31, 2017. In Manitoba, subsidies to the blenders will start at 20¢ a litre but will decrease by 5¢ every two years so that by 2016 there will be no subsidy to the industry.

This seems a more reasonable approach. In other words, by this time if this industry is not making a profit and there is a downturn in biofuels consumption, then government should not be injecting new funds into this enterprise.

It is important to look at the politics of the whole biofuel industry, not only in North America but in the world. While we were in Washington, the agriculture committee was told that the U.S. government's ethanol corn initiative was there to fulfill its need for

increased consumption of fuel. In other words, the U.S. does not want to import any more oil as its consumption goes up. This increase is to be met by the production of corn and other commodities to make ethanol.

What we are seeing is a dangerous precedent. Instead of encouraging a decrease in oil consumption on fossil fuels, the U.S. government is encouraging an increase by growing corn. As we have seen from the research, corn is not an efficient energy input-output commodity. For every one unit of energy of corn, we may get 1.5 units of fuel, if that.

If we look at all of the input from fertilizer for fuel for machinery and transportation, we need to question the efficiency of corn ethanol production. This is why I advocate and my party is saying that we must discuss this bill in committee as part of an overall discussion in our country on the whole aspect of biofuels.

Today the reality is that big agriculture, big oil and big biotech are in the biofuels driver's seat. It is Husky Oil that has opened the ethanol refineries in Manitoba, which is a good idea and it is helping farmers, but it is the big corporations that are in the driver's seat. Our challenge and the challenge of governments is to work with them and ensure the benefits of this industry go to the producers and Canadians who always strive to meet their obligation to reduce greenhouse gases.

For example, of the 119 ethanol plants in the U.S., currently 49 are still owned by farmers. However, of the 90 plants currently under construction in the U.S., about 90% are corporate owned. By having the biofuel industry firmly in control by the major multinationals, the role of the farmer is reduced solely to that of supplier. If refineries then are allowed to import feedstock from underdeveloped countries or even from heavily subsidized U.S. farmers, our primary producers will once again be left out in the cold and at the mercy of these multinationals.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

There is also the question of genetically modified foods. When major corporations step up biological research, we will be faced with the issue of GMOs. For example, there is the contamination of other crops, the debate in Europe about Monsanto corn, and so on.

Government Orders

Biofuels have a role to play in a comprehensive renewable energy strategy, but we have to continue to keep a close eye on them to avoid problems like the ones that have occurred in the south.

If taxpayers are to assume the burden of funding this industry, then we must make sure that our ability to ensure food safety is not threatened or diminished. We also have to make sure our policies do not threaten another country's food safety, that we get real results when we reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that the industry is not subsidized once it is established, as is the case in Manitoba.

Finally, we must continue to encourage a decrease in fuel consumption. In the long term, this is the most important factor in a fuel-based economy.

[English]

As we begin debating the idea of biofuels as a possible solution to part of our energy needs, we must not forget food.

For the first time we are seeing the emergence of a truly global agricultural market driven by the underlying force of all economic activity. The scarcity of goods, wheat supplies for example, have reached a 30 year low. In only one year, inventories in the European Union have dropped from 14 million tonnes to only 1 million tonnes.

We need to ask ourselves how humankind will be able to feed itself in the future and at what price. How can agriculture feed the world that grows by 80 million people each year? When we take land out of food production to produce fuel, we obviously complicate this matter and we need to find a balance.

If we come back to our local agricultural industry, we have seen that the demand for biofuels has driven up the price for corn, which is good if one is a corn producer but not so good if one is raising cattle and already competing with the high Canadian dollar, the rising cost of inputs and other factors that are driving the cost production up.

Only yesterday we heard once again from representatives of the pork and cattle industry saying that their industry was in crisis. Some producers in Ontario are saying that they are losing at least \$300 for every steer sold. We are seeing that they are not getting any immediate assistance from the loan program that they asked for. Small communities are going under. Part of this is because of the rise in prices of corn that they must use in that industry.

Somehow we must get a balance and also assist those in parts of the agriculture industry who are suffering because of this demand for biofuels. The government still has not been able to address the fundamental needs of these producers who are struggling to survive.

We are seeing more critics in the world speaking out against the biofuels industry and we need to take that into account. For example, the verdict of the OECD, consumer organizations like FoodWatch and even major food corporations like Nestlé, is devastating.

According to the OECD, expanded biofuels production will lead to untenable strains on the commodities markets without yielding significant benefits for the environment. FoodWatch is convinced that the strategy, while benefiting farmers, will do nothing to protect the climate. Germany's environmental expert counsel says that the industry raises expectations that fly in the face of acceptable science.

Nestlé's CEO bluntly characterized biofuels production as environmental lunacy.

That does not mean we need to stop the whole aspect of moving forward in this industry. What this means is that we must undertake a very logical approach. We must see that as this industry moves forward we help the primary producer. We have seen that this has given the primary producer a stimulus to at least start making some money but at the same time we have a responsibility to feed not only ourselves but the world.

We must ensure that we do not get on the band wagon that we see happening south of the border where the American ethanol industry is creating what I would say in many respects havoc in other parts of the world where countries are scrambling to supply this growing demand for fuels.

As I said before, instead of the growing demand for fuels, we should be concentrating on decreasing our demand for fuels and fossil fuels in particular.

Much of what the energy farmers produce is offset by the amount of energy that goes into producing the plants in the first place. They consume fossil fuels to harvest plants, for shipping, for storage and for drying, not to mention the energy required to produce pesticides and fertilizers. The economic possibilities are also limited.

Even in the U.S., if the entire corn crop were converted into fuel, it would satisfy only about 12% of the demand for gasoline. For example, to fill a 100 litre tank of an SUV, an ethanol producer has to process about one-quarter tonne of wheat. This is enough wheat for a baker to bake about 460 kilograms of bread which has a total nutritional value of about one million kilo-calories, enough to feed one person for a year.

●(1015)

I would like us to take this debate forward and to look at biofuels from the aspects of the environment, of food security and from our ability as a nation to assist our primary producers, who are basically the best in the world, to continue producing food with help from us here in Parliament and, at the same time, not to make life more difficult for people in countries like Malaysia, Brazil and other places where family farmers are being forced from their farm to finance the big plantations for palm oil and ethanol from sugar.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the member and I believe he had a number of good points in his remarks on Bill C-33 and its positive implications on some sectors of agriculture and negative implications on others.

Government Orders

Given that the ethanol and biodiesel industry is subsidized, which naturally forces greater demands for some of the crops that go into ethanol and biodiesel and, as a result, does inflate the cost of feed for the beef and hog sectors which are suffering substantially right now, does the member believe that the government's policy is forcing prices up? Does he believe that the Government of Canada has an obligation to support the livestock industry in some fashion because it is partly responsible for the high cost of feed?

We certainly believe that the grain and oilseeds sector needs to receive good and profitable returns, but it is in part because of the inflationary impact, the push up in prices as a result of government policy, that is forcing prices up even more for the hog and beef sector. Is there an obligation on the part of government to bring some balance to the livestock sector by supporting that sector which it absolutely has not done?

• (1020)

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his insight and knowledge into what is happening in the industry. As I mentioned earlier, we see that the push in biofuels is helping our grain and oilseeds sector, and that is good, but at the same time we see that this is one reason that the pork and cattle industry is going through such hard times. I must reiterate that some in that industry are calling today “black Friday”. They are saying that there has not been any help. They came before committee before Christmas and we made recommendations. However, nothing has happened. There has been no immediate aid to offset all of the factors that are contributing to their downward slide.

I agree with the fact that the government has the responsibility to assist the pork and cattle industry to get through these hard times, which in part has been caused by biofuels. We can do it. Why can we not do it? Other countries do this. Why can we not be good to our farmers and why can we not help all sectors of the agriculture industry?

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from British Columbia Southern Interior has been a tireless advocate for farmers. In British Columbia food security has become a pressing issue where we are seeing the loss of some of our very precious agricultural land.

I paid very close attention to the member's speech and I wonder if he could comment on some of the concerns that have been raised around biofuels and genetically modified organisms. It is very disappointing that Canada has not taken a lead on putting a moratorium on GMOs, nor has it taken a lead on mandatory labelling of genetically modified food products.

One of the concerns that has been raised with this increasing push around biofuels is that it will encourage and support further growth in an industry that, in many of our views, is poorly regulated. We are certainly seeing some concerns raised under the security and prosperity partnership talks going on with this increasing look at harmonization. Many of us in Canada are very concerned around the fact that our food supplies do not have the protection that is required.

Could the member comment specifically on GMOs and what he sees needs to be done in order to prevent the creep into biofuels?

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing her comments and the concern of many in our country in regard to food security and GMOs.

One of the problems in having the big biotech industries involved in the push for biofuels is that there is more pressure to produce crops, to produce strains of weeds and corn that are genetically modified, in order to increase the harvest. But at the same time, if we introduce this into our environment, there is a very strong probability of contamination.

This is one of the reasons why we do not have genetically modified wheat in Canada. There was a very strong push to say no to this. Genetically modified crops can and do contaminate fields in their vicinity. As we have seen, there is the whole case of Mr. Schmeiser, who has been fighting against Monsanto and is still continuing to fight against this.

Also on the point of GMOs, research has been done. I met personally with Dr. Seralini from France, who has been doing extensive research on the negative aspects of GMO crops in regard to human health. The president of France has been very supportive and has put a stop to one type of Monsanto 810 corn, because studies have proven its negative aspects in regard to human health.

Therefore, as we start the debate on biofuels and GMOs, and I must emphasize that we are just starting, we have to take that into consideration. One of my tasks in Parliament at this time is to continue to push to eventually convince Parliament and the Government of Canada to put a moratorium on genetically modified food and seeds in Canada.

• (1025)

Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for British Columbia Southern Interior. I am one of those who was here last night and heard the first part of his speech, and I made sure that I was here this morning to hear the conclusion. I certainly found it very stimulating and informative.

I know that he comes from the southern interior of British Columbia, a very environmentally pristine part of Canada with the Kootenays and the beautiful mountains and rivers. I know that it is a very environmentally conscious area.

One of the issues that I suspect is not in this bill because it is a bigger issue, and this is more of a housekeeping type of bill, and one of the things that troubles me, is about the Environmental Protection Act and the way it is applied with respect to the oil sands, for example.

Government Orders

Under the act and under the mandate of the Canadian Environmental Protection Agency, the agency is meant to look at projects incrementally, but the way I see it, many projects are coming on stream and I am not sure that the agency is actually looking at the cumulative impacts of these particular projects. I am not sure that the agency is actually looking at their impacts on the water resources and the Athabasca River basin, at the cumulative impact of CO₂ emissions, which will grow and grow over the next little while, and at the impacts of the use, or the misuse, if I might put it that way, of natural gas to bring up the bitumen that has to be upgraded considerably to feed into the U.S. market.

While I understand the need for our U.S. colleagues and neighbours to the south to try to diversify their energy sources, it seems to me they need to understand that there are some environmental issues here, which we need to deal with.

There was an interesting announcement the other day, I thought, with the industry or some agency recommending the need for carbon capture and sequestration. Of course that is what we need to be doing, but it needs to be accelerated. I think there is a role for the federal government, but as for the industry saying that the federal government should bankroll \$2 billion to accelerate the development and deployment of carbon sequestration technologies, first of all it is obviously an opening gambit, but I think we should be putting some of these projects on hold until we have solved, at least significantly, the problems of carbon capture and sequestration and also the impact on water resources.

I wonder if the member could comment on that.

The Speaker: He will do so ever so briefly. There are about 30 seconds left in the time for questions and comments, but we will hear from the hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko: Briefly, Mr. Speaker, energy policy in Canada has to be good for Canadians. We have to look at our needs first. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. We know that with the whole locking in of energy and what we have to export to the Americans, we have locked ourselves in under NAFTA.

Clearly the federal government does have a role. It does have a role in looking very closely at the cumulative impacts on water resources and the misuse of natural gas. We can do it. We are a nation of innovators. We can have a balanced approach whereby we support business and we support development for Canadians first, and at the same time we can look at the environment, shift over to a greener energy and look at, for example, carbon sequestration. We have the ability to do it, but the government must have a role in this.

• (1030)

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be following my colleague from British Columbia Southern Interior, our agriculture critic, who has spoken on Bill C-33, which is being directed through the agriculture committee. It is being run under the auspices of an being an agricultural bill, and in reality it is that, because it is a bill that directs \$2 billion of the government's future spending toward the interests of farmers, not particularly toward the interest of the environment or the interests of Canada in how we are dealing with energy.

It is a response to a perceived need to support farmers. In the United States, it was perceived in that fashion. I think cooler heads

are prevailing across the world, but biofuels will be a large part of the energy structure across the world.

Recently I had the opportunity to visit Brazil, where I talked with experts in the biofuels industry there. Brazil's biofuels industry is ramping up quickly. It has signed major contracts with Japan. The pressure on the biofuels industry is going to drive up the price of biofuels. There is no question about it. It is going to make a big difference across the world in what happens with this.

Some of the concerns expressed by my colleague about the degradation of farmland, pristine rainforest and jungle in Brazil are apt. That has taken place. Brazilians recognize that, but they have yet to deal with it.

One of the issues the Brazilians talked about was the opportunity to spread the development of biofuel technology into third world countries in marginal agricultural areas to promote the developing world. In some respects, we can see that it would be a very useful endeavour, whereby marginal land would be taken up in the proper fashion, with proper environmental concerns attached to it. But in most cases as we ramp up the price of biological products for energy, this will go to the best land.

If a farmer can produce corn and sell it for ethanol at a higher price than he can get when he produces corn for food, that is where he is going to go. If a farmer or an agricultural operation in Brazil or west Africa produces sugar cane, they are going to take the best land they can to produce the most sugar cane and to produce the biggest amount of ethanol.

Therefore, we are moving ourselves in a direction that really does not have a lot of hope for the world in the long term. In the short term, Canada needs to establish clear guidelines on how to deal with this industry. Problems are going to be created all over the world, but our country can be a leader in dealing with them correctly here.

I am the party's energy critic and tend to speak to these issues in a holistic sense. I try to look at how every energy transfer affects other things. Let us talk about biomass. When we put the expansion of energy into the biomass area, the pulp and paper industry gets quite concerned about it, because of course its product is now being valued more for energy than it is for pulp and paper.

Once again, when we look at energy in every form, we have to look at how it impacts everything else. It is not simply about establishing a special interest in the country. It is not simply about establishing a need in one sector and saying that this is the direction we should go in. We are investing \$2 billion in this endeavour. That is more than we are putting into any other part of our greenhouse gas strategy at this time.

Government Orders

What are we going to do? We are going to require a 5% average renewable content in gasoline by 2010. Other regulations will require a 2% average renewable content in diesel and heating oil by 2012, once we show successfully that we can use this in diesel in Canadian environmental conditions. What does this actually mean?

• (1035)

When the minister spoke on this issue the other day, he said this would take the equivalent of one million cars off the road. I looked at those numbers and asked him what the percentage would be. He replied that it would be a 40% reduction in CO₂ emissions. Therefore, if 5% is put into gasoline, we are going to get a 2% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Canadian vehicles produce about 100 million tonnes of CO₂ every year. Two per cent of that is two million tonnes. The minister said four million tonnes. He is inflating those figures. Literature indicates that a 40% reduction in CO₂ emissions is about the best we can get. Many people say it would only be 20%. Also, if every one of the 26 million drivers in this country has a car, only 500,000 cars would be reduced by this measure, not one million.

Therefore, we have a bit of rhetoric going on around this subject. I think this should be clarified. I hope that this subject and the issues around it will be discussed fully in committee.

What I really want to talk about here today is the need to put this in terms of a national energy strategy. Where does it fit? How does it work?

Interestingly, Saturday is the national day of action on energy, sponsored by the Council of Canadians. The council is joining with many groups, chief executive officers and people all over the country who are crying out for direction on the overall energy strategy of this country.

Are we getting good leadership from the government on this issue? No, we are not. We are getting the opposite. We are getting the kind of leadership that says "here is a special interest and let us push this one forward" in the absence of a debate that would cover all the issues around energy. This is a failure of leadership on the part of the government. People are crying out to the government to correct this problem.

Why is that? Why have the Liberals and now the Conservatives not provided us with leadership on energy issues or energy security issues? The answer is that over the past number of years both governments have entered into arrangements through NAFTA, through the North American energy working group and through the security and prosperity partnership to link us directly with American energy security and American energy plans.

The Alberta government does not send an ambassador on energy to Washington without a reason. There is no Alberta government ambassador here in Ottawa to lobby us on energy concerns. The Alberta ambassador is down in Washington where the action is. This is a clear indication of where our energy policy is being made. This is a clear indication of where the key decisions around energy are being made right now for Canada.

This energy situation needs to be returned to Parliament, where we can take hold of it ourselves. We need to put Canada first in energy

policy and energy security. Within that perspective, we should be looking at all the things that we are doing, whether it is biofuels, whether it is the importation of liquefied natural gas, or whether it is the export of bitumen. Whatever we are doing in energy needs to have a "Canada first" label attached to it.

Without a clear and defined direction, with this ad hoc approach, the Prime Minister is not only supporting the American energy plan but is also helping big American agribusiness and the massive American biotech industry.

However, when it comes to the needs of Canadians, energy is very important, of course. We live in a cold climate. Everybody today understands the need for heating oil or natural gas in their homes. They do not question this today, because these things are fundamental requirements for Canadians. We have a fundamental need for a supply of energy that is available when we need it. Our energy supply should not be impacted by world crises of the kind that are going to be created as the energy situation in the world becomes even more dire.

• (1040)

The U.S. has a policy that new energy supplies will be handled internally. That is not simply about economics. That is about security. The United States has a strategic petroleum reserve, a quite large one. That is used to ensure that American citizens are protected at all times.

The Canadian model is to take convention oil, export it into the United States, and import into eastern Canada an equivalent amount. We have really moved away from any semblance of energy security.

Right now in Quebec we are arguing over liquefied natural gas terminals in Rabaska where we will be replacing natural gas that is flowing now from western Canada into the Montreal area with a foreign source of liquefied natural gas. It is coming in tankers from such stable areas as Russia, Qatar and Iran. How is this energy security in this country? How is this working for people in that regard?

When we say we need energy security, it applies to biofuels, it applies to natural gas, it applies to oil, and it means that we have to come together on those issues in this Parliament. It is not a partisan issue. This is an issue that speaks to every Canadian. It speaks to our industry. It speaks to our consumers. We should wake up and deal with it in that fashion.

Biofuels could be a boon to farmers and could help Canada tremendously if they are done well. However, what exactly are we trying to do with biofuels? We are trying to create ethanol. One of the more simpler ways to use biofuels is simply to use them in space heating right across this country.

Government Orders

When I go to Yellowknife, I see that the new correctional facility, a very large correctional facility, is now run on biomass energy at half the cost of the fuel oil it was replacing. This is a simple and direct way to use biomass energy. There is no conversion required into ethanol. The greenhouse gas reductions that are achieved through this process are far superior to that of ethanol in fuel for cars. Why are we not putting some effort into that area?

As well, what are we doing with the bill that will support the development of biological material on marginal lands, whether it is in northern Ontario, New Brunswick or wherever it is in this country where we have farmland that is not useful and is not competitive with agri-businesses in producing food? Those are the areas where we can enhance the use of biological energy, where we can make a big difference to Canadians right now in a variety of industries and which would make a tremendous amount of sense if it is handled in this program.

Many problems with biofuels have been presented, but the core of these problems is caused by lack of leadership that will look at the larger picture and quantify what we are doing rather than insisting that we put forward programs of this magnitude that simply deal with special interests.

The fact that the bill comes through the agricultural committee speaks to that in spades. This is an environmental energy issue. This is an issue that fits much stronger in the natural resources and the environment committees, but it is not there.

If the Prime Minister and the government wanted to show leadership by first thinking how to meet the energy needs of working Canadians, we would be supporting more small scale initiatives around biofuels. The large scale initiatives will help the large scale industry. We can do much better right across this country with biomass energy in so many ways with proper incentives. Where in this program is that available?

● (1045)

We need all areas in this country to be producing correctly for the future following principles that are outlined very carefully. The Dutch buy biomass products from Canada to run in coal plants in Holland. They are one of the biggest purchasers of wood pellets from Canada. The pellets are shipped to Holland and used in coal plants. It is sold as clean energy to customers.

Holland follows a 100-point program of environmental care for that product. It follows it right from where the product is harvested in the forest through the whole process the product follows to the market to ensure it meets the green standards that it has set.

This is the kind of approach that would be very valuable to a biofuels industry right now. It would bring surety to everyone in the industry and in the country that what we are doing is correct. This bill does not list the regulations. It gives the government the opportunity to put in place regulations. That is the heart of the matter for the success of this bill.

This is a very important piece of legislation. This is a very important industry. It needs the utmost attention. We need to do this right. We do not need to do it wrong by following a model that does not work in this world. We can be smarter than that. Let us make sure

that when this bill leaves Parliament, it is the finest product we can deliver for Canadians and their future.

Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member for Western Arctic has been very instrumental in many of the energy policies in the part of the world he comes from. Having worked with him on the natural resources committee, I know he is very qualified in matters of energy and energy policy.

One of the aspects he talked about was marginal farmland. I know that our government undertook measures with respect to marginal farmland. Working with organizations like Ducks Unlimited, we wanted to promote the idea that transfers of marginal farmland to trusts or conservation agencies could be done without triggering a capital gains tax, which was inhibiting some of the breakup of farmland into more manageable pieces, so that good farmland could be managed appropriately and marginal farmland could be offloaded to other uses.

The constraint at the time was that this would trigger a capital gain and farmers did not want to face that, so measures were introduced that brought down the capital gains inclusion rate.

The member makes an excellent point with respect to biofuels and their application to marginal farmland. I hope the government is listening to that. The point the member raises with respect to the unintended consequences of promoting biofuels is very valid. We have seen the impact on the pricing of corn and products like that.

When we look at biofuels and the different sources of the materials, one could make an argument that when converting corn to biofuels or other sources like that, it is perhaps not the most energy efficient or environmentally appropriate way to proceed because on a net energy basis it takes a lot of energy to convert corn into biofuel.

While it may be good agricultural policy in a sense for the farmers, it may not be good for consumers when the price of corn rises to a certain point. The idea of moving that to marginal farmland makes some sense.

I would like the member to comment, if he could. He made a point with respect to biofuels and the forestry industry. I know the forestry industry has been promoting very heavily the need for government policies at the federal level to encourage the use of biofuels in its operations because it faces enormous energy costs. Energy used to be a comparative advantage for the forestry industry in Canada and now it is a comparative disadvantage. It would like to use these biofuels.

Are we then faced with a situation that we will support, let us say, the sawmilling sector of the forestry industry at the risk of creating problems for the pulping industry, because that is the source of a lot of their raw material? Or, do we have to make those choices? Can we deal with the question of the better use of biofuels in the forestry industry without necessarily causing problems to the pulp and paper sector?

Government Orders

•(1050)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in the use of biological product for energy. It is there in this country. Within the forestry industry we still have large amounts of biomass that is being simply wasted.

We have not got to the point where the industry is completely converting all of its waste into viable energy product. I think incentives could help a lot. We need also to look at some of the opportunities that are presenting themselves for the use of bioenergy in the forests of British Columbia with the incredible damage that has been caused there by the pine beetle kill.

As I pointed out in my speech, right now wood pellet energy is replacing fuel oil at about 50% of the cost in northern Canada and that is also trucking the pellets a very long way.

When we look at northern Ontario and New Brunswick, we can see multitudes of opportunities for the conversion of buildings and homes to a cheaper source of energy that is readily available there.

It will impact on the forestry industry as the price of oil rises and we can be sure this is going to happen. The major multinationals are not buying back their shares in a record fashion because they feel that the value of oil is going to go down.

Therefore, we are going to see marked increases in the price of oil. Biomass energy will be productive here. If we compare the competitive advantage for a reduction of CO₂ emissions between ethanol and the use of biomass energy in heating and we look at the cost effectiveness of those two products, biomass energy would win hands down right now.

A unidirectional approach with a \$2 billion subsidy program to simply biofuels for ethanol and liquid fuels is not the way to go.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Western Arctic is very knowledgeable on energy policy. I would like him to elaborate on a couple of points that he mentioned.

One of the things that we have seen from the Conservative government is a piecemeal, fragmented and often incoherent strategy when it deals with climate change and certainly energy policy.

Many of the communities on Vancouver Island are rural and very small urban communities. For example, when we look at the government's transit strategies, it simply does not recognize some of the challenges. We have our rail line on Vancouver Island that we have been asking the federal government to invest in as a viable alternative to trucking and other transportation. Yet, we simply cannot get the government's attention on it.

One of the elements that the member for Western Arctic touched on was the fact that an energy policy in Canada should talk about putting Canada first. I wonder if he could elaborate on the deficiencies in the bill and generally on the strategy that the Conservatives have put forward in terms of an energy strategy which puts Canadians first.

•(1055)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, the situation in the world with biofuels is expanding rapidly. There is a

rapidly expanding market for biofuels. Major countries like Japan are making huge investments in cornering the market.

Therefore, we have to be careful about what we do with this subsidy incentive. Will it actually help Canadians? Will it put Canadians' needs first? Or will we end up finding ourselves simply supporting the large scale development of a biofuel industry in the world which may or may not have the environmental characteristics, and may or may not have the socio-economic characteristics that we are looking for in Canada?

We have lived in what ideologically everyone calls a market driven economy for quite a while and it is not working any more. We need to have a directed economy, not a managed economy, which says that these are the directions that businesses should go in to ensure that our future is maintained.

Until many of my colleagues here can understand that and come to that realization which may be difficult for them, as they have grown up with this particular ideology, I think we will be stuck with it. Perhaps the Canadian population will have to work through attrition to change the ideology in that regard.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Western Arctic raised some legitimate concerns.

We see Bill C-33 as being important in terms of CEPA and in a way of assisting the farm community. We also recognize there needs to be some complimentary action on the part of the government relative to protecting the environment.

I was in Saskatchewan and Manitoba two or three weeks ago. We are seeing pressure on the marginal lands. I know it is a provincial responsibility to a great extent, but there is pressure on the marginal lands. People are looking at taking out hedgerows and plowing up marginal lands to plant more high value crops. This will create problems in the future.

Does the member have any suggestions on what can be done from the federal side to wage against that happening?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, we should follow the model that was established by the Dutch industry in using biomass products. We should establish an environmental life cycle analysis that would allow us to subsidize those products which through their life cycle meet the environmental characteristics that we consider important in this country.

Without that kind of attitude, we will not go where we want to go.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***WORLD OF WAR**

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to highlight a young and proud constituent of mine, Sarah Clark. She is just 13 years old, yet she has the maturity to recognize what is important and when it is time to honour those who keep us safe.

Sarah has composed and recorded a CD entitled, *World of War*, that honours our forces, both those who are serving us now and those who have died to ensure our freedom.

After a recent school visit to the Canadian War Museum, she composed a heart warming tribute to our soldiers. Her beautifully haunting voice reminds us of the perils of war and the sacrifices made by our brave men and women who volunteer to share the freedom that we too often take for granted.

Sarah reminds us on this red Friday that it is not just our right as Canadians to enjoy all the freedoms that we share, but indeed a human right that should be enjoyed by all corners of the world.

I thank Sarah. It is indeed a privilege to represent her voice in Parliament, a voice which embodies the many thoughts and feelings that so many Canadians, both young and old, hold so dear.

Colleagues, please drop by my office to hear her beautiful tribute.

* * *

KENYA

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Kenya is in a meltdown with over 850 people dead and 200,000 people displaced. The UN Secretary General said it is critical that the killing stop and that security be established.

Over 20,000 Canadians are of Kenyan origin, but our government's pathetic response to the crisis is to simply shovel money at it without a plan. Canada can play a critical role to help resolve this crisis by supporting the deployment of an African Union stabilization force, by invoking targeted sanctions against Mr. Kibaki and Mr. Odinga and their lead personnel if they do not act in good faith to stop the killings, and by offering the services of Elections Canada to aid in a potential re-vote.

Kenya is on the edge of an abyss. It demands nothing less than immediate action on this front by our government. If not, Kenya could well follow down the bloody path of Somalia.

* * *

• (1100)

*[Translation]***RÉMY BRUNET**

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to congratulate Rémy Brunet, a 19-year-old student in my riding who has distinguished himself during his schooling with a series of outstanding academic achievements.

First, he obtained the best overall average every year at Arthur-Pigeon secondary school in Huntingdon. He also received the McGill University award of excellence for his studies in physics and the Lieutenant Governor's medal for his fifth year of secondary school.

Subsequently, at the Collège de Valleyfield, he was the top student in mechanical engineering in his first and third years of study. He was also named the best overall student in second year.

For the Bloc Québécois, hard work and perseverance are the keys to success. That is why I wanted to congratulate this student and encourage him to continue his studies, where he has had such outstanding success.

* * *

*[English]***BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year during Black History Month we mark the anniversary of the act that abolished the slave trade in the British Empire. Canadians played a critical role within the British Empire beginning in 1793 by passing laws that began the abolition of slavery in Upper Canada, helping to establish the Underground Railroad.

This month is a time to reflect on the contributions that black Canadians have made at the forefront of Canada's successes as a nation in so many fields at home and abroad.

In the past weeks we have seen a unique and long overdue celebration of a man from my native province of New Brunswick, Willie O'Ree, the first black man to play in the NHL.

Willie dropped the puck at the all star game this past weekend. The Boston Bruins honoured him in January at a celebration marking 50 years since his first NHL game. He was recently honoured in his hometown of Fredericton, New Brunswick, with its newest arena being named Willie O'Ree Place.

I will be celebrating Black History Month in Hamilton at the John C. Holland awards in honour of the Hamilton man by the same name who was the first African Canadian to win an award for his humanitarian work.

* * *

WINNIPEG'S RIVER TRAIL

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a proud Manitoban I was pleased to see Winnipeg's River Trail, the longest skating rink in the world, featured on today's front page of the *Ottawa Citizen*.

I know that Ottawans have boasted about the Rideau Canal for many years, but it is time for them to concede the title. Soon the longest rink in the world will be credited to Winnipeg in the Guinness World Records.

Statements by Members

Unlike Ottawa's publicly funded trail, all Manitoba needed was a few college students with shovels and a bit of Manitoba brawn.

Last weekend Winnipeg's River Trail was enjoyed by some 30,000 skaters. We can laugh at the cold but the reality is that we will easily beat Ottawa for the number of safe skate days. The ambience, shopping opportunities and culinary delights found at The Forks sure cannot be beat.

Move over Ottawa, with the longest skating rink in the world and many other tourist delights, Winterpeg wears our title with pride.

* * *

RADARSAT-2

Ms. Bonnie Brown (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates, Canada's leading aerospace company, has just decided to sell its space program to a large American arms manufacturer.

The sale includes RADARSAT-2, a state of the art satellite used for monitoring crops and forests, climate change, tracking ships at sea and mapping Arctic sea ice.

Canadian taxpayers paid \$445 million, or about 85% of the total cost of developing this technology. In return we were promised large amounts of imagery and priority access to RADARSAT-2 in emergencies.

Once it is sold, Ottawa's ability to control what the satellite is used for and to use it in emergencies will be lost. Worse yet, the U.S. government would be able to use our satellite in ways that might contradict our interests. For example, it could assist its efforts to send a ship into the Northwest Passage without our consent.

The Harper government has indicated a desire to block foreign investments that threaten Canada's security interests. RADARSAT—

• (1105)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows that mentioning members by name is contrary to the rules. I had to chastise one of the ministers the other day for this and she will not want to repeat that mistake in her remarks.

The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the presence of people of African descent in Canada can be traced back to the early 1600s. Black History Month provides an opportunity for all Canadians to reflect on the many achievements of black Canadians and their part in the building of Canada.

Upper Canada was the first jurisdiction in the Empire to move toward the abolition of slavery. Between 1800 and 1865, approximately 30,000 black American slaves from the United States escaped to Canada and freedom via the Underground Railroad in which the most northern terminal was the city of Owen Sound.

Every summer people of African descent flock to Harrison Park for the Emancipation Day Picnic and to view the beautiful monument erected there to honour the end of the freedom trail.

Last summer I personally attended the 145th annual Emancipation Day Picnic.

By celebrating Black History Month and the 175th anniversary of the Act for the Abolition of Slavery, we honour the bravery of the many black Loyalists and others who strove to bring an end to slavery.

* * *

[Translation]

35TH SPORTS-QUÉBEC GALA

Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the 35th annual Sports-Québec gala, which was held in December, recognizes the extraordinary accomplishments of athletes and other people involved in sports in Quebec. This year, in honour of the 35th anniversary of this important celebration, many people who have contributed to the history of amateur sports in Quebec attended the event. To emphasize the sense of continuity, special tribute was paid to Pierre and Alex Harvey, a father and son duo who are passionate about cycling and cross-country skiing and who are both exceptional athletes. In fact, this year, Alex Harvey himself received one of the awards.

I would also like to single out a few of the many nominees and award recipients, such as Karine Sergerie and Benoît Huot, international athletes of the year, and Francis Millien and Edgard Théorêt, who have made significant, long-standing contributions to sport.

I would like to congratulate all of the athletes, coaches, officials, organizers and volunteers as once again, the Sports-Québec gala has put the incredible talent, dynamism and vitality of amateur sport in Quebec in the spotlight.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to speak about the Official Languages Act this week. The Bloc Québécois shifted the debate to the Quebec nation because the notion of official languages in Canada scares them.

I would like to point out that the Quebec nation is important to sovereigntists and federalists alike. On November 22, 2006, our Prime Minister, who is from Calgary, rose in this House and recognized that it is possible to be a nationalist without being a separatist, a shocking notion for the Bloc.

Instead of playing petty politics, the Bloc should explain its hypocrisy and inconsistency in this file, given that on Wednesday, they were against it, while Thursday, they put forward some amendments and Friday, wow, they finally saw the light.

The Bloc Québécois can continue to behave like armchair separatists, but we will continue to support official languages across Canada and continue to build a strong Quebec within a strong Canada—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso.

Statements by Members

[English]

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that 2007 will be remembered by front line Service Canada employees as the absolute worst year of their public service careers.

All Canadians remember the mess that was last year's Canada summer jobs program. The cuts and changes made by the Conservative government cost valuable jobs for many students and opportunities for not for profit organizations and small businesses. Combine that travesty with the more recent changes in training assistance through the skills development program and people will get the picture.

Young men and women, many of whom had already enrolled in courses, were later notified that they would receive no training assistance from the government and their lives were thrown into chaos. Single mothers who had enrolled in courses to improve their lot in life with a sincere desire to make a greater contribution to their communities had the rug pulled out from under them.

We understand that the government has responded to some of the advice made by the official opposition with regard to the Canada summer jobs program. We would hope only that the government would see the wisdom and the merit in doing the same for the skills development program.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's tackling violent crime act, Bill C-2, will make Canadians safer. From allowing police to charge those suspected of being drugged up while behind the wheel to protecting children from sexual predators, Bill C-2 is the most comprehensive crime legislation to pass the House of Commons in recent memory.

However, sadly, after passing this chamber, whose members are elected and have to report back to their constituents, the unaccountable, unelected Liberal dominated Senate is putting Canadians at risk by stalling this important legislation.

We all know the Liberals are soft on crime and that their position changes on a daily basis. However, I, along with millions of Canadians, am sick and tired of Liberal games. Enough is enough.

On behalf of all Canadians, I call upon the Leader of the Opposition to stop flip-flopping, stop putting lives at risk and demand that his Liberal senators pass the bill immediately.

* * *

● (1110)

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Jordan's principle has been developed to ensure that all first nations children are cared for appropriately and in a timely manner where jurisdictional disputes exist among governments.

Last week, Premier Gordon Campbell publicly supported Jordan's principle. He went on to say that he hoped that British Columbia

would be the first province to implement this child-first principle. The NDP government in Manitoba has asked for meetings with its federal counterparts to discuss implementing Jordan's principle, but its request has been denied.

Why are provinces leading the way, even though it is the constitutional responsibility of the government to ensure aboriginal children ensure the same standard of care as all other Canadians?

On December 12, 2007, the House voted unanimously to endorse Jordan's principle. When will the Conservative government meet with its provincial counterparts to ensure no first nations child is left behind?

* * *

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week we commemorate the International Day of Holocaust Remembrance, the 63rd anniversary of the liberation of the death camps, of the liberation of the surviving remnants of "Planet Auschwitz", the most horrific laboratory of mass murder in history, reminding us of the dangers of state-sanctioned cultures of hate, of incitement to genocide, of the dangers of indifference and silence in the face of radical evil.

We remember and we pledge, and this must not be a matter of rhetoric but a commitment to action, that never again will we be indifferent to incitement and hate; that never again will we be silent in the face of evil; that never again will we indulge racism and anti-Semitism; that never again will we ignore the plight of the vulnerable; that never again will we be indifferent in the face of mass atrocity and impunity.

We will speak and we will act against racism, against hate, against anti-Semitism, against mass atrocity, against injustice and against the crime of crimes, whose name we should even shudder to mention, genocide, and always, against indifference, against being bystanders to injustice. For in our day, more than ever, *qui s'excuse s'accuse*, whoever remains indifferent indicts himself or herself.

* * *

[Translation]

HOG AND BEEF INDUSTRIES

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week we were treated to some responses that were upsetting, to say the least, from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and his parliamentary secretary about the crisis in the hog and beef industries. The minister's recycled announcements and the parliamentary secretary's trip to Paris are not the solutions that Quebec hog and beef producers are looking for.

The President of the Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec, Jean-Guy Vincent, has publicly criticized Ottawa for remaining silent, and added that if the federal government does not respond soon, the producers will protest on the Hill. Is the minister trying to push the producers to the limit before he takes action?

The president of the Fédération des producteurs de bovins du Québec, Michel Dessureault, is calling on the government to act quickly on the solutions proposed by producers. The minister must respond to this urgent request and implement transitional measures to give hog and beef producers the money they need.

* * *

[English]

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been almost a year since Parliament passed Bill C-293, the better aid bill, with the support of all members in the House, all parties in the House, with the exception of the Conservatives.

Since then, however, Bill C-293 languishes in the Senate because the Conservative senators have used tactics of delay, misinformation and diversion. They have done so in spite of the will of this Parliament. In spite of thousands of petitions that have been presented here, in spite of rallies and in spite of emails, they continue to delay the bill.

It is time for the Conservatives to stop filibustering Bill C-293. The Prime Minister himself supported this bill when in opposition and it was part of a Conservative platform. The problem, however, is that the Conservatives talk an accountability and transparency game and they practise exactly the opposite.

The poor of this world deserve better from the government.

* * *

•(1115)

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has broadly accepted the recommendations in the Manley report. We believe it provides Canadians with a balanced, thoughtful and comprehensive overview of the Afghanistan mission.

We have been making strong efforts to facilitate debate, to start discussions and to build consensus on how to proceed. Joint committee meetings were seen as an opportunity for parliamentarians to play a vital role. Frank, open discussion is what is needed, and I dare say it is what Canadians expect.

The Liberal opposition continues to show the leadership vacuum that exists. The Liberals have grown so used to not making decisions on legislation that now even open, thoughtful discussion at committee is not possible for them.

Oral Questions

The so-called Leader of the Opposition and indeed the members under his direction feel that if they close their minds and do not talk about it and if they pretend it is not happening, it will go away.

Canada and Canadians expect better.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for months Canadians have received disturbing reports about the torture of Afghan detainees. From the very beginning, the government has bungled the issue, trying to brush it aside, even stooping to accuse its critics of supporting the Taliban.

Now, no less than the governor of Kandahar, Asadullah Khalid, is accused of beatings and electrocutions. What is worse, the government knew about it. It has known since April of last year and it covered it up.

Does the government really think it can credibly fight this war in secret?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that simply is not true.

A more important issue for us is the future of the mission in Afghanistan. Yesterday, the Liberal Party blocked a parliamentary study into the Manley report on the future of the Afghan mission. Our government is seeking to have a broad discussion based on what is a serious and responsible report and to work together with others in Parliament to try to find a reasonable agreement on how to move forward in Canada's interest.

I would like to hear from the Liberal House leader how it is serving the interests of Canadians, on a broad debate on the future of the Afghan mission, to shut down debate the way the Liberal Party did yesterday.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the House does not need a dog and pony show. It needs the truth.

No amount of bluster and obfuscation can hide the fact that the government covered up the most heinous allegations, the spectre of the governor of Kandahar torturing detainees. The Government of Canada, the Prime Minister of Canada, knew about it for almost a year and kept it secret. Surely, barbaric behaviour is not a matter of operational security.

Does the government expect to earn the confidence of Canadians in the absence of basic transparency?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what confidence Canadians would have in a Liberal Party that considers John Manley and Pamela Wallin to be a dog and pony show. We think what they produced was a serious report.

Oral Questions

Every day we hear the Liberal Party raising questions about Taliban prisoners. Yet it is the same party that yesterday blocked any serious debate or discussion by a parliamentary committee on how to move forward on the Manley report.

The time has come for a serious discussion of those matters. The Liberal Party is blocking those discussions. It does not think that matters; it does not matter what Canada does in Afghanistan; all that matters is Taliban prisoners. The Liberals are happy to talk about that all the time.

Could the Liberal Party explain why that—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Wascana.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader should simply start with the truth. The government's failure to come clean has drained its already tenuous credibility.

Since last April, the government knew about credible allegations that Governor Khalid had been involved in torture, but the Minister of National Defence continued to deal with him. Senior Canadian commanders and diplomats still deal with him.

Has the government even bothered to investigate the allegations against Mr. Khalid, as specifically required under Canada's detainee transfer agreement? Why the cover-up?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, cutting through the histrionics, hyperventilating and hyperbole coming from the member opposite, he would know, as a member of the previous government, that we have improved upon an agreement that was flawed under his government. We have made it much more possible to have eyes inside the Afghan prisons. This is exactly what we set out to do.

With respect to Governor Khalid, of course I would meet with an individual who is the governor of a province in which there are over 2,500 Canadians. I met with him, as I met with the president of Afghanistan and my counterpart, the minister of defence.

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, leadership is judged not only when things are going well but also when they are not going so well. At present, they are not going so well. An allegation has been made that the Governor of Kandahar was personally involved in the torture of detainees and the government hid this from Canadians for almost one year.

Why did Canada transfer detainees to a system controlled by such a regime?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said moments ago, of course I met with the governor. I met with the president of Afghanistan. I met with the defence minister. In fact, I did so immediately upon hearing of these credible allegations. I sought assurances from them that there would be a full investigation, that they would look into these allegations

and in fact the individual involved should be immediately suspended. There were assurances given that would happen.

Members would know as well that the operational decision then taken by the military was to suspend transfers. Everything that happened should have happened.

I know members opposite do not want to hear that. They want to hear that there was a flurry of press releases, but that did not happen.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why he kept all that secret until he got caught.

[*Translation*]

This government's cavalier attitude is disturbing. It is now clear that the Conservatives hid what they knew about the Governor of Kandahar and his involvement in cases of torture.

Was Mr. Manley informed of the governor's activities before the government briefed him about the mission? Mr. Manley and his panel have insisted on the importance of transparency. Where is the transparency in this matter?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite were not so intent upon shutting down any further discussions at the committee level by Mr. Manley and members of the committee coming before a parliamentary committee to have a reasonable and rational discussion about this particular report, we could ask him that.

What I can say is that the process we have in place was improved upon from the previous government. It was done so specifically to deal with allegations of abuse, and that has happened. There has been no hiding of the truth. There have been operational decisions taken in the field as they should be taken.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this week we found out about two cases of political interference involving the Office of the Prime Minister and his press secretary, Dimitri Soudas. What was the Prime Minister's reaction to these troubling revelations? He started a witch hunt to find those responsible for the leak.

Instead of waging an internal political vendetta, should the Prime Minister not realize that he must address the problem at the source and put an end to such wheeling and dealing, including in his office?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there is any problem. None of the parties involved received any special treatment. Only the Liberals think there is a scandal when a staff member looking into an issue does not hand out special treatment. Correction, the Bloc Québécois thinks there is a problem as well.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the political interference and wheeling and dealing the Prime Minister's Office is being taken to task for occurred while the Prime Minister was boasting that his Accountability Act would protect whistleblowers in the public service. Today, he is looking for those who told the truth about these goings-on, and about those in his office in order to punish them.

Is that not a fine example of the window-dressing ethics, duplicity, and hypocrisy of this Prime Minister and this government?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, times have changed. Under the previous Liberal government, the handing out of political favours to friends was so regular that even the media tired of reporting those stories because it was just business as usual.

Under the Conservative government, the uproar from both the Liberals and the Bloc is all about cases where no undue interference occurred and no favours were handed out. It is a measure of how much things have changed under our government.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Gilbert Lavoie, one of Brian Mulroney's former chiefs of staff, said that when people got a call summoning them to the Prime Minister's Office, they got a move on for one simple reason: the Prime Minister was interested in a specific file.

Having allowed his secretary, Dimitri Soudas, to meet with the unelected Minister of Public Works—Michael Fortier's—chief of staff, in his offices in the Langevin block, can the Prime Minister deny that the request was, by definition, political interference?

• (1125)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote the former Liberal minister, Jean Lapierre, who said, “quite honestly, after hearing the Radio-Canada report and reading the article in *La Presse*, I do not see either a smoking gun or a scandal. In my political experience, dating back to 1974, any citizen can make a request to the Prime Minister's Office, which may then forward it to the ministers involved”.

There is no problem. No favours were handed out.

Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the legal conflict pitting his department against the Irving family, the unelected Minister of Public Works refused to listen to the grievance of a member of Parliament who wanted to discuss a case that is before the courts. However, in the Rosdev case, a matter that is also before the courts, Public Works ran straight to the Prime Minister's Office. Two similar cases, two different ways of dealing with them. Does that not qualify as political interference?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are two cases that are entirely similar. No favours were handed out. No political favours were dispensed. No changes were made. No political pressure was applied.

It is actually outstanding conduct, conduct very different from what we used to see under the previous government.

* * *

AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the war in Afghanistan, the Conservative culture of secrecy has no limit.

Today, the *Globe and Mail* is reporting that the governor of Kandahar is involved in torture. The government reported this to the Red Cross but there is no indication these allegations have been investigated, as is required by the detainee transfer agreement.

The Conservatives failed to tell Parliament. They suppressed this information in federal court. Why did the Conservatives not tell Canadians about these cases? Why do they continue to hide the truth from Canadians?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to point out an important matter. First, the allegation with respect to the governor is not a Canadian transferred prisoner.

Second, with respect to the governor of Kandahar, we must not forget that this is an individual appointed by the sovereign elected government of Afghanistan.

We will continue to abide by the agreement that we signed and improved upon, the flawed one of the previous government. This agreement is in place to do exactly what we have always done, which is to stand up for human rights and ensure that prisoners who are transferred are treated properly.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government knew Asadullah Khalid was personally accused of torture and abuse of detainees. The government has kept this secret for nine months.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence are defendants in federal court over these manipulative actions.

Justice Mactavish said that transfers should not resume until a judgment is made.

Will the government commit today not to restart that transfer of detainees? Will the government respect Canada's courts?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we always support our international agreements. We support the courts. We support the Geneva Convention. That is exactly the reputation that Canadians have always enjoyed.

However, what we will not do is follow the advice of the members of the opposition, the members opposite, who want certain operational details disclosed. They want information that might be of use to the Taliban, operational matters.

Oral Questions

As General Hillier has said and as other Canadians working in the field know full well, operating in an area the size of Ottawa with a set group of individuals, certain information can help the Taliban. We will not do that.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government's explanations about the backroom wheeling and dealing by the Prime Minister's press secretary raise more questions than they answer. The government explained that the city counsellor who allegedly brought the Rosdev file to Dimitri Soudas' attention was Paolo Tamburello. However, Mr. Soudas intervened in this matter in August 2006, whereas Mr. Tamburello was no longer a counsellor as of 2005.

Who approached Mr. Soudas and when?

• (1130)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his statement, the city counsellor said the same thing as this government: there was no political pressure or favouritism.

[English]

Nothing wrong has been done. However, the outrageous kinds of accusations that we have had from the Liberal Party on this issue are wrong. They are so outrageous that yesterday their own leader had to retract and apologize for his outrageous accusations in this case.

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are saying anything they can to distance themselves from the Rosdev affair. Former counsellor Tamburello, potential Conservative candidate Marcel Tremblay and party fundraiser Leo Housakos have all been named.

Which one of them will agree to take the rap for Mr. Soudas? Who approached the Prime Minister's Office on Rosdev's behalf, and under what circumstances?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the circumstances are not the same as they were, for example, in the case of the Liberal member for West Nova, who, as minister responsible for ACOA, gave a grant to a harbour for which his brother-in-law has a monopoly, or the member for LaSalle—Émard, who introduced legislative amendments and tabled a bill that benefited CSL, despite his own leader's concerns. That was a rather divisive decision.

That is the Liberal record: a record of scandals. This is completely different.

[English]

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's excuses over the Soudas affair are weak, are unravelling in a heap and are resting squarely at the Prime Minister's feet.

It is clear that Mr. Soudas tried to exert pressure over Public Works officials. They were being lobbied to rethink the govern-

ment's position by Rosdev's lawyer, a Conservative Party bagman and one of the Prime Minister's senior staff.

If this was not influence peddling, how else were they to interpret being called to the PMO? Was it for tea?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently my friend thinks the Prime Minister's Office should have nothing to do with running the government or asking questions about the government.

What is of interest to Canadians is that no special political favours were handed out in this case. None. That is what Liberals think is scandalous.

God forbid that becomes the practice because when the Liberals are in office they will have nothing to offer their supporters. It will not be business the way it always was under the Liberal Party. There will be no reason for the Liberal Party to even exist.

Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Soudas meddling could end up compromising the government's position in a multi-million dollar lawsuit. None of the people involved were registered to lobby. It is a clear violation of the law.

When will the government stop serving up nonsense and demand some real accountability from the Prime Minister's own staff?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have had full accountability and nothing untoward occurred. No favours were handed out.

When we talk about concerns, I look at this entire affair. Only one person has had to apologize under this entire sad episode, this invented scandal by the Liberal Party. Only one person has had to retract what he did. Only one person has had to back off.

Some hon. members: Who?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: The leader of the Liberal Party.

* * *

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government denies that there have been cases of torture in Afghanistan. Yet it has heavily censored the documents provided in accordance with the Access to Information Act, thereby protecting the torturers.

How can the government have denied for one year that there have been cases of torture when, at the same time, it censored proof of the activities of the governor of Kandahar province, who is suspected of having tortured prisoners?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I should not have to remind the member opposite that it was the Government of Canada and the Minister of Foreign Affairs who revealed here on the floor of the House the fact that we had uncovered a credible allegation of mistreatment. That happened and that is undeniable.

Let us retrace what has been going on here. We put in place a new agreement. It leads to the ability to discover any improper treatment. That works. We discovered that. We suspended transfers. We revealed on the floor of the House of Commons what happened. We have done everything in line with our commitments to protect individuals and to support the Canadian Forces.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has been questioned many times about possible cases of torture and has always denied the allegations, stating that it was Taliban propaganda.

How could the government deny that the torture took place when it had documents proving that the torture was carried out by those in the highest political circles, namely the very governor of Kandahar province?

An hon. member: It is outrageous.

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite has a different view of sovereignty than I do but we are not going to tell the government of Afghanistan who it can put in place as its officials. We will, however, as we have always done, raise our concerns at the highest levels, which is what I did in November.

I spoke to the governor and I told him of our concerns. I said that there had to be action, that there had to be an investigation and that there had to be changes. I said the same thing, within 24 hours, to the President of Afghanistan and my counterpart, General Wardak, and that will continue.

We have regular contact with not only our own officials, but we raise concerns regularly with members of the Afghanistan government.

* * *

[Translation]

FORESTRY AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the list of jobs lost in Quebec is getting longer: 270 jobs lost in Lebel-sur-Quévillon; 115 jobs lost in Maniwaki, in the riding of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and 55 jobs lost in Saint-Hilarion.

When AbitibiBowater announced yesterday that another 400 workers would be laid off because of the crisis, the CSN called on the government to take immediate action and abandon its partisan

interests. The Prime Minister must table a bill immediately to improve the Conservative's aid package, which is being criticized all across Quebec.

Does the Prime Minister not realize he must take immediate action?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed the forestry sector is undergoing major restructuring. We all know why. If we take the U. S. economy for example, usually some 2 million homes are built every year. That figure has now dropped to 600,000.

What is the government doing about this? First, we have reduced the GST. Second, we have reduced personal and business income taxes. Furthermore, we have granted an accelerated capital cost allowance and, finally, we have just announced \$1 billion community development trust.

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, jobs are being lost in Conservative ministers' ridings. That is a fact. They are doing nothing about it. They are caving in to western Canada, which receives more money per capita than Quebec. While the forestry sector of Quebec is in crisis, the profits of the Conservatives' friends keep climbing; Imperial Oil \$3.19 billion; Petro-Canada, \$2.73 billion. The government must realize that its plan is basically helping the oil companies in Alberta by reducing their taxes.

Will this government table a bill immediately to help the forestry and manufacturing workers who truly need it?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, we have just announced \$1 billion to support the forestry and manufacturing industries. Of this \$1 billion, \$217 million will go to the province of Quebec to help the workers and the regions.

Will the Bloc Québécois do its part for the workers and support this measure during the next budget? Yes or no? Will it support the workers and regions of Quebec by voting in favour of the \$217 million earmarked for the province of Quebec?

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENT CANADA

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the contempt that this Conservative government has for the public service is shocking. This morning we learned that scientists at every level at Environment Canada are being muzzled by the environment minister. Our scientists cannot even explain to a reporter what an endangered species is without first getting approved lines from the minister.

What is the government afraid of? Why does it insist on bullying and muzzling the best scientists in the world?

Oral Questions

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the story is wrong and the member is absolutely wrong. There is no change in providing media access to the scientists or others.

This is a policy being implemented by the department officials at Environment Canada. It is also based on the government communications policy which members opposite would well know because it was brought in, in 2002, six years ago by the Liberal Party.

• (1140)

Mr. John Maloney (Welland, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only person at Environment Canada that needs a muzzle is the minister, who keeps barking like a prime ministerial pit bull.

First the government gagged Environment Canada scientist Mark Tushingham for trying to talk about his new science fiction novel, then it eliminated the position of science adviser to the Prime Minister, and Arthur Carty resigned in disgust.

When will the government realize that fearless advice is the cornerstone of our public service, and that freedom of thought and speech are part of the bedrock of our society?

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want the truth and the truth is that in 13 long years that party caused emissions to go up 33%. It is huge. It caused an environmental disaster. The Liberals did not get it done.

We now have a government that is serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, 20% actual reductions by 2020. We are getting it done. Shame on them.

* * *

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government does not listen to any experts. Here is one more example.

We now know that engineering experts are telling us that this new MAPLE reactor will never be up and running because of major engineering flaws. Understandably, Canadians have no faith in this minister. They still have major questions about AECL and the government has yet to start the review it promised.

When will we get the truth about this boondoggle of nuclear proportions?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is not one to talk about the truth. This issue, he knows, goes back more than a decade and he is well familiar with it.

I am sick and tired of opposition members misleading Canadians on this issue. They misled them on the issue of timelines regarding the medical isotopes. They misled people about the lack of connection between the Auditor General's report and the medical isotope issue. They misled Canadians about their position on December 11. They should be focusing on telling the truth.

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga—Erindale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada used to have one of the most respected nuclear

safety commissions in the world, but the Conservative government has chosen to join the Homer Simpson school of nuclear regulators.

It fired the national science adviser, the nuclear safety regulator, and what does it do? It is also muzzling every nuclear expert or science expert who dares to tell Canadians the truth.

The government says not to worry because the Prime Minister is personally responsible and there will not be any nuclear accident. How can Canadians trust someone who does not even believe in science?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the facts.

In early December we had a national medical crisis in the country. The deputy leader of the Liberal Party called it a national medical crisis. He talked about the millions of lives that would be affected if we did not get the reactor up and running.

We had a session here in the House of Commons. We brought in the experts and the witnesses, and members had as much time as they wanted to ask questions of them.

At the end of that night, all members supported the government in its initiative to get the reactor up and running again. We made a good decision. We stand by that decision. The opposition should quit trying to rewrite history.

* * *

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday opposition members on both the defence committee and the foreign affairs committee defeated a motion that would have allowed a joint committee of Parliament to debate the Manley report.

Conservative members had proposed a full month of meetings on this important issue. Canada's future role in Afghanistan is of great concern to Canadians, yet the opposition refused to allow Canadians to debate this critical issue.

Can the Minister of National Defence share his views on this shocking decision by the opposition parties to oppose public hearings on the Manley report?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed unfortunate that we may miss this opportunity to have an impartial review, of an impartial independent panel quite frankly, on what is and I think has been appropriately characterized as perhaps the most important issue that we in this Parliament will ever deal with.

This process of working through a committee would allow for a more in-depth study of an important substantive issue, that is the future of the mission in Afghanistan, looking at the detailed and laudatory report that was put in place by Mr. Manley and members of that panel.

I implore members of the opposition to reconsider this view and allow the committee to do this work.

ETHICS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have not cleaned up Ottawa. In the fine tradition of Roch LaSalle and Chuck Guité, PMO insiders are still trying to interfere with Public Works contracts and even when they are before the courts.

In a new twist, Montreal city councillor Marcel Tremblay denies that he ever asked Dimitri Soudas to intercede on behalf of the claimant in the lawsuit. There are gaping holes in this story.

If the government has any self-respect whatsoever, will the Prime Minister agree to relieve Dimitri Soudas of his duties until the Ethics Commissioner can determine the extent of his wrongdoing?

• (1145)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, there is no contradiction between what Mr. Tremblay has said and what the government has said, only now the NDP have taken this scandal one step further.

Before, there was no pressure; there was no favour dispensed. Now the scandal is: no favour was even asked for.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder what Justice Gomery is thinking as he watches this latest saga of the abuse of power unfold, especially as the dust gathers on the recommendations of the report that he tabled two years ago today.

There is still no Access to Information Act reform. There is still no public appointments commission. There is still no parliamentary budget officer and still no curbing of corporate lobbyists.

PMO insiders would not be able to run roughshod over fair contracting rules if Justice Gomery's recommendations were implemented when the Conservative government promised it would implement them. What is the holdup?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the holdup is that this member was part of the committee that passed the Federal Accountability Act, the toughest anti-corruption law in Canadian history.

Among the recommendations that Judge Gomery made, this member did not put forward any amendments to add those recommendations into the bill, so if he was so excited about those recommendations, he had his chance.

We on this side promised the Federal Accountability Act. We passed the Federal Accountability Act, whistleblower protection and expanded access to information. We reined in the lobbyists and we are getting the job done.

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MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the region of Waterloo is home to over 62,000 workers in the manufacturing sector and many of these work in the high tech sector. We depend on manufacturing and today it is in crisis.

Oral Questions

NCR, ATS, MTD, Lear Corporation, Kitchener Frame, and the list of companies in crisis goes on. Yet, what is the government's response? "Laissez-faire, I don't care".

When will the government introduce and implement a plan to deal with this crisis in manufacturing?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raises this question. It gives us one more opportunity to talk about what this government has done.

Let me remind the hon. member what the United Steelworkers said: "The crisis didn't just start when the Conservatives took office". The Liberals had 12 years to deal with this stuff and they did nothing.

Let me also share what we have done in the immediate past. We have taken aggressive action, over \$9 billion in support to the manufacturing industry.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sadly this is an answer that I would have expected and it is insufficient. Canadians deserve better and my constituents in Kitchener Centre deserve better.

Does the parliamentary secretary understand the stress that families suffer when there is a job loss? Does he understand the loss of self-esteem? Does he understand the insecurity they go through? Does he understand the impact on secondary spin-off jobs in the retail and service sector? Or, does he just simply not care?

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be very guarded in my response about what Kitchener Centre deserves as representation.

However, let me remind this House the importance of jobs in this country. Every one of us in this House realizes the seriousness of lost jobs, but we are seriously pleased with the number of better jobs, higher paying jobs that the initiatives of this government have brought.

Let me also remind the hon. member that the business that comes out of Ontario that goes to feed the oil and gas industry in Alberta—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

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[Translation]

TELEFILM CANADA

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the new chair of the Telefilm Canada board of directors, Mr. Roy, who was appointed by the Conservative government, yesterday told the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage that Telefilm Canada's funding is insufficient. The industry has been calling for an increase for two years.

Oral Questions

When will the government increase the Telefilm Canada budget? When will it finally support Canada's English and French film industries?

• (1150)

[English]

Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is well aware that we had the hearing for the new commissioner for Telefilm yesterday and it is from that hearing that his question arises. I believe if he were to reflect on the answer of the new commissioner, the new commissioner was not asking for increased funding.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): He just recognized, Mr. Speaker, that the funding was not adequate.

In December, I asked the minister why the Conservatives were cancelling the exhibit transportation services. The parliamentary secretary said that they were “continuing to work” on the matter. Some actually drew hope from that answer.

Yet in January, the minister's chief of staff wrote to the member for Charlottetown stating, “the only option was to discontinue the service”.

Who is telling the truth? Has the government really chosen to abandon the 100-plus museums and galleries that rely on this service? Why is the government promoting cultural isolation?

Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member will be well aware of the fact that we have taken steps that had to come in line as a result of a situation with respect to that organization. We are very well aware of it. We are not in any way isolating, as he suggested.

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[Translation]

FORESTRY SECTOR

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, workers, unions, plant managers and politicians of all stripes have condemned the measures announced by the Conservatives to address the forestry crisis. Even the member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean said that his own government's announcement was unsatisfactory and that he hoped the Prime Minister would reconsider his decision to make the assistance plan conditional on the budget being adopted.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that he should act now and table his bill so that we can improve it and vote on it without delay?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the \$1 billion we announced, here is what Manitoba's New Democrat Premier, Gary Doer, said: “In Manitoba, if I wanted to act on a budget item of such great importance, I would introduce it in my budget”.

We live in a democracy. A billion-dollar item has to be voted on in the budget.

My question for the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord and his party, the Bloc Québécois, is this: will they help the regions of Quebec and workers by endorsing this measure when the time

comes? Will they vote with the government or will they deprive workers and the regions of the \$1 billion we want to give them?

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we want to help workers right now. However, I would like to remind the House that the member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean added that his government should be doing more, particularly for older workers.

Not only does he hold no sway with his Prime Minister and his ministerial colleagues, but he is complicit in the government's sole objective: to help the oil companies.

Will he admit that he is just like the other Conservatives, a mouthpiece for rich oil companies and too bad for workers in Quebec and Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean?

Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I still think that the Bloc Québécois is playing petty politics at the expense of workers and the regions of Quebec. If the Bloc Québécois is serious and really wants to help workers, its members can vote for the budget, and if they want to trigger an election the day after that, all they have to do is move a motion of non-confidence against the government and let parliamentarians decide.

At the moment, we are talking about \$1 billion for workers and the regions of Quebec to support those who want to find another way.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Roger Valley (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first nations people deserve better from the Conservative government. Conservatives have been cancelling education projects all across Canada. The latest cancellation of the school in North Spirit Lake is appalling.

On August 22, 2006, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs promised in writing to build this much needed school. For two years the community invested time and money into starting construction on December 1, but guess what. It was cancelled eight days before the project started.

Chief Donald Campbell and the community of North Spirit want to know why they have been cheated by the government. They want to know when the minister will stop making their children beg for a new school.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, CPC): Mr. Speaker, within the scratching of the member's paper, I do believe there was a question. We do have a lot of interest in supporting first nations communities throughout the country. In that region specifically, I met with many of the leaders throughout the member's riding, and of course we look forward to assisting them in the future.

Let me talk a bit about the improvement in the system that we have attempted in British Columbia. In fact, the British Columbia government has brought forward an important change to the way that first nations schools will be implementing their education. Many jurisdictions across the country are very interested in that same change.

* * *

• (1155)

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in an attempt to address some of the concerns raised in the Manley report, our government proposed a joint committee meeting to study the report in an open and transparent manner. Shockingly, the opposition members refused this request. What are they afraid of? Are they worried that the experts will testify that their positions on the Afghan mission simply are wrong?

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain to the opposition why a frank and constructive dialogue would be in the best interests of Canadians?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the actions of the Liberal Party members yesterday revealed their fear for an open, reasoned and informed discussion. Maybe that is because the Liberal Party is divided on the mission in Afghanistan. Perhaps the Liberal Party does not want an open, honest and constructive debate on the future of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan.

Why are the Liberal Party members afraid of Mr. Manley's testimony? Why are they afraid of Mr. Manley? I want to know why.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pork and cattle producers told the agriculture committee that the government has basically abandoned them. Some have called today, February 1, black Friday and others are calling the government's funding promises a cruel joke.

Farms are foreclosing, rural communities are dying and yet no immediate assistance has been committed. At the same time the minister is using bully tactics and blatant pressure on the Canadian Wheat Board which will take power away from farmers. This is clearly undemocratic.

When will the government stop leading Canada down the road to agricultural suicide?

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even the opposition is starting to recognize that the issue is getting very serious. It is a unique situation. Thank God that we have a minister and a Prime Minister who are willing to put farmers first. Let me elaborate.

In the last two years, the minister has been responsible for \$4.5 billion in program payments in 2006, \$600 million for AgriInvest Kickstart in January, \$76 million to help farmers combat

hog disease, \$400 million to cover farmers' increased input costs, \$200 million—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Western Arctic.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, fuel shortages in Kirkland Lake, Cape Breton and Inuvik are creating suffering for middle class and working families. Homes and vehicles are going without fuel. Two respected Canadian energy institutes released a detailed report yesterday predicting even more shortages unless Canada acts now.

The Prime Minister claims Canada is an energy superpower, but the reports say Canada is an energy satellite that puts U.S. interests ahead of our own. When is the Prime Minister going to create an energy security strategy, one that puts Canadians first?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in fact an energy superpower. We look forward to working with the provinces and the industry on these issues. We continue to work with them on issues such as climate change and developing the energy sector in this country. We look forward to success in that area.

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MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the greater Toronto area is Canada's largest manufacturing region with about 400,000 employees. Recently, plant closures and layoffs have cost the region more than 1,900 jobs a month. The Conservatives' response was laissez-faire, "We do not care".

The government talks of structural adjustment, but has provided no vision for overcoming the challenges facing our economy and no plan for strengthening our industries. Is it that it is incompetent, or is it, as usual, engaging in petty partisan politics by trying to punish Toronto for not electing any Conservatives in the last election?

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, none of that is true of course. The fact of the matter is that although jobs are being lost because of some restructuring in some industries, other jobs are being created. This government has been strongly supporting workers in making the transition to new job opportunities.

We are investing heavily in that kind of support for transition. In addition, we are also investing in the very industries that are trying to restructure with enormous infusions of tax breaks and other measures that will allow communities to rebuild and restructure.

Routine Proceedings

●(1200)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, stakeholders such as The Future Group, Stop the Trafficking Coalition and The Salvation Army believe that Bill C-17 is important legislation to help further combat the plague of human trafficking and the exploitation of women.

Could the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration please comment on why stakeholders who had confirmed their appearance on Monday before the committee have now been told they are no longer welcome to appear before the citizenship and immigration committee, and why Bill C-17 is no longer on Monday's agenda?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the subcommittee, which is opposition dominated, met and mysteriously, for no apparent reason, Bill C-17 is no longer on Monday's agenda.

I think the opposition members on that committee should explain to these stakeholders, and indeed to all Canadians, why the protection of vulnerable women and children is not a priority for them. I can assure members that it is a priority for our government.

The Speaker: That will conclude the question period for today.
[Translation]

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier on a point of order.

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[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the statement by my colleague from Mount Royal about Holocaust Remembrance Week and it is what causes me to stand now and make this intervention.

While the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam was asking a question about Afghan detainees, the member for Northumberland—Quinte West yelled twice, "How many Canadians were abused?"

I take it that the member for Northumberland—Quinte West would not mean by that that it is okay to abuse human beings as long as they are not Canadians. I wish he would take an opportunity to correct that record.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the point he was making is a very simple one, that one should have some consideration for the safety and well-being of our troops in the field, many of whom have died at the hands of the Taliban, the kind of Taliban whom we are taking prisoners. His point is that we should have some regard for them and that is a sentiment I hope all of us in the House share. It is a sentiment we hear all too rarely from the opposition parties.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, such an assertion on the part of the government House leader is absolutely outrageous. There is no question that every member of the House wholeheartedly supports our troops whenever they are put in harm's

way anywhere around this world. The Conservative Party has no monopoly on compassion or good faith or patriotism.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that reassurance from the Liberal House leader about the Liberals' care and compassion for our troops in the field. I hope they would honour that by allowing a democratic debate and discussion on the Manley report in the foreign affairs and defence committees.

The Speaker: We are wandering far away from points of order. Discussion of committee business is a matter for the committees and the House leaders. They can have it without me having to hear about it here.

The hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Conservatives do not like the opposition. Maybe they would like to become the opposition and allow us the chance to govern.

Hon. Karen Redman (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the parliamentary secretary was responding to my question about manufacturing losses, he was indeed reading from a press release. I would ask if he would, in the tradition of the House, table that press release. While he is at it, he could level an apology to the people, constituents and Canadians of Kitchener, Waterloo.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to share that press release. I believe it was some time in the last two years, but I will certainly make sure that I provide it to the House.

I was simply referring in my comments, no disrespect to the hon. member or her representation of her constituents by any means, to the fact that was quoted in the release, that the Liberals had 12 years to improve on the manufacturing job prospects in this country.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1205)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report related to the nomination of Michel Roy as chair of the board of directors of Telefilm Canada.

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PETITIONS

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first petition has to do with the Statistics Canada error on the CPI. It is calling on the government to take full responsibility for this error and to take the required steps to repay every Canadian who was shortchanged by the government program because of the miscalculation of the CPI. This is very important because it affects not only Canada pension, old age security and other pension plans, it also affects some of the private pension plans that are also based on calculations of the CPI.

PEACEMAKING

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is to establish a department of peace. It is calling on the Government of Canada to establish a department of peace that will reinvigorate Canada's role as a global peacemaker and peace builder and that will have the abolition of nuclear weapons as a top priority.

INCOME TRUSTS

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present this petition on behalf of a number of Canadians, some from Calgary, Alberta, some from Peterborough, Ontario, some from Kitchener, Ontario, some from British Columbia and from right across the nation who remember that the Prime Minister boasted, on his apparent commitment to accountability, that the greatest fraud was a promise not kept.

The petitioners remind the Prime Minister that he promised never to tax income trusts but that he recklessly broke that promise, imposing a 31.5% punitive tax which permanently wiped out \$25 billion of hard-earned savings from Canadians.

The petitioners, therefore, call upon the Conservative minority government to admit that its decision was wrong, that it was based on flawed methodology and incorrect assumptions, and to instruct the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to finally let Canadians see their basis for any allegations of tax leakage, instead of stonewalling them at the finance committee.

SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have here over 150 names of people from Manitoba who are extremely concerned about the proposed security and prosperity partnership. They are calling upon the Government of Canada to stop further implementation of this partnership with the United States and Mexico until there is a democratic mandate from the people of Canada, parliamentary oversight and the consideration of its profound consequences on Canada's existence as a sovereign nation, and also our ability to adopt autonomous and sustainable economic, social and environmental policies.

These people urge the Government of Canada to conduct a transparent and accountable public debate of this process, involving meaningful public consultations with civil society, and a full legislative review, including the work, recommendations and reports of all SPP working groups and a full debate and a vote in Parliament.

INCOME TRUSTS

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to present an income trust broken promise petition from a number of residents of Calgary, Alberta.

Routine Proceedings

These petitioners want to remind the Prime Minister that he promised not to tax income trusts but that he broke that promise and imposed a 31.5% punitive tax that wiped out the hard-earned savings of about two million Canadians, particularly seniors, of some \$25 billion.

These petitioners are calling upon the Conservative government to admit that the decision to tax income trusts was based on flawed methodology and incorrect assumptions, as demonstrated in the finance committee hearings; second, to apologize to those who were unfairly harmed by this broken promise; and finally, to repeal the punitive 31.5% tax on income trusts.

* * *

● (1210)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 2.

[Text]

Question No. 2—**Hon. Sue Barnes:**

With regard to the arming of Canadian border officers: (a) how many officers will be armed by the end of 2007; (b) how many officers will be armed in 2008; (c) how many years will it take to train and arm all officers; (d) what dollar amount is being spent per officer; (e) what dollar amount will be spent in total to train all officers; and (f) how does the government justify disregarding the results of the ModuSpec job hazards analysis?

Hon. Stockwell Day (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), as of January 25, 2008, 220 CBSA officers have been armed and deployed to various ports of entry, POE. By the end of the 2007-08 fiscal year, we expect to have between 250 to 300 CBSA officers armed.

In response to (b), the number of officers armed in 2008-09 will be based on the availability of training facilities and the implementation plan and seat allocation. The plan and the seat allocation are currently being developed in consultation with the regions and will be available in early 2008.

In response to (c), fully trained and armed border officers have already been deployed. While it is projected that this process may take up to 10 years, the government intends to move forward as quickly as possible and is looking at options to increase training capacity.

Government Orders

In response to (d), the CBSA's arming initiative involves much more than just the cost of training officers. The cost of the initiative includes officer training, uniforms and equipment, inventory tracking and incident management, overall program administration and corporate support, the replacement of summer students, new construction at the CBSA learning centre in Rigaud, Quebec, the development of new policies and procedures, and the costs related to our legislated requirement to accommodate certain employees. To assign these costs on a per person basis when only slightly more than 100 employees have successfully completed the training would be extremely misleading.

In response to (e), the 2006 federal budget provided funding of \$101 million during a period of two years to begin the process of arming officers and to eliminate work-alone shifts. The total cost of arming border services officers, including all expenses related to the initiative, is estimated at \$781 million over a period of 10 years. This includes \$338 million in training, \$97 million for infrastructure, \$44 million for equipment such as firearms, ammunition, et cetera, \$77 million for student conversion, \$17 million for duty to accommodate situations and \$207 million for program administration and corporate costs.

In response to (f), there have been many assessments over the years done on the issue of arming border officers, and not all had the same conclusions. The Government of Canada's position has always been that CBSA officers need to be provided with adequate tools to protect their lives, health and safety and to perform their duties. The government has concluded that it is in the public interest to provide an armed presence at the border.

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-219—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on a point of order raised by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons concerning the need for Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction for volunteer emergency service), standing in the name of the hon. member for Malpeque, to be preceded by the adoption of a ways and means motion.

I wish to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary, as well as the hon. member for Malpeque and the hon. member for Mississauga South for their submissions on this matter.

On January 31, 2008, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons rose to argue that the provisions of Bill C-219 to allow volunteer emergency workers to deduct certain amounts from their taxable income needed to be preceded by the adoption of a ways and means motion because they would have the effect of replacing several tax relief measures enacted by Parliament following the adoption of the Budget

Implementation Act, 2006. He contended that removing such alleviations of taxes would result in an increased tax burden on taxpayers.

In his response, the hon. member for Malpeque argued that on the contrary, Bill C-219 would reduce taxes, not increase them. He pointed out that a very similar bill in the last Parliament, Bill C-273, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction for volunteer emergency service) had been accepted as being properly before the House and that there was no reason to judge it to be otherwise in the current session.

The Chair has carefully reviewed the provisions of Bill C-219. As has been pointed out, the bill provides for volunteer emergency workers to deduct certain amounts from their taxable income. It would thus reduce the amount of taxes payable. It does so by adding to, not replacing, parts of sections 60 and 60.02 of the Income Tax Act. Let me explain.

It is true that these same sections of the Income Tax Act were amended by the Budget Implementation Act, 2006, but those amendments dealt with very different issues than Bill C-219. Specifically, they provide tax relief in relation to the universal child care benefit, the Canada Disability Savings Act and income splitting for seniors.

On reflection, I believe that the House will conclude with the Chair in the first place that the sponsor of the bill could not have intended to amend provisions which did not even exist at the time of the introduction of his bill, Bill C-219.

Furthermore, Bill C-219 does not explicitly repeal provisions of the Income Tax Act, nor does it concern in any way the issues addressed in the subsequent amendments brought by the Budget Implementation Act, 2006. Instead, the bill deals with deductions for volunteer emergency workers.

In light of this, the Chair simply cannot accept the arguments put forward by the hon. parliamentary secretary. If and when the bill is referred to committee, the Chair has no doubt that any clause numbering inconsistencies will be corrected.

Accordingly, I find that Bill C-219 is properly before the House and that debate on the motion for second reading may commence as planned.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Government Orders

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Bloc Québécois about Bill C-33, which, in short, would regulate fuels. The Bloc Québécois is obviously in favour of having the standing committee study this bill. In fact, passing the bill at second reading, the motion which we will vote on, enables the committee to directly examine this bill. The bill will not have an immediate effect on the content of fuels, but it will simply enable the minister to regulate the content.

The bill reflects some of the Bloc's concerns—and I say some—that we should wean ourselves off our dependence on oil. The Bloc Québécois, like all Quebeckers, believes our policy should be to increasingly reduce our dependence on oil. The bill also calls for an effort to be made in the transportation sector in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the use of agricultural and wood waste products.

Before the regulations are implemented, our party would like to see some thoughtful deliberation concerning the environmental record of the alternative fuels the federal government will propose. If the Conservative government really wanted to make a difference in this area, it would choose the path proposed by the Bloc Québécois, which calls specifically for legislative action to force automakers to substantially reduce the fuel consumption of all road vehicles sold in Quebec and Canada. The regulation would be very similar to the reduction proposed by California, which has been adopted by 19 other American states and the Government of Quebec.

We know the Conservative government's stance on this, however. It has chosen to ignore the reform supported by those who are showing leadership in the fight against greenhouse gases. In his statement, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities instead endorsed the Bush administration's declaration, which is much less demanding and seems as though it was designed specifically to spare American car manufacturers. Once again, the Minister of Transport showed his loyalty to the Prime Minister's approach and the Conservative Party line, which lean towards the Bush administration rather than California standards.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 to provide for the efficient regulation of fuels. It would allow the federal government to regulate renewable content in fuels in order to require, for example, a certain percentage of biofuel in gasoline. The proposed measures, except for a few key details, were included in Bill C-30 of the previous session. I would remind the House that the bill called the "clean air act" was amended by the opposition parties in committee and that the measures concerning biofuels still appear in the amended version of the bill.

The government already announced the following:

An amended Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 would allow the government to implement regulations which will require five per cent average renewable content in gasoline by 2010. Subsequent regulations will also require two per cent average renewable content in diesel and heating oil by 2012 upon successful demonstration of renewable diesel fuel use under the range of Canadian environmental conditions.

Clearly, we believe that cellulosic ethanol is the way of the future. In terms of a biofuel substitute for oil, the most interesting prospect at present is ethanol made from cellulose. This process, still in the experimental stage and deserving of more support for research, uses

a plentiful and inexpensive raw material and, more importantly, would recycle vegetable matter that is currently unusable. It would also provide new markets for the forestry and agriculture industries.

Given the environmental and economic problems posed by the production of ethanol from certain crops, support for raw materials that could be produced more readily is gaining ground. Thus, research is being increasingly focused on the production of ethanol from non-food crops and materials rich in cellulose and fibres. The development of an efficient process for converting cellulose to ethanol could promote the use of raw materials such as agricultural residues and straw as well as forestry residues, primarily wood chips, and even trees and fast-growing grasses. However, it is a more complex process requiring specific enzymes and it is not cost-effective at present.

• (1215)

Iogen, an Ottawa company, has built a pilot plant and has been producing ethanol from cellulosic materials for a few years. The pilot plant in Sweden produces ethanol from wood chips. The production process combines acid and enzyme hydrolysis. The products obtained are lignin, which can be burned directly or dried and sold as fuel, carbon dioxide, which is recovered, and ethanol, which is used to produce a biofuel.

Still in the experimental stage, ethanol made from cellulosic materials such as agricultural and wood waste cannot yet compete with traditional products. However, it does represent an interesting possibility. In addition, the Government of Quebec has announced that it will not promote corn ethanol further because of the environmental impact of intensive corn production. It seems that the Varennes corn-based ethanol plant will be the only such plant in Quebec.

It is important for all parties, and all the men and women listening, to understand the Bloc Québécois's policy and program to reduce our dependency on oil.

Quebec can cut its oil dependency in half within 10 years. By oil dependency, we mean oil's percentage of our energy consumption. Since global consumption of energy—be it electricity, energy from biomass or less conventional energy—will continue to grow in parallel with economic growth, reducing oil dependency by 50% means reducing oil consumption by a third in absolute numbers. This is quite a challenge, but it is not impossible.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois estimates that this huge shift requires that six objectives be met: one, quickly help Hydro-Québec regain a margin of flexibility; two, continue encouraging individuals, businesses and industries to give up using oil; three, reduce fuel consumption in passenger transportation; four, stop the increase in consumption in goods transportation; five, reduce consumption of petroleum products as fuel; and six, make Quebec a centre for clean energy and clean transportation.

When we say that we need to focus on energy efficiency to restore a margin of flexibility to Hydro-Québec, which can no longer count on surplus electricity as it did in the past, the goal is to increase residential efficiency by 18% and reduce consumption by 15% in 10 years.

To recoup energy, we need to start by looking at the energy we waste. The best way to create some flexibility is to improve energy efficiency, especially in buildings. Older homes are much less efficient than new homes. Homes of equal size built between 1981 and 1996 lose 14% more heat than new homes built after 1996. The difference climbs to 27% for homes built between 1971 and 1981 and 43% for even older homes. Using fairly simple methods to improve thermal efficiency, we can reduce the difference between older homes and newer homes by 65%, according to the federal Department of Natural Resources.

Given the real potential to save energy, we need to look at introducing measures such as programs to encourage people to use alternative energy, including geothermal, wind, passive solar or photovoltaic energy; mandatory but free energy audits when homeowners apply for a permit for a significant renovation; and amendments to the building code to set thermal efficiency standards for older homes and require that homes be brought up to standard before any permit is issued for major renovations.

Our second proposal is to eliminate the use of fuel oil in homes, businesses and industry. The 10-year goal would be to reduce by half the number of homes that heat with fuel oil, to reduce their consumption by 60% through energy efficiency measures, and to reduce by 45% the use of oil as a source of energy in industry.

In 25 years, the number of homes heated by fuel oil in Quebec has been cut in half. In the past few years, the trend has slowed considerably, in part because there are no longer any incentives for converting heating systems, but also because the price of oil has been relatively low for the past decade. The price of oil has gone up considerably in the past two years and that in itself provides an incentive.

To accelerate the conversion rate, the incentives for converting heating systems that were successful in the past could be reinstated.

• (1220)

Third, we recommend curbing fuel consumption for the intercity transport of goods. Trucks consume far too much fuel and alternatives to trucking are not flexible enough.

The goal is to put a freeze on truck traffic at its current level and to focus on technological advances and on changing the standards and regulations, in order to achieve a 9% reduction in fuel consumption for the intercity transport of goods. This increased fuel consumption

is directly related to the increased quantity of goods being transported by truck.

While the quantity of goods transported grows along with the economy, rail transport is not growing as quickly as production, and transport by truck is practically absorbing the entire increase. To reduce truck traffic in the intercity transport of goods, in addition to increasing the energy efficiency of trucks, the relative advantages of other modes of transport need to be greater and efficient infrastructure needs to be developed to encourage the use of more than one mode of transportation.

Creating programs to rebuild the rail system, immediately removing all federal obstacles to implementing a Quebec marine policy, building an efficient transshipment infrastructure to facilitate the use of more than one mode of transport—intermodal transport—and limiting the predominance of trucking are some avenues to explore to achieve this goal.

There is a second point to the third suggestion, which is to curb fuel consumption for the intra-city transport of goods, since nearly all oversized vehicles run on oil products. The goal would be to reduce the amount of fuel used for the intra-city transport of goods by 25%. Unlike intercity transport, for which it is possible to develop alternatives to trucking—since it is over a long distance, it is always possible to consider transport by rail or by water—trucks will always be difficult to replace in an urban environment. However, in many cases, the vehicles used for this type of transport are unnecessarily large.

According to a 2001 study by the Office of Energy Efficiency, delivery trucks in urban areas in Canada were on average driving with a load that was at 20.5% of their capacity. The Bloc Québécois thinks we should put an end to that.

Measures specially designed for this sector can be implemented, for example, developing plans to reduce the size of vehicles, in cooperation with the government, for transport and delivery companies. For companies to which this measure could apply, such as messenger companies, there should be incentives to encourage them to introduce as many electric or hybrid vehicles into their transport fleet as possible. This idea has already made some progress, since in a brief presented to the House Standing Committee on Finance on October 17, 2006, the association representing messenger companies indicated that its members were interested in introducing electric-dominant hybrid vehicles into their fleets, provided they would receive a federal tax credit to help them make up for the price difference between hybrids and gasoline-powered vehicles.

Government Orders

The Bloc Québécois' fourth suggestion is to reduce the amount of fuel used to transport people, which makes up two thirds of the total amount of oil consumed in Quebec's transport sector and of which a large portion, 83%, is used in urban settings almost exclusively by cars. Our goal is to halt the increase in the number of automobiles on our roads by promoting a 40% increase in public transit ridership, and to reduce the fuel consumption of privately owned vehicles by 17% and that of industrial and commercial vehicles by 30%. Automobiles are responsible for nearly all oil consumption used in passenger transportation. Reducing our oil dependency and contributing to the fight against greenhouse gases necessarily requires us to reduce the use of cars and reduce fuel consumption.

There are two paths to achieving our objectives. On one hand, we must come up with an efficient alternative to the use of personal cars in urban settings and, on the other hand, we must reduce the amount of fuel consumed by cars. This will obviously require considerable investment in public transit infrastructure, particularly, to establish transit-only roads, develop new lines for commuter trains, street cars and trolley buses, establish designated lanes for public transit and car pooling, all properly monitored, as well as car sharing and other initiatives. For the Montreal, Quebec City and Gatineau areas alone, these developments would require considerable investment.

It would also require regulatory changes in order to force automakers to substantially reduce the fuel consumption of automobiles. Such a measure would target a 20% reduction in the fuel consumption of all road vehicles sold in Quebec within 10 years. In order to ensure that the reduced fuel consumption of new vehicles is not offset by an increase in consumption by older vehicles, this measure would have to be coupled with mandatory annual inspections of all vehicles more than five years old or having been driven more than 100,000 km.

• (1225)

Once again, our regulations should follow the California model rather than what is being proposed by the Bush administration in the United States or the Conservative administration in Canada.

Fifth, we recommend that the amount of oil be reduced in fuels where biofuels, despite their interesting potential, are almost non-existent. The objective of our fifth suggestion is to reduce by 5% the amount of oil consumed throughout Quebec. The Bloc Québécois, like the federal government, is recommending that current oil-based fuels have a 5% biofuel content—biodiesel and ethanol, preferably cellulosic ethanol.

Sixth, we recommend that Quebec—a leader in some areas of transportation and clean energy—become a transportation and clean energy pole primarily by increasing investment in research and development and promoting the creation of technology poles. The objective is to gain the advantage on our neighbours and to be on the cutting edge of technology when this sector really takes off.

By further consolidating our assets in such sectors as public transportation, hydroelectricity and wind power, as well as substantially increasing support for research and development in niches related to clean technologies—in which Quebec has comparative advantages—Quebec could have an enviable position in the post-petroleum era because it would be less vulnerable to oil crises and it could export leading edge technology.

Over the next 10 years, achieving the objectives and recommendations that we have just listed would benefit Quebec in many ways. Quebeckers could benefit from a 32.8% reduction in oil consumption in Quebec and a reduction of close to 50% in oil used for power generation in Quebec, which would drop from 38% to 20%. They would also benefit from a 21.5% reduction in Quebec's greenhouse gas emissions, and a savings of \$3.2 million on the cost of importing oil into Quebec. These measures would also make Quebec more competitive and stimulate growth, which would, in turn, increase employment and outside investment. Quebeckers would also benefit from increased wealth and an improved balance of trade.

Let us not forget that achieving these goals would effectively reduce Quebec's greenhouse gas emissions by 7% by 2012 and by 21.5% by 2020.

Within a few years, these investments would produce significant results, particularly in terms of Quebec's balance of trade, the competitiveness of businesses here, household disposable income in Quebec, Hydro-Quebec's revenues, and employment in construction and businesses in the transportation and clean energy sectors. In short, investing to reduce our oil dependency will make Quebec richer and will generate revenue that will enable the state to cover the full cost of these investments, perhaps within as little as seven years.

It is important to understand that so far, Quebec has developed its hydroelectric generating capacity by itself with no funding from the federal government, which has contributed barely 8% to the development of wind energy. It is high time the government came up with programs that will enable us to invest in reducing our oil dependency, in helping people and in imposing the strictest possible standards for automobile manufacturing, rather than offering tax credits to help rich oil companies.

All the measures proposed by the Bloc Québécois are achievable in the short, medium and long term. Just as it is already a leader in hydroelectricity and wind energy, Quebec could be a world leader in the fight against greenhouse gases, but especially in our desire to reduce our oil dependency. Clearly, this will require an effort by the federal government.

Quebeckers can cut their oil dependency in half within 10 years, but only if the federal government does not work against us and scupper Quebec's efforts by doing nothing, as it has done in the fight against greenhouse gases.

Government Orders

Moreover, in accordance with the constitutional division of powers, the federal government has responsibility for taking some steps to help achieve these objectives. Consequently, the government must correct the fiscal imbalance once and for all, mainly in the form of independent revenue, which grows with the economy and inflation. It must also continue investing in transportation, in particular by rebuilding rail lines and port facilities, building transshipment facilities to support the development of intermodal transport and improving transportation networks.

In short, with federal involvement, Quebecers could avoid once again having to foot the bill themselves for developing new energy sources.

* * *

● (1230)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

TABLING OF PRESS RELEASE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after question period there was a point of order from the Liberal member for Kitchener Centre requesting that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance table a news release from which he had read.

This was a news release in which the United Steelworkers had been critical of the Liberals' record in the manufacturing sector and stated:

The crisis didn't just start when the Conservatives took office...The Liberals had 12 years to deal with this stuff and they did nothing.

That is what he read out. I now have a copy of that news release and would table it in response to that request.

* * *

● (1235)

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, 1999

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation on this very good issue here today, the renewable fuels issue, but I was very interested in his discussion about Quebec and its plans and directions. I think it is important that the discussion take place on a larger front than the provincial one. We need federal-provincial agreements to drive the kind of energy planning we need in this country.

Having said that, I note that he did say one thing that I found a bit contradictory in terms of his party's position. He said that his members want to work toward eliminating the use of fossil fuels in Quebec, yet his party has not opposed the development of the liquefied natural gas terminals at Rabaska, near Quebec City. These terminals will bring non-renewable fossil fuels from other countries to Canada largely for the use of industry or residents and commercial buildings and heating. Much of this energy could be replaced by the use of bioenergy from Quebec forests or from farmland in Quebec.

Why does the Bloc support such a development when there are greener alternatives within Quebec?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to tell my NDP colleague that he has it all wrong. What the Bloc Québécois said about liquefied natural gas terminals is that the Government of Quebec should do an energy analysis. This has not been done. So, the Bloc said that it would not support the bill before the Government of Quebec does a full analysis of our energy needs. This was the position of the Bloc Québécois, and it was criticized by those who supported the liquefied natural gas terminal in Rabaska. The people in favour of it slammed us because we did not want to support them.

As always, the Bloc Québécois is very responsible. We want the Government of Quebec to analyze Quebec's energy capacities. Do we need one or two liquefied natural gas terminals? No analysis has been done, and until one has, the Bloc Québécois will not support the development of the liquefied natural gas terminal at Rabaska, on the south shore.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

CANADA GRAIN ACT

Hon. Jay Hill (for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food) moved that Bill C-39, An Act to amend the Canada Grain Act, chapter 22 of the Statutes of Canada, 1998 and chapter 25 of the Statutes of Canada, 2004, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege and pleasure for me to rise today and support the proposed amendments to the Canada Grain Act, because they touch on a vital economic sector in this country and in my riding.

As I recall, many of the amendments to this act come out of work that has been done at the agriculture committee. It has been done in cooperation with all parties, so I look forward to their support for this bill.

Government Orders

When we look at the tremendous accomplishments of our agriculture and agrifood industry over the last 100 years, the Canadian grain sector stands out as a great success story. Today, Canadian wheat, barley and other grains are known by our customers all over the world for their outstanding quality, consistency, cleanliness and great innovation.

Each and every year, Canada's grain industry contributes over \$10 billion to the Canadian economy. These dollars of course drive the economies of both the rural and the urban areas of Canada. They create and sustain jobs right through the grain production chain, from farm input suppliers to elevators, to transporters and processors.

These dollars create jobs and prosperity for Canadians here at home and they support our rural communities, which contribute so much to Canada's economy.

This government has taken concrete action in support of this vital sector of economy. We are putting farmers first, as we hear the agriculture minister saying quite often. Two-thirds to three-quarters of our caucus has rural roots.

Hon. Wayne Easter: What baloney.

Mr. David Anderson: I notice that the Liberal opposition critic wants to heckle us on that because we do have a massive number of MPs from rural areas and he basically sits alone over there. We understand agriculture from the ground up, unlike the Liberals, and that is why it once again was a strong theme in our throne speech last fall.

Our first act as a new government in February 2006 was of course in the interests of grain producers when we accelerated the grains and oilseeds payment program. They thanked us for that.

We are investing more than \$2 billion in the development of biofuels to open up new markets for our grain and oilseeds producers, to create new jobs in rural communities and to create a better environment for all Canadians.

We are working hard to deliver marketing choice to help our western wheat and barley producers capture new opportunities, to make business decisions that are right for their farms and, indeed, even to capture the opportunities that are available to other farmers across this country.

We have improved cash advance programming by doubling the interest-free portion for producers. That was another act we were able to deal with very quickly and successfully at the agriculture committee because everyone there was willing to cooperate.

We have helped the transfer of family farms to young farmers by boosting the capital gains exemption, which for many years has been asked for. The Liberal government would not do that for farmers. We chose to do that. We have moved ahead on it.

We are pressing for an ambitious outcome at the WTO for the benefit of Canada's entire agriculture sector.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and his provincial colleagues have agreed to move forward on new programs to support farmers. These programs will be simpler. They will be programs that our producers can take to the bank, which is also something that they

have asked for over several years. They will be programs that are going to be designed by the farm community for farmers.

AgriInvest, for instance, the producer savings account, is where producers can deposit their money to their accounts and trigger matching government dollars. To help kickstart this program, the government has committed \$600 million, which started flowing in January 2008. We hear the opposition crying about our programs, but in fact they are working. We have just rolled out a major one in the last month.

Ministers also agreed to move forward on AgriStability, an improved margin-based program that replaces much of the coverage previously available under the Liberals' flawed CAIS program.

Ministers agreed on the details of AgriRecovery, a disaster relief framework that ensures rapid assistance to producers hit by smaller natural disasters. We look forward to that rollout.

Farmers can expect the whole business risk suite of programs to be in place and available by April 2008. That will be good news for them. They have waited a long time for good farm programs. Indeed, they waited through the entire Liberal regime to find a decent farm program. They will now have those programs in place.

● (1240)

The amendments the government is proposing to the Canada Grain Act and the Canadian Grain Commission are one more illustration of our commitment to grain producers. Canada's quality assurance system for grain is a key competitive advantage for our farmers. The measures proposed in these amendments will build on that competitive advantage.

When Canada's global customers purchase Canadian grain for processing, they can count on getting the consistent quality and cleanliness they have come to expect, load after load. This world class reputation that our Canadian grains enjoy around the globe has been earned.

In large part, it has been earned through hard work, first and foremost by the hard work of our farmers, who grow some of the best grain in the world, but also by grain handling companies, research scientists and the Canadian Grain Commission.

Why is Canada so successful? Our edge in the marketplace has always been quality. This kind of quality did not happen by accident. Much of the responsibility for the quality of Canadian grain belongs with the Canadian Grain Commission and the quality assurance system that it is mandated to administer under the Canada Grain Act.

Canada's grain industry is changing. The legislative tools required to keep the industry competitive need to change accordingly.

Government Orders

The Canada Grain Act has not changed substantially in almost four decades. In that time, the marketplace for grain has continued to evolve. There has been more emphasis on a broader range of crops in western Canada and on such things as identity preservation, niche marketing and processing of grains in our own country.

The biofuels industry, supported by initiatives put in place by this government, has become a major customer for grains. On the previous bill we were discussing, there was some debate on that very issue.

The reform of the Western Grain Transportation Act in the mid-1990s triggered a wholesale diversification as producers opted to market their grains through livestock or to switch to other crops such as oilseeds, pulse crops and horticultural crops.

I do not think the change was bigger anywhere than it was in my own region of southwest Saskatchewan, where at one time we grew almost exclusively grains. Now there are crops growing in my region that we never thought we would grow there, such as mustard, canola, lentils, peas and chickpeas. Farmers have taken the initiative to change their operations to respond to changes in the industry.

Today, wheat accounts for one-fifth of farm receipts on the prairies. That seems substantial, but in the 1950s three-quarters of our land was producing wheat, so there has been a huge shift.

Likewise, marketing structures are evolving as well. The Wheat Board monopoly on wheat and barley was put in place by Parliament 70 years ago because of a variety of dynamics and reasons.

The system was essentially designed to collect the grain produced by small farmers at small country elevators, market it around the world as a uniform commodity and then try to divide the returns from that process among all the producers who delivered the grain.

Today, those dynamics have changed. Our approaches and structures need to change with them. We face the prospect of numerous new and growing competitors in South America, the former Soviet Union and other regions around the globe. We need to respond to those challenges.

As well, in the buying side of the market, the grain market has moved away from the commodity procurement model of the past. Now we have a situation in which large numbers of mainly private buyers select a range of quality attributes for particular market segments.

In other words, people are getting picky. They want high quality products, which Canadians can produce, but they want them delivered at a certain time in a certain way and often in a manner that farmers are best able to meet. Our present marketing system just cannot meet those challenges.

We need to continue to evolve and adapt to these new realities. That is why we are working to open up opportunities for our producers through marketing choice. On barley marketing, a majority of farmers, 62%, has asked for marketing choice. Our new government remains firm in its resolve to stand up for farmers. We remain committed to giving producers the barley marketing choice they are calling for.

The Prime Minister also remains absolutely firm on our determination to move forward with producers for marketing choice and to bring them opportunities they have not had in the past. We are committed to freeing our farmers to make marketing decisions that are right for their own businesses. We want to give producers the freedom they deserve and the marketing options they need to maximize their own profitability.

We are proposing these amendments to the Canada Grain Act to help keep our grain producers competitive by improving the regulatory environment for Canada's grain sector. The proposed change to the Canadian Grain Act and the Canada Grain Commission will help the grain sector to meet the challenges of a more competitive and market oriented sector for the 21st century.

● (1245)

By removing unnecessary costs from the grain handling system, the bill works to build a lower cost, more effective and innovative grain sector. We are working to reduce the regulatory burden. As all costs in the system eventually work their way to farmers, this will result in a less costly system for those same farmers.

These amendments reflect the direction of both the COMPAS report and the good work done by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. Both reports reflect extensive consultations held with the sector in preparing those reports. In short, these amendments speak to the will and the needs of the Canadian grain industry.

I want to talk a bit about the changes that we are bringing forward.

First, inward inspection and weighing of grains will no longer be mandatory. These amendments remove the requirements for costly mandatory services that do not clearly contribute to the bottom line of farmers and the grain industry.

Currently, the Grain Commission is required to inspect and weigh each railcar or truck lot of western grain that is received by a licensed terminal and transfer elevators. The industry has been calling for change in this area for some years now on the grounds that these mandatory inspections impose costs and are not essential to ensure grain quality. I should point out this does not affect the inspection that is done at the elevator when farmers deliver their grain. We need to be clear on that. They will still be protected.

Inward inspection itself will no longer be mandatory. Instead, shippers of grain will be able to request an inspection at their discretion when they feel the benefit justifies the cost. Elevators will also be required to allow access to private inspectors when an inspection is requested.

The Canadian Grain Commission will also be authorized to provide grade arbitration if so requested by the parties to a transaction, so farmers are protected in their transactions with the grain companies.

Second, the Grain Commission will get out of the business of collecting and holding security deposits from licensed elevators and grain dealers under the producer payment security program. This program has cost a lot of money, since security is working capital tied up with no return.

Some may believe that the security program provides a free service to farmers, but every cost in the grain handling system must be paid and the program does have costs. Worse, it does not work. We all know there have been some spectacular failures in which producers found out the security system did not guarantee that they would be paid.

With the Grain Commission leaving the security business, the field will be open to farmers to decide whether they need payment security insurance if the benefits are worth the cost to them.

The field will also be open to farmers and farm organizations wanting to look at alternative methods, such as commodity clearing house models or other alternatives in which they might be interested. The government will no longer impose the cost on farmers and will no longer make the assumption that it always knows best. This brings the policy in line with other areas of agriculture and it brings the grain policy in line with what goes on in other parts of Canada.

In addition, the legislation proposes several additional amendments to modernize the act. These amendments will improve the clarity of the application and the enforcement of existing provisions. They will reflect current practices as we modernize the act. They will enhance producer protection. They will eliminate some of the provisions that are no longer applicable or no longer used.

I have a final word on the job situation at the Canadian Grain Commission.

The commission will be working with staff over the duration of the legislative process to assess the full impacts of the proposed changes. We understand this process may have a significant impact on the lives of some of the employees and are committed to working with them in a clear and transparent manner.

The proposed amendments to the Canada Grain Act support the goals of the government's growing forward framework for agriculture. They will help the grain sector continue to evolve in a direction of greater competitiveness. They will give greater freedom to farmers to manage risks. They will bring in effective regulatory oversight where it is needed.

The amendments the government is proposing contribute to building a competitive and innovative grain sector by reducing costs, by improving competitiveness, by reducing regulation and by providing choice for our producers and others in the grain sector.

The government has built a strong foundation for agriculture across Canada. We have delivered on our commitments to farmers just as we have delivered on our other commitments to Canadians. In short, we have put farmers first. This proposed legislation is just one more example of that.

• (1250)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to what the parliamentary secretary had to say. His last comments are glaring. He tries to leave the impression that the government has put farmers first and it has done anything but. In fact, the way the legislation is proposed, puts farmers behind industry.

In terms of the parliamentary secretary's remarks, there has been a lot of hot air about what the government is doing for farmers. In

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reality the government is talking a good line, but is not meeting the needs of primary producers in so many ways, especially the hog and beef industries at the moment. What the government is doing now is an insult to those industries.

His remarks on the position of the government toward the Canadian Wheat Board were even worse. The actions of the government are an affront to democracy. The parliamentary secretary knows that this week the minister called the Wheat Board, and those opposed to the Wheat Board, to a meeting and basically suggested—

• (1255)

Mr. Ted Menzies: Ninety per cent producers.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, one member over there says that he is talking to producers. We know for a fact that there are 12,000 barley producers in western Canada. The representatives, who were in that room before court in terms of the appeal, admitted they had been in existence since 1976 and represented 130 producers. Having 130 present out of 12,000 is not having barley producers represented at the meeting. That was said in the court documents, and the member knows it. What I am saying is it is an affront to democracy.

The parliamentary secretary mentioned the work of the standing committee in the review of the Canadian Grain Commission earlier. However, the bill, as drafted, ignored many of those recommendations. There is no cost benefit analysis, as was asked for by the standing committee. Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 11 have been completely ignored.

Let me ask the parliamentary secretary this question. The current minister was chair of that committee. Why did the two members ignore the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in proposing this bill or is it just another sop to their industry friends in which they intend to weaken the position of farmers in marketing and grains around the world?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the member opposite was listening, but I explained the benefits of the changes to the act. They would benefit farmers with reduced regulation and improved protection and opportunities in agriculture in the future.

I want to address the issue that he spent the majority of his time on and that was the meeting that the minister called this week. The member is from Prince Edward Island so we would not expect him to have a clear understanding of what goes on in western Canada right now.

Last year we held a plebiscite and 62% of farmers in western Canada voted that they wanted some marketing choice with regard to barley. Since then there has been a huge shift toward support for our position, for bringing choice to farmers, particularly in dealing with barley. Not only has there been a huge shift, but there is a huge sense of urgency that something needs to be done very quickly.

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This week the minister called a meeting between the barley industry and the Canadian Wheat Board. All barley industry participants were invited and they came. Wheat Board representatives came as well. The barley commissions, the barley growers, the malt industry, the Grain Growers of Canada, the brewers, the Wheat Board and three agriculture ministers from western Canadian provinces came to discuss what needed to be done in the barley industry in western Canada.

The member can afford to delay and hold this thing off, but western Canadian farmers are making their decisions about seeding intentions. They need to know what they are going to be doing this spring.

The Canadian Wheat Board is not bringing any sense of certainty to the market for western Canadian farmers. The last thing we need in western Canada is for the Wheat Board to continue to delay on this issue so farmers do not know if they should grow malt barley or not. If they make a decision to move out of malt barley, then the malt industry starts to make a decision about whether Canada is a good place to invest in the malt industry.

We need some stability in this industry and the board needs to take some leadership and make some decisions that will give farmers choice in this area. Then we can develop this industry the way it should be developed.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the member, but his comment that the member from P.E.I. did not understand western Canada was a cheap shot.

I am from western Canada, but I happen to live on the east coast. It would be like me telling the member and his party that they have no understanding of Quebec or Atlantic Canada. Therefore, he can retract that statement later in the House if he so desires.

With the direction the Conservatives are taking farmers, or the ones they purport to represent, these farmers, without the protection and the services of the Wheat Board, will end up at the hands of foreign multinational corporations like Cargill and Monsanto. When these farmers end up competing against those huge multinationals, they will be left out in the cold.

Will the government be there to help them? No. It is just an excuse to get out of the way. We in the NDP, and I am sure many others, support the idea of the Canadian Wheat Board because it was successful. If the Conservatives did not fire the Wheat Board president, we would probably have a much better thing going now.

● (1300)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, he just proved my point. He does not know what he is talking about. What he is saying is rubbish. We clearly have a situation in western Canada right now where we need some leadership on this issue.

We have the farmers, the maltsters, the brewers and two provincial governments representing 95% of the malting industry in western Canada all on the same page and the Wheat Board and the opposition on the other page.

We need to represent farmers. We are willing to do that. I wish they would get on board with that.

Hon. Jay Hill (Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously time is of the essence, but I did want to rise in this debate to support the comments made by my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture.

I want to refer to some of the comments made by my colleague. A large number of people in our Conservative government caucus are actively farming, or they have families actively farming, or have farmed before. Although I no longer own land and farm, so I am not in any potential conflict when I speak on issues like this, I farmed for 20 years and raised 3,000 acres of grains and oilseeds in the Peace River country. I am proud of that heritage. My father farmed all his life other than during the second world war when he was in the air force.

That is not unusual for members in this caucus. We have a lot of people who have direct links to the land. It annoys me to no end, and I know it annoys my colleague as well, when I constantly hear members on the opposition benches talk as though they are some kind of an authority on the Canadian Wheat Board and on what it means for western Canadian farmers.

It is fine to be from Prince Edward Island or from Nova Scotia and to tell us how we should market our grain, but it is hard not to get a little emotional about this issue.

As a former farmer and as a person who was involved in farm organizations for years and years before I got into federal politics, one of the criticisms I often heard from farmers was they were sick and tired of programs designed by bureaucrats to benefit bureaucrats. Would my colleague further elaborate on the new programs that are coming into place under this new Conservative government, which will help farmers and which they have had direct input into those programs.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I have a quick reflection on the Wheat Board and then I will move on to something else.

Yesterday I sat on a panel with a Liberal member who brought forward a private member's bill together with an NDP member. Both of them are from urban ridings. I know the view from downtown Winnipeg is a lot different than it is from the farm, but the government has moved to protect farmers from day one.

I mentioned that we accelerated the grains and oilseeds payments. As soon as we formed government, we put that into place. We put \$2 billion into the biofuels industry. We have worked hard to deliver marketing choice to farmers. We have changed the cash advance programming that the Liberals never changed. We have changed the capital gains exemption. For years that was requested. We are pressing at the WTO for a good result. We brought in agri-invest, and my colleague asked about that. As well, we brought in agristability and agri-recovery. This suite of programs will be ready in April.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to the Chief Government Whip, I should not rise to speak. If democracy were dictated by this government, since I am from Quebec, I would not have the opportunity to speak on behalf of producers from out west or anywhere else. What is happening is not an act of the Holy Spirit. These are proposals and questions put forward by the producers.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary—who attended the committee meetings when the Canadian Grain Commission and the changes to be made were being discussed—why did most of the committee's recommendations not find their way into this bill?

• (1305)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I think most of us here would try to abide by the rule that if we are going to speak we should talk about things that we know something about. That does not stop anyone from talking about anything they want, but that is probably the first thing that we should consider.

These recommendations deal with a number of issues. In these recommendations and amendments to the legislation, the mandate of the Canadian Grain Commission and the Canada Grain Act is being clarified, but there are a lot of other things going on. The Canadian Grain Commission is moving to protect the interest of grain farmers. It is working to protect the interests of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is kind of sad to have to stand in this place and outline my credentials before I start, but the attack on my person by government members is designed to try to discredit what I have to say.

As a former farm leader, I spent 11 years in western Canada on grain issues. I have probably been in as many, or more, farm yards than any of those folks across the way. I have been at many public meetings in the debates on these issues.

Why, as a member of Parliament from Prince Edward of Island, I am speaking on this issue, and the Canadian Wheat Board issue when that opportunity occurs, is that my office is swamped by phone calls, faxes and letters from western Canadian farmers, practising farmers who are concerned about where the Conservative government is taking Canada in terms of its farm policy. It is undermining the Canadian Wheat Board. Clearly, with this bill which has ignored so many of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, it is undermining the Canadian Grain Commission itself.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board talked about how Canadian grain is recognized as quality number one around the world. That is true. It is recognized as quality number one around the world.

Where we are seen as the quality supplier of grains around the world, the United States is seen as the residual supplier. The

Americans may set price, but they are seen as the residual supplier. Why is that? Because farmers long ago advocated for an agency, a commission, the Canadian Grain Commission, that would protect their interests, that would ensure they were protected from the grain trade, along with the Canadian Wheat Board. It would ensure the quality that Canada sold was number one.

It is the Canadian Grain Commission which has put Canada's reputation where it is today, as have the farmers, in terms of producing that high quality grain. So let us give credit where it is due.

We have to ask, if we were to pass this bill as currently composed, would Canada still be recognized as the quality number one supplier of grains around the world? Would Canadian producers still have the protection from industry that they currently have and from the grain trade? As I read the bill, I do not believe they would.

There are some real concerns about what the government has proposed in terms of Bill C-39. What should have been a decent bill after the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food presented its report is like so much of what the current Conservative government does. It leaves out the balance in terms of the proposal and brings forward a bill that is more to do with ideology, with half measures, with no real intent to improve the system in an all conclusive way.

That is sad, because it would have been nice to be able to stand and congratulate the government for once, but again it has denied us that opportunity of support by basically ignoring the will and the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. By so doing, the government is ignoring the will and the recommendations of the farm community. Oh yes, the Conservatives cater to the few, as was clear in the parliamentary secretary's discussion about the meeting this week. They cater to the few, but they ignore the many.

• (1310)

The government has a responsibility in its actions to govern for the whole, not just those that the governing party is ideologically aligned with.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member has 15 minutes.

Hon. Wayne Easter: I expect, Mr. Speaker, that if you asked it, members would probably give unanimous consent for me to have another 20 more.

Bill C-39 does not reflect the unanimous recommendations of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. For the minister to imply otherwise is misleading. The question is why this contempt for the committee, and why this contempt by the minister for his own Conservative colleagues that were on that committee, of which he was one. I suppose it does make some sense because that is the way they continue to act over yonder based on ideology alone.

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When the standing committee presented its report in November 2006 it was under the chairmanship of the member who is the current Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. He was chair, and the parliamentary secretary for agriculture at the time is the current Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources. They were at all those committee hearings and ignored the very committee hearings that they should have been encompassing in the bill. Why? Maybe it is, there is the rumour out there that the Prime Minister's Office and government dictates everything, and maybe they have had to toe the line there as well. Maybe that is the case, and I expect it probably is.

There are lots of concerns about this bill coming in. Let me read a few into the record. The National Farmers Union on December 13, 2007, which was the first major organization to draw attention to some of the serious deficiencies in this bill, stated a number of concerns quite clearly. Its president, Stewart Wells, said that Bill C-39 will fundamentally "turn back the clock" on the Canadian Grain Commission. In other words, it will bring us back to the havoc times before the Canadian Grain Commission was put in place. A number of other concerns were outlined, and I will raise them for debate at a later date. The amendments will remove the requirements that the Canadian Grain Commission operate as a public interest watchdog that regulates the overall grain industry "in the interests of producers".

If this bill passes, the NFU says that the grain industry would become virtually self-regulated, and the CGCs role will be reduced to being a passive service provider that provides grading, weighing, and inspection services to grain companies on a fee for service basis. Farmers' protections will be reduced to a minimal level while the legislation leaves the door open for companies to be able to circumvent those limited provisions.

It went on to say, "Canada's farmers have not advocated for any weakening of the CGC regulatory role. At a time when grain companies like Viterra, ADM, and Cargill are consolidating their hold over the market, it is obvious there needs to be a mechanism in place to provide farmers with protection". In other words, it is implying that the Conservative government is undermining those protections for farmers through this bill.

It goes on to say, "The current system allows grain inspectors to catch contaminated, off condition, or incorrectly represented car loads while they are being emptied, weighed and elevated, and before they are mixed with large quantities of other grain". Mr. Wells said, "Eliminating this provision will have a negative effect on farmers' bottom line".

• (1315)

It is true that eliminating this provision would have a negative effect on farmers' bottom line but it goes to the point of the parliamentary secretary earlier. One of the reasons that kind of contamination and bad grain does not get into the marketplace is because of what the Canadian Grain Commission does now, which is why we are seen as the highest quality supplier of grain in the world. The bill would undercut Canada's ability to be the highest quality grain supplier in the world.

The last point they make is that the amendments also call for eliminating the provision that grain dealers post a security bond

before they can be licensed by the CGC. This provision was put in place to protect farmers who would be left holding the bag if the grain company were to go bankrupt. Mr. Wells says, "Eliminating this requirement will not save farmers any money. It will, however, greatly increase their risk.

In other words, another undermining of protection for farmers from the grain trade and grain companies when they do business.

It is interesting to note that one of the organizations that was at the meeting on Monday was the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. It is supporting the bill. I will admit and I will admit on the record that I sometimes wonder in whose interests the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association speak, whether it is the farmers or in fact the grain trade. The fact that it supports the bill, its name implies that it represents a lot of western grain producers. However, it does not.

It is something like the Western Barley Growers Association. There are 12,000 barley producers in western Canada and on the record before court it said that it represents 130. Therefore, we must question who those organizations really represent.

However, I will get back to the bill. Those were some of the criticisms and concerns raised by a directly represented farmer organization, an organization that is concerned about farmers and their future.

However, what is absolutely shocking, which is typical of the government, it has done no cost benefit analysis on the impact of Bill C-39 with respect to any contracting out of grain inspection, as was called for in recommendation 5 of the standing committee report.

I will explain. This is not unusual from the government, but in terms of a cost benefit analysis, the legislation on changing the CGC shares the same ideological basis as the government's determination to undermine the Canadian Wheat Board. Neither are based on the kind of economic basis that we would expect a government to do. We would expect the government to study and to look at the economic implications on the country, but especially on producers, and it has failed to do that.

Recommendation 5 of the committee report called on the federal government to conduct and complete both pilot projects in contracting out services of grain inspection. The government has failed to comply with this recommendation.

Recommendation 11 required the government to address the issue of specific models which "could be implemented for protecting grain farmers as a result of the elimination of the producer payment program". What the government provided, in the minister's statement of December 13, 2007, was a suggestion of what "producer groups" could do. It sounds awful familiar to the lack of analysis on the Canadian Wheat Board changes it proposed.

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This kind of contempt is becoming common for the government: contempt for parliament, contempt for committees and their reports, and contempt for farmers. It is consistent with the actions that the government has taken with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board that the member talked about earlier.

On July 16, 2007, the director general of marketing policy for Agriculture Canada testified in the hearing on the Canadian Wheat Board court issue, and this makes the point that it goes to the heart of the lack of analysis by the government opposite.

• (1320)

During that testimony, the following questions were asked with respect to the economic impact analysis done by the federal government in relation to the regulations to deregulate barley from a single desk. They were subsequently found to be illegal by the court. The questions were:

Did the government or the civil service or anybody retained by either do any analysis of how the amending regulations would function in the marketplace — are you aware of any studies of the kind I have mentioned to you?

Answer: No.

Was anybody retained to analyze that in the recent past?

Answer: No.

When governments are making substantive changes that will affect an industry, one would naturally expect that they would do the analysis to see the impact of those changes. The impact of the changes the government wants to the grain commission or the Wheat Board on farmers is of no consequence to the government, obviously, and that is by its own admission.

Why should the government be trusted when it does not do its homework before bringing in legislation that could have a serious impact on primary producers?

The elimination of inward inspections and weighing will cost the Canadian Grain Commission some 200 positions, which is serious. What about the responsibilities that those inward inspections are utilized for? Has there been an analysis done in that regard? There has not.

Measures contained in the legislation would ensure the commission focuses more on the concerns of industry and not just on producers. I will list a number of points that threaten Canadian grain producers in this proposed bill.

The grain commission has served as an independent referee to settle disputes between Canadian grain producers and the powerful companies that buy and export. That is needed even more today than it was in the past.

The commission has also served as the body that actually determines the amount farmers are paid based on the CGCs determination of the weight and quality of grain before it goes to market. That is a concern.

These rules will dramatically diminish if Bill C-39 becomes law, leaving producers newly disadvantaged in their dealings with grain companies when it comes to determining grain quality and quantity.

The producer can hire a private company to grade and weigh their grain even though no such companies exist today. Is that not something?

The bill would also expose grain producers to financial harm in the event of a grain buyer bankruptcy or refusal to pay.

Plus, as I mentioned earlier, there is the danger of undermining Canada's international reputation should the quality of grain be jeopardized as exporters have more authority and farmers have less protection.

The standing committee did good work but the minister, even though he was chair of the committee at the time, selectively took what the government wanted out of that committee report for its own ideological purposes and its own friends who are trying to undermine farmers' empowerment in the marketplace through the Canadian Wheat Board. They are working for the same people.

The government seems to be working for grain companies and not for farmers, and it is farmers in these kind of times who need protection. The bill could undermine that protection for farmers. That is a sad commentary on a government that purports to represent farmers but obviously does not.

We will be looking further at this bill and speaking to it in later debates. Maybe it can be changed for the better, maybe not, but the bill in its current fashion is certainly not acceptable to the official opposition.

• (1325)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did listen with interest to my hon. colleague from Malpeque. I do need to suggest to our hon. member that we are thinking of his constituents right now in their trying times with the ice storm. We hope the member will be able to get back to his family this weekend to spend some time with them and maybe even put up power lines for his constituents.

I do take extreme exception to some of the comments the hon. member made, especially the suggestion that we should not make improvements to Canada's grain grading system because we need to protect 200 jobs. That should not be the reason to not go forward. However, I am not suggesting that any jobs should be replaced but, further to his comment that there is no company that can do the same thing for farmers, there are many. I will not make any advertisements but many companies are available. I used to use them on my own farm. Therefore, to suggest that these people would actually lose their positions, there are lots of other opportunities as we go forward with a better, more effective Canadian Grain Commission. Those people can play a very real part in a more effective system of grading grain.

I represented the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, an association that fought for about 30 years to get the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission to recognize that it was more than just visual distinguishability that should determine the value of grain.

The protein content of grain means more than its visual distinguishability. That group and many others fought a long time before we finally recognized that. That was one step.

Private Members' Business

We need to move forward in making grains available to the customer by their value and that value is their specific traits. It is not what they look like but it is the ash content, the falling number and it is the milling quality that need to be recognized. Those are some of the things that the government is trying to put through that did not get changed for farmers in the previous 13 years.

How would the hon. member suggest that we should not provide this benefit to farmers?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Macleod for the concern he raised for Islanders who are still feeling the impact of a serious ice storm.

The member asked a number of questions and some of them I in fact agree are concerns. However, the dilemma that the government has put us in as an official opposition is that it mixes a little bit of good in a bill with a whole lot of the bad and, therefore, it makes it very difficult for us to support the bill without very substantive changes.

On KVD, we agree—

• (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): It being 1:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

When we return to the study of Bill C-39 there will be six minutes left for the hon. member for Malpeque for questions and comments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.) moved that Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction for volunteer emergency service), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I almost feel sorry for my colleagues opposite to have to listen to me. Everything happens at once I guess. Maybe it is that good things happen all at once, I do not know.

I certainly move that Bill C-219, seconded by my colleague, the member for Cape Breton—Canso be read the second time.

This private member's Bill C-219 is really about fairness. I am shocked at the approach that the Government of Canada took yesterday in trying to deny the opportunity for the bill to be debated.

However, in your ruling, Mr. Speaker, you agreed that the bill was proper and should be debated. Even though the government attempted in a backdoor way to deny volunteer firefighters and others a tax deduction, the Speaker ruled, I believe wisely, and hopefully this bill will pass and meet the needs of those volunteer firefighters and others.

The bill is about ensuring that those who serve their communities by placing themselves at risk, by sacrificing time from their families and from their businesses, will have that time honoured and given recognition.

Most significantly, Bill C-219 is about acknowledging one of the fundamental principles behind the success of our rural communities and indeed urban ones as well. It is volunteerism.

I am referring to those who are volunteer firefighters, volunteer ambulance attendants, those who volunteer for search and rescue operations, and all of whom are required to attend training sessions and actively participate in preparation for those activities.

The principle contained in the bill has been presented in previous private members' bills in the past. In 2005 the member for Cape Breton—Canso presented Bill C-273. In 2002 the member for Lethbridge presented Bill C-325.

It is fair to say that members of all parties in past debates have basically been supportive of this approach. I was pleased to support both of those bills and wish to extend thanks on behalf of the volunteer emergency workers. This legislation will assist those members by providing recognition to those volunteers for their efforts.

It is important to note that each of these bills received the support of the House and most recently, Bill C-273 received the support of the Standing Committee on Finance.

The reason this legislation has not been passed already is not I believe been because of any particular partisan political issue. What should be acknowledged is that members of Parliament from all political parties have agreed with this legislation. That was shown with the last bill.

The problem is this. The problem has been the bureaucrats at the Department of Finance. They seem to be finding any way to stymie this bill in its tracks.

We are the politicians. We are the people who should be making the decisions. That is why I was so shocked that the deputy House leader for the governing party tried to stop the bill again because there are many people in that party who support this approach to assisting firefighters and others who do good volunteer work.

The officials of the department have been able to provide numerous reasons why they cannot comply with the legislation. What we need in this town is common sense. We do not need 16 reasons why it cannot be done. We need one reason why it can be done and that is what we want the Department of Finance to do. It is to find that one reason and make it work.

• (1335)

Yes, there were questions in the finance committee the last time around. There are ways of addressing them and they need to be done, so that we can assist the volunteers in rural communities.

In terms of the specifics, Bill C-219 proposes the following: that the Income Tax Act be amended to allow voluntary emergency workers to deduct from their taxable income the amount of \$1,000 if they performed at least 100 hours of voluntary service and \$2,000 if they performed at least 200 hours of voluntary service. That needs to be done.

Private Members' Business

Many of us rub shoulders. In fact, some people in the House have been volunteer firefighters. It is not like being a volunteer at a club. I myself, a little over 24 years ago to be exact, had a major fire and there were four fire departments in the yard. It was a day in May. Many of those firemen were farmers, too, or businessmen. As soon as the buzzer went off on their belts, they were there. It did not matter whether they were baling hay or it was threatening to rain. They left and tended to the fire.

Those people ought to be recognized. They put their businesses in jeopardy. They leave their families. They leave their businesses, they leave their families, and they leave their farms to work for the benefit of others in the community.

Liberals had this problem as well when they were on the government side fighting for the contents of this bill. There already is a payment to firefighters along the lines of this bill, though not quite as high. It is called voluntary firefighters, but only voluntary firefighters receive an honorarium.

In my community volunteers do not receive an honorarium. They take the money out of their own back pockets for their training, to buy equipment, and to assist in fundraising. We absolutely have to recognize the volunteers and what they do.

The Library of Parliament, in a paper examining Bill C-219, stated:

The current Income Tax Act contains a provision exempting from taxation the first \$1,000 received by an emergency worker for volunteer services performed as an ambulance technician, firefighter or a person who assists in search or rescue of individuals or in other emergency situations. Payment must be received from a government, municipality or a public authority. The emergency worker must not be regularly employed, or paid as an employee, for their services as an emergency worker by the government, municipality or the public authority. This exemption was enacted in 2001.

The premise behind this legislation is to ensure that those who do not receive an honorarium from a government, municipality or other public authority, and yet provide the same type of service, are also given a form of compensation for that participation. That is what the bottom line is.

We need to support those voluntary emergency services out there. The point of this legislation is to have the sections, which officials acknowledge are not there, implemented and become effective for what we could call volunteer volunteers.

The finance committee, in its examination, raised a number of questions. I do not have time to go through them, but all of the questions were technical. Some of them related to record keeping. That is easily done. We do not want to impose a paper burden on anybody in terms of the administration of this bill. That is not what we are asking for. Those records are kept by fire chiefs, in any event.

• (1340)

For heaven's sake, can the Minister of Finance or the deputy minister of finance or whoever is in charge of the bureaucracy at the Department of Finance not trust a fire chief who is willing to put his or her life on the line, to assist in the community? I would think so. Those answers can be found and they need to be dealt with so the bill can be implemented.

I would submit that one of the key roles of the Department of Finance, given the fact as has been demonstrated by research undertaken by the Library of Parliament, has already presented the fact that the Income Tax Act currently accepts the first \$1,000 voluntary emergency workers receive from taxation. It should apply the same definition to the provisions of Bill C-219, that voluntary emergency workers, not paid emergency workers who do not receive an honorarium, receive the improved income tax deductions outlined in the bill.

To conclude, for all the reasons outlined, volunteer emergency workers are people in our rural and urban communities not paid for what they do. They put themselves at risk. They take training which costs money. They have to drive back and forth to fire halls and other places for that training and for weekly meetings, taking money out of their own pockets. They have to exercise and stay in shape with the costs of doing that and buying equipment. They have to go to emergencies on the call of the buzzer. It does not matter what they are doing, whether they are in the middle of a hay field, or attending to business, or selling a widget to a client.

Firefighters and other emergency workers need to be treated fairly. They need to be recognized for their efforts. Bill C-219 will give them that recognition and assist them a little bit financially. Certainly, their families would recognize and be more supportive of their activities if Bill C-219 would be passed and carried.

The best way to deal with this would be for the Minister of Finance to just put it in the budget and be done with it because many members support it in this House.

Mr. David Anderson: Are you going to vote for the budget then?

Hon. Wayne Easter: The member asks would I support the budget? It would be the same thing as previously in the Canada grain commission bill.

The problem with the government is that it sprinkles a little bit of good stuff to leave the impression it is doing something good, but along with that puts a whole lot of other legislation and damages that which undermines the support of Canadians. That is why it makes it impossible many times for the opposition to support what it does. If Conservatives would work cooperatively instead of dictatorially, run clearly out of the Prime Minister's Office, it would make our job easier on this side of the House.

The bottom line is that Bill C-219 is an important bill for voluntary service workers. It is important to their families. It is important to them financially. It is important that this Parliament of Canada recognizes those people for what they do.

I would encourage all members, including cabinet ministers opposite, to support the bill fully, so we can do what we ought to do for voluntary emergency service workers.

Private Members' Business

• (1345)

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again I listened with interest to my hon. colleague who seems to be speaking quite a bit today. He recognized the fact that this has been raised in two different parliamentary sessions, both by Liberals and by Conservatives. We recognize that, but what concerns me is the inconsistencies. Many Liberal members were very adamant in their opposition to the former iterations of this same private member's legislation.

In fact, the member for Richmond Hill suggested:

—the hon. member's proposal would significantly compromise the fundamental principle of the tax system, the principle that people with comparable incomes should pay comparable amounts of tax.

As well the current member for Halifax West dismissed it by saying, "In my view, it is not actually any more likely that someone will volunteer because of a tax deduction like this". I could go on, but my hon. colleagues are suggesting that I wrap up.

I will wrap up with a question for the hon. member. Did he or did he not in the 37th session of the second Parliament, Wednesday, October 8, actually vote "nay" to the previous iteration of this?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, the member asked a very good question. However, I find it hard to believe the parliamentary secretary has his head stuck in the past.

One of the problems we have with that bill, and why Bill C-219 is necessary, is the people who are not paid do not get the deductions. Only the people who are paid with honorariums get it. The bill the member opposite talked about would have improved the situation for those who already received an honorarium, but it would have done nothing for those who did not.

Bill C-219 is important because it would give the same benefits to those volunteers who do not receive an honorarium. We need to give the same benefits to those firefighters and emergency workers who do not receive the benefit now.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what I find alarming and amazing is the heckling from the government side when we are dealing with an important bill recognizing volunteers in our community. I do not quite understand it.

Six years ago this bill was put before Parliament and still nothing has been done. Farmers told us at the agriculture committee yesterday that they had shown up with the same complaints before Christmas, and still nothing has been done.

What is wrong with us collectively that we cannot get our government machine moving fast enough to help people in our country? Could the member comment on that?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that parliamentarians have to take charge. The contents of the bill are similar to the contents in previous bills. It has been stymied by none other than the Department of Finance. That is the reality. We have to take charge and get it done. That is easy enough to do if members of all parties support the bill and move it forward. The job will then be done.

Things are not happening now with the current government in place because everything is run out of the PMO. Remember when the Prime Minister said that he would be transparent and allow free votes? This bill is a prime example. Members of the party over there supported the bill in the past, but their deputy House leader came forward with a technicality to try to stop the bill in its tracks. That is coming out of the—

• (1350)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting discussion. I suggest for the hon. member for Malpeque, in response to his answer to my question, that perhaps the more effective role at that time, rather than voting no, might have been to suggest an amendment, which may have made the private member's bill better for the firefighters.

However, I welcome the opportunity to acknowledge in the House the tremendous work and the efforts of emergency service volunteers, especially volunteer firefighters. Firefighters put their lives on the line responding to emergencies at a moment's notice, as my hon. colleague has suggested, making our neighbourhoods safer. Every community and every Canadian benefits from their selfless acts of heroism.

That is why I was so pleased to see our government recognize in budget 2007 that firefighters must have the proper training to effectively respond to emergencies.

The government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, provided \$1 million to the International Association of Fire Fighters to support the hazardous materials training program, a move hailed by IAFF general president Harold Schaitberger in a March 21, 2007 press release, as a major advance for public safety in Canada, one they thanked the government "for listening and for acting decisively on this issue".

These men and women, for whose contributions we all will forever remain grateful, protect our families, homes, businesses and the communities in which we live. Consequently, some volunteer firefighters and other emergency service volunteers often receive honorariums, most commonly in the range of only a few hundred dollars, in recognition of their vital contribution to the community.

I am not sure what amount of money could ever truly compensate an individual for putting his or her life on the line for others. However, these honoraria are paid by municipalities and other public authorities.

Under the current income tax rules, emergency service volunteers can receive up to \$1,000 in such honoraria without having to pay any tax on this amount. If a volunteer receives an honorarium that exceeds \$1,000, he or she would only have to include the amount above the \$1,000 in income. In other words, if the honorarium were \$1,200, only \$200 would be added to the volunteer's income for tax purposes.

Private Members' Business

This special treatment is well deserved. It is a way to recognize the crucial role played by emergency service volunteers across Canada, who routinely give of their time and put themselves in harm's way with virtually no expectation of payment and in doing so, exemplify all the traits that we respect and admire. This is especially true in our smaller rural communities and towns where volunteer firefighters play a vital role, which many in larger cities may not fully appreciate.

As columnist Robert Aaron once noted, and I will paraphrase, it is in these places where neighbours look out for each other, where they are willing to risk their lives for each other.

Mike Walsh, past president of the Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association, echoed that sentiment, remarking that volunteer firefighters "answer the call every day, literally putting their lives on the line for the people of their communities".

A few Septembers back in my home riding of Macleod, I had the honour to be part of the High River Fire Department's 100th centennial gala. It truly was a memorable evening, as I heard firsthand of the contributions that our firefighters had made throughout the years, the good they had done, the sense of community that they had fostered, and I witnessed the respect and the admiration their neighbours felt for them.

This is why I always look forward to meeting with firefighters, such as the Lethbridge Fire Fighters Association, which myself, along with my colleague from Lethbridge, had the pleasure of sitting down with this past April. If I may take a moment, the member for Lethbridge has consistently been among Parliament's strongest advocates for firefighters and emergency service volunteers in his years in Ottawa, and I applaud him for that.

● (1355)

The legislation before us today seeks to recognize the importance of such emergency service volunteers, proposing a graduated income tax deduction that would see the size of the deduction increase with the number of hours volunteered.

To be more precise, emergency service volunteers would benefit from \$1,000 deduction from income if they volunteered for over 100 hours or more and a \$2,000 deduction if they volunteered at least 200 hours.

This issue is not new, though. In recent years very similar private members' bills, Bill C-325, introduced in the 37th Parliament, and Bill C-273, introduced in the 38th Parliament, similarly sought a deduction for emergency service volunteers based on hours volunteered.

I note, however, that Parliament declined to endorse both pieces of legislation. Indeed, the Standing Committee on Finance, after undertaking a thorough review of Bill C-273 in November of 2005, recommended that the House of Commons not proceed further with the bill based on a litany of concerns, such as: the definition of the term "volunteer emergency services" and what would it include; the definition of the term "emergency" and what it would be restricted to; the activities that would qualify in determining the number of hours of volunteering; the existence of accurate, reliable record keeping and reporting capacity to determine the number of hours of volunteer emergency services; the extent to which the

number of hours of volunteer service in the proposal had been set at the appropriate level; whether the authority responsible for keeping records would be a municipal authority or an entity approved by the municipality; whether the term "volunteer" would be synonymous with unpaid; the relative merits of a tax deduction versus a refundable or non-refundable tax credit; the extent to which provincial, territorial tax revenues would be affected by the proposed measure; and the extent to which this type of measure should be designed, only following consultation with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Many of these concerns are still present in the legislation before us today and will require further examination as we progress. Among them is the recurring question of fairness and equity that has arisen during previous incarnations of this debate. Basically the issue, as portrayed by certain observers, is whether this measure would be fair and reasonable from the perspective of other volunteers who also selflessly volunteer their time, but are not classified as emergency service volunteers. To illustrate this, examples of people who work in hospitals, or with people with disabilities, or with children in need are often evoked.

Ironically enough, in previous debates on similar legislation, it has traditionally been Liberal members who have made such claims. Indeed, on October 6, 2003, in this very chamber, the current Liberal member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine articulated just that when she remarked:

—I fear that the hon. member's proposition may go too far. While it is very generous toward emergency service volunteers, it may be perceived as being unfair to other taxpayers who are also volunteers.

I recognize that emergency service volunteers want to be recognized for what they do, but...I am concerned about the fact that we are asking the House to put a value on one type of volunteerism as opposed to others.

Clearly, as the House acknowledged previously, a rigorous examination surrounding the proposal outlined in Bill C-219 is merited as we move forward.

I think often of our volunteer fire departments in our own communities, those of us who have the privilege of representing rural ridings. As my hon. colleague from Malpeque mentioned, many who represent their constituents in the House have been volunteer firefighters.

We all agree that we need to look at this in the most appropriate fashion. However, we need to recognize that we have to be very cautious in picking winners and losers and who will receive a tax credit and who will not receive one.

● (1400)

I think of one of the individuals who actually opposed me in my nomination process in 2004, with whom I got to be very good friends, Gordon Colwell, from the town of Okotoks in my riding. He is an amazing, compassionate individual, one who is the prime example of the volunteers we are discussing here today.

We all have friends. There is the mayor of my hometown of Clareshome. He is a firefighter who spends countless hours involved in putting his life on the line for the rest of us.

Private Members' Business

I also had the experience just last fall of having a fire on my farm. I was not even present. I could not count the number of neighbours who arrived at my farm with water trucks and firefighting equipment. That begs the question, do we acknowledge and offer tax credits to those individuals who did not ask for it, who came to help?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to speak this Friday afternoon in support of the initiative by the hon. member for Malpeque and his Bill C-219, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (deduction for volunteer emergency service).

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the volunteer firefighters of Quebec, including those in my riding of Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. I have a great deal of admiration for those who devote their free time and sacrifice time spent with family to help their community and rescue people in difficulty. I think it is only right to encourage these people, these volunteers, who risk their lives for the common good, and to show them our appreciation and give them a pat on the back to encourage them to keep up the good work.

Emergency service volunteers are recognized under the provincial and federal income tax acts. Currently, the first \$1,000 received in a year for volunteer work is not taxable. Bill C-219 will increase that deduction to \$1,000 for the first 100 hours worked and to \$2,000 when the number of hours worked in a year has reached 200. This bill by the member for Malpeque comes from the heart and is intended to support people who help their community. We should thank the hon. member for this initiative.

In Quebec, out of roughly 24,000 municipal firefighters, more than 18,000, or roughly 75%, are volunteer or part-time firefighters. In other words, three municipal firefighters out of four are volunteer or part-time firefighters. Although we may not be going through the same volunteer shortage that other countries are experiencing right now, we do have to wonder about the future.

Volunteer firefighters have always been able to join the fire department without any specific provincial hiring or training criteria applying. In other words, it is up to the municipality involved to decide what training these firefighters must have in order to be hired at the fire department. While some require the nine initial modules of training, in other words, level I, others do not require any training. Often, the decision is based on local risk or available budgets. In that context, many volunteer firefighters have joined the ranks without any training. That is why qualified instructors are currently recognizing the skills these firefighters have acquired. In other words, they are verifying whether the firefighter's experience over the years corresponds to the municipality's desired level of training. Inevitably, this may have an impact on volunteer firefighting.

Éric Lacasse, president of the Association québécoise des pompiers volontaires et permanents stated, "I do not believe we will see an abandonment of the field, but with the skills assessment, clearly, firefighters with more experience will not be interested in investing time in training, especially since they are generally older and have been doing this work for many years. We must not forget that this is not their permanent or primary job."

According to Mr. Lacasse, we should not expect major upheavals in the years to come, "I think that the wave of people annoyed by the skills assessment and who wanted to leave have already left. The most obvious impact, I think, will be the injection of young blood into fire departments. The average age will then be somewhere between 20 and 30 years old."

How does the volunteer firefighter system work? I would like to talk about how the program works.

As in France and elsewhere, volunteer or part-time firefighters in Quebec have another job that ensures a steady income. Since they have occupational constraints that must be respected, the fire department provides them with digital or voice pagers so they may be reached when needed. On average, each fire brigade comprises approximately 20 firefighters who take turns being on duty. Thus, each volunteer firefighter is generally assigned one week of duty per month. However, some departments call upon all their firefighters at once. There seems to be no standard method of operation. When a firefighter is on duty, he or she must be available 24 hours a day, although they do not necessarily have to remain in the fire station, thanks to modern communication devices. When an emergency centre receives a call, the firefighters who must respond are notified at the same time.

A volunteer firefighter who is working at his or her regular job may get a call to respond to a fire.

● (1405)

Typically, prior agreements have been reached with the employer. Everything depends on the employer's flexibility. Some are reluctant, while others have no problem with this constraint, depending, of course, on the nature of the business. However, in most cases, an employee who leaves work to fulfill his or her duties as a volunteer firefighter receives no financial compensation whatsoever.

Therefore, it makes sense to clarify that, under section 154 of the Quebec Fire Safety Act, an employer can be fined from \$200 to \$1,000 for refusing to allow an employee to leave work to act as an on-call firefighter without good cause. However, the firefighter must have already informed the employer of his or her duties as a firefighter and must advise the employer in the event the firefighter must leave work precipitously to respond to a fire. The employer must also be informed of the nature and frequency of such interventions.

Furthermore, every employee is required to communicate with the employer before leaving the workplace. Of course, this section applies to firefighting activities, not to prevention, training or maintenance. Also, a labour commissioner serving as conflict arbitrator is empowered to determine whether the employer's refusal to cooperate is justifiable if the absence of the employee from work could result in a loss. If the employee considers himself or herself to be a victim of discriminatory measures, he or she may appeal to the labour commissioner.

With respect to payment, municipalities are responsible for determining rates of pay. Some firefighting organizations pay firefighters about \$10 per hour spent fighting fires, while others pay up to \$20. I would note that these amounts are paid only for time spent fighting fires, not for time on call. Wealthier municipalities may offer various lump sums to their firefighters, but this practice is less common.

Firefighters do not sign a contract upon entering into service. They go through a 12-month probationary period. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the firefighter is taken on strength for an indeterminate period of time. This means that they can be released from their commitments at any time.

Last week, following a federal-provincial meeting, this Conservative government, led by the Minister of Labour, proposed a bill to protect the jobs of reservists. It wants to require businesses to hold the jobs of reservists who temporarily leave their jobs to go to fight in Afghanistan. It wants to prohibit companies from refusing to hire reservists because they could be called to go to war. It wants to give privileges to reserve soldiers who have student loans. In short, the Minister of Labour's bill would free reservists from professional and financial restrictions that often make them hesitate to serve in Afghanistan.

What a surprise. Could it be that this government wants private businesses to do more than it does? Does it want these businesses to treat their part-time employees better than the government itself treats its full-time employees? This government is not leading by example. It wants to place restrictions on companies that it will not abide by itself. It wants everything for its soldiers and for the war in Afghanistan, but nothing for volunteer firefighters, people who save lives.

By not supporting this bill, the government is clearly showing once again that it has a military rather than humanitarian focus and that this deliberate choice is not restricted to Afghanistan. Here, every day, this Conservative government is obsessed with law and order, prison, firearms, prison sentences, war, machine guns, drones and military helicopters. It is not promoting the death penalty internationally, but it no longer stands in solidarity with countries and agencies that want to prohibit the death penalty.

This government is not telling us the truth when it talks about the torture of prisoners in Afghanistan.

This Conservative government does not have the same values as the nation of Quebec. It does not share the values of solidarity, and it will therefore never be able to defend the interests of Quebecers and volunteer firefighters.

● (1410)

[English]

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak to the bill and I congratulate the hon. member for Malpeque for putting it forward.

I am shocked and amazed that this was put before Parliament six years ago and reintroduced in the House of Commons for the third time in October of last year and still nothing has happened. I say shame because something like this should not have any obstacles.

Private Members' Business

When we look at the giveaways in corporate taxes, something that is a minimal amount of money that helps people, those volunteers who are precious and who keep our communities alive, those who provide, in this case, emergency services, there should be no question of assisting them in any way that we possibly can.

I remember years ago, when I was working for the Yukon Recreation Branch, that we put on seminars to show people in communities how to help and work with volunteers. Often we forget and we take them for granted. We forget there are people who do not take any money for jobs they do day in and day out and we even forget to thank them for that.

I believe firmly that if we are able to get this bill passed it will be a bill that will thank those people who put, in this case, their lives on the line for us.

It is almost similar to the feedback I am getting from the private member's bill that I tabled on the GST for 100% reimbursement for school boards. It is something we would think would not cost that much money but would help school boards as they try to overcome these great financial difficulties with government cutbacks these days.

Somehow once again the big government machine stops and we cannot move to help people who need the help.

With regard to the bill, I would like to read a letter I received from Munro Pickering who is with the Kootenay Boundary Regional Fire Services, Company #1 Rossland, British Columbia, Rossland and District Search and Rescue. He said:

I am writing regarding the proposed tax incentives for volunteers in Canada. I have been A/ a volunteer firefighter for 20+ years and B/ a search and rescue member and manager for 20 years. Many members spend a large sum of money on equipment they use in these endeavours and are on call 24/7. Also, much time is spent fundraising, whereas this time would be better spent training. Any tax deferrals/incentives would be gratefully appreciated and would lead to more members to provide the services needed. Membership lists are available upon request.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

I would like to add that in my riding, as in all ridings—I guess with the exception of major cities where people doing this work are paid and, thankfully, they are—we have people from Princeton, to Hedley, to Osoyoos, New Denver, Caslow, all these small communities have dedicated people who gather once a week and practise to be there when we need them.

In my own community, which is called Pass Creek and is approximately 15 kilometres outside of Castlegar, there are dedicated individuals. My neighbours and friends gather every Tuesday to ensure they get the proper training to be there in case I or someone else needs them. Recently they received a state of the art fire truck which all of us are very proud of and which will help them to do their work.

In a press release from Parry Sound we have the McDougall fire chief, Brian Leduc, and Seguin fire chief, Dave Thompson, who both support this bill. The press release reads:

We need to encourage people to volunteer as firefighters and really, most of us, as fire chiefs, are at our wits' end because we can't find people to replace those who leave", said Mr. Thompson.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Leduc said people don't put their names forward for any financial reward, but that the tax deduction would help the many who end up paying out of pocket to serve.

This seems to be a recurring theme. Those of us who volunteer in our communities pay out of pocket and people do this willingly. Surely, if this happens, we, as parliamentarians and as government, should do all we can to assist them as they continue to provide this valuable work.

• (1415)

The press release further states:

"There's probably some guys, if they sit down and figure out expenses (such as lost wages, gas to attend calls); there's probably guys that it costs them to be a volunteer firefighter", said Mr. Leduc.

In the immediate area where I live, namely the Southern Interior, it has comparable groups of dedicated individuals who are there at a moment's notice to help us. There is the Castlegar Society for Search and Rescue. It is a non-profit society of professional volunteers dedicated to providing search and rescue services to our community and the surrounding area. It is based in Castlegar and has about 25 to 30 active members.

We also have the Nelson Search and Rescue. It is a registered non-profit society consisting of over 40 dedicated and highly skilled individuals who are capable of an organized response to assist local police, fire departments and B.C. Ambulance in a variety of areas.

We often do not know what goes on and this is an example of what is happening right across the country. The group consists of a management team, an initial response team, a rope team, a swift water team, and general search and rescue personnel. These teams include mountain rescue technicians, rope rescue instructors, Canadian avalanche technicians, paramedics, physicians, swift water rescue technicians, and certified helicopter flight rescue systems practitioners.

This society is managed by a board of directors, consisting of a coordinator and six directors. Directors meetings are held at least once on the last Wednesday of each month. General training is conducted on the first Wednesday of each month, with additional weekend training, usually quarterly. Individual teams train together on a regular basis as team members see fit.

It is important for us to understand what happens at the grassroots level. I know when the member for Malpeque was thinking of bringing this bill forward, he had in mind people who he is in contact with on a weekly basis where he lives.

In my area there is also the South Columbia Search and Rescue, formerly known as Beaver Valley Search and Rescue. In 2000 members of the society voted on a name change to better reflect the response area of Trail, Waneta, Montrose, Fruitvale, Pend D'Oreille and other regions of South Columbia. This group assists with other SAR groups in B.C. and most often with the local search and rescue groups of Rossland, Castlegar and Nelson.

Their members are trained in GSAR, ground and inland water search and rescue. No prior training is required for interested new members, although an interest in outdoors and a basic level of fitness is a benefit. All GSAR training is provided by quality local instructors.

Specialized training opportunities also exist in the area of rope rescue, swift water rescue, avalanche rescue, tracking, et cetera. A lot of money and time has gone into ensuring that we have the very best quality of assistance in time of need.

A recent search summary was issued on Monday, January 28. Rossland & District SAR was called at 2235 hours on January 5 to look for a local skier who failed to return from a late afternoon tour. A 44 year old male with touring equipment and experience had last been seen between 1400 and 1430 hours at the Red Mountain base area. A hasty search was conducted by 19 Rossland & District SAR members. Due to very poor and dangerous weather conditions, the search was suspended at 0230 hours, which is 2:30 in the morning, and commenced at 6 o'clock in the morning with the assistance of the Castlegar SAR, Beaver Valley SAR and Salmo SAR teams.

Let us not forget that these people do other things in their lives. They are not full time members of these teams. They have taken time to get the training and to dedicate part of their lives to helping other people. On this particular search, a total of 31 search personnel responded on Saturday morning. At 8:10 a.m., the subject skied out after spending the night in a snow cave near Mount Grey. It was a happy ending and thankfully the skier was found alive.

We often forget, though, that these folks put their lives in the line of duty, especially when it comes to rescues in the mountains where I live. Lately, there have been avalanche conditions. It has been tough. People sometimes do not make very smart decisions and go out of bounds. These people are then called in to get them.

• (1420)

So, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): The hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, at this point in the debate I can only say that I am absolutely inspired by everyone in this House and all the good things said by four parties in the House. At this point, I would like to ask through you, Mr. Speaker, that everyone in the House accept Bill C-219 unanimously, that we put forward a motion to accept this unanimously so we can put this into committee and have it accepted for our volunteer emergency service personnel across this country, who so rightly deserve it. I ask for unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): There is no consent.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this debate today. I want to congratulate my colleague from Malpeque for making sure that this issue gets the opportunity to raise its head again. It is one that has been around for a number of years. I had the pleasure in the last Parliament of introducing it as Bill C-273.

In clarification of some of the points brought forward by the parliamentary secretary, I stood shoulder to shoulder with the member for Malpeque, who seconded my private member's bill in the last session, as well as the member for Lethbridge, who is respected in this House for the work he has done on behalf of firefighters across the country. Under a previous government, he brought forward similar legislation.

We stood shoulder to shoulder. We went to committee to represent this bill. Tough questions were asked, but it was never defeated by the finance committee. If the parliamentary secretary remembers, Parliament was dissolved. We went to the polls. The writ was dropped and the legislation died on the order paper. That is the history of the bill. That is in essence what happened with Bill C-273, so let us be fair about that.

I certainly thought at the time that the House supported the intent of the bill. I thought it supported the principle of the bill. Certainly not everyone was in line. I know that in our caucus we had to educate some of the people from urban Canada. There were some comments made about members of my caucus who really did not support the bill and were concerned about the merits of the bill. I guess people who live in one of the bigger centres take for granted the fact that there is a professional firefighting service. When they go to bed at night, they believe there are professionals who are going to respond to the call.

What many of us in our caucus did was try to educate those people from the cities and show them that in rural communities this is not the way it is. The guys who respond to alarms in our communities are the same guys rotating tires at the local garage. They are the guys running cable and wiring houses. They are the guys and the women who are serving in any of the sectors of the economy, but when the pager goes off, they respond. These are the firefighters we have in so many of the rural communities. It is for these brave men and women that we stand here today. Hopefully we can get some support from the government on this bill.

In my own riding, I have 50 volunteer fire departments. I take any opportunity I can to go to an installation of officers or whatever the function might be in one of those fire departments. I have been to Inverness, Albert Bridge and Glace Bay. I was in Dominion last weekend, where Chief Hugh MacDonald brought seven new members into his department.

There is a consistency throughout these departments. We can see it. These firefighters consider themselves to be carrying the same weight as the professionals. They have the same responsibilities as professionals.

We place so many expectations on these men and women. There is an expectation that when the alarm and the pager go off, they are ready to respond, whether it is three o'clock in the morning or they

are on the golf course with three of their friends. Whatever it might be, they are going to be there. There is that expectation.

There is the expectation that once they get to the scene of an accident or a fire they know exactly what to do. There is the expectation that they are as well trained as the professionals in the larger centres.

There is another expectation that sometimes we just see past and try to see through, and that is the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual expectation that we put on these individuals.

I have some friends who work with the Mira Road fire department, which has just acquired a new set of jaws of life. They did the fundraising and what had to be done to get this set of jaws of life and they did all the training involved.

● (1425)

Let us think about it. Let us say that two guys who are going about their business get the call. They respond to the call out on the highway bypass where there has been a head-on collision. They get out the jaws of life.

The expectation is that they respond to the call, know how to use the equipment that is there, go through the procedures and scrape a 17 year old kid off the dash of a car. We have an expectation that they are going to be able to leave that scene, deal with it emotionally, mentally and spiritually, and then go back to their day jobs. That is a very great expectation to put on volunteers.

I will put in my volunteer time, like most people in the House. Everybody has a volunteer background. I certainly spent enough time in the rinks across my riding coaching lacrosse, soccer and hockey over the last number of years. I hold in high regard those people who volunteer. That is what makes communities.

However, there is something different about these men and women we are discussing. They are the people who are running into the building when everybody else is running out. They deserve our respect. They deserve more than the average volunteer. They stand apart from every other volunteer. That is what this bill is all about.

They are not motivated in any way by financial reward. That is not what motivates somebody to join a volunteer fire department. They are motivated because they feel they can do something to help their community. They feel they are able to contribute to their community for the better.

I would hope that this small measure in some way would perhaps recruit, retain or reward those individuals who give of themselves on a regular basis over extended periods of time throughout their entire careers as volunteer firefighters.

I am disappointed with the actions of the government on this. I thought this was the time that the bill would proceed. I am sure that the member for Lethbridge is disappointed with this.

I hope the government can find its way to come through on this and support the bill. I know that the member for Lethbridge would be happy. I know that firefighters across this country, the men and women who volunteer from coast to coast, would be happy. I know that the people who hold them in such high respect in the rural communities of this country also would be very pleased.

Private Members' Business

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Royal Galipeau): I thank the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso. When we return to the study of Bill C-219, there will be two minutes left for him.

It being 2:30 p.m. the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

HON. BILL BLAIKIE

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ROYAL GALIPEAU

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. ANDREW SCHEER

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. PETER MILLIKEN

MS. LIBBY DAVIES

MR. MICHEL GUIMOND

HON. JAY HILL

MR. MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

MR. JAMES MOORE

MR. JOE PRESTON

HON. KAREN REDMAN

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Second Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage.. | Kootenay—Columbia..... | British Columbia | CPC |
| Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism) | Calgary—Nose Hill..... | Alberta | CPC |
| Albrecht, Harold | Kitchener—Conestoga..... | Ontario | CPC |
| Alghabra, Omar | Mississauga—Erindale..... | Ontario | Lib. |
| Allen, Mike | Tobique—Mactaquac | New Brunswick..... | CPC |
| Allison, Dean..... | Niagara West—Glanbrook | Ontario | CPC |
| Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification | Edmonton—Spruce Grove | Alberta | CPC |
| Anders, Rob | Calgary West | Alberta | CPC |
| Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board..... | Cypress Hills—Grasslands | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| André, Guy | Berthier—Maskinongé..... | Québec | BQ |
| Angus, Charlie | Timmins—James Bay | Ontario | NDP |
| Arthur, André..... | Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier..... | Québec | Ind. |
| Asselin, Gérard..... | Manicouagan | Québec | BQ |
| Atamanenko, Alex | British Columbia Southern Interior..... | British Columbia | NDP |
| Bachand, Claude | Saint-Jean..... | Québec | BQ |
| Bagnell, Hon. Larry..... | Yukon..... | Yukon | Lib. |
| Bains, Hon. Navdeep | Mississauga—Brampton South | Ontario | Lib. |
| Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment | Ottawa West—Nepean..... | Ontario | CPC |
| Barbot, Vivian | Papineau | Québec | BQ |
| Barnes, Hon. Sue..... | London West | Ontario | Lib. |
| Batters, Dave | Palliser..... | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Beaumier, Colleen..... | Brampton West..... | Ontario | Lib. |
| Bélangier, Hon. Mauril | Ottawa—Vanier | Ontario | Lib. |
| Bell, Catherine | Vancouver Island North | British Columbia | NDP |
| Bell, Don | North Vancouver | British Columbia | Lib. |
| Bellavance, André..... | Richmond—Arthabaska | Québec | BQ |
| Bennett, Hon. Carolyn..... | St. Paul's..... | Ontario | Lib. |
| Benoit, Leon..... | Vegreville—Wainwright | Alberta | CPC |
| Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Foreign Affairs | Beauce | Québec | CPC |
| Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio | Vaughan | Ontario | Lib. |
| Bevington, Dennis | Western Arctic | Northwest Territories.... | NDP |
| Bezan, James | Selkirk—Interlake..... | Manitoba | CPC |
| Bigras, Bernard..... | Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie | Québec | BQ |
| Black, Dawn..... | New Westminster—Coquitlam | British Columbia | NDP |
| Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec | Jonquière—Alma | Québec | CPC |
| Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker..... | Elmwood—Transcona | Manitoba | NDP |
| Blais, Raynald..... | Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine | Québec | BQ |
| Blaney, Steven..... | Lévis—Bellechasse | Québec | CPC |
| Bonin, Raymond | Nickel Belt | Ontario | Lib. |
| Bonsant, France | Compton—Stanstead | Québec | BQ |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Boshcoff, Ken | Thunder Bay—Rainy River | Ontario | Lib. |
| Bouchard, Robert | Chicoutimi—Le Fjord | Québec | BQ |
| Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Status of Women | Beauport—Limoilou | Québec | CPC |
| Bourgeois, Diane | Terrebonne—Blainville | Québec | BQ |
| Breitkreuz, Garry | Yorkton—Melville | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Brisson, Hon. Scott | Kings—Hants | Nova Scotia | Lib. |
| Brown, Bonnie | Oakville | Ontario | Lib. |
| Brown, Gord | Leeds—Grenville | Ontario | CPC |
| Brown, Patrick | Barrie | Ontario | CPC |
| Bruinooog, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians | Winnipeg South | Manitoba | CPC |
| Brunelle, Paule | Trois-Rivières | Québec | BQ |
| Byrne, Hon. Gerry | Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte | Newfoundland and Labrador | Lib. |
| Calkins, Blaine | Wetaskiwin | Alberta | CPC |
| Cannan, Ron | Kelowna—Lake Country | British Columbia | CPC |
| Cannis, John | Scarborough Centre | Ontario | Lib. |
| Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities | Pontiac | Québec | CPC |
| Cardin, Serge | Sherbrooke | Québec | BQ |
| Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry | Oshawa | Ontario | CPC |
| Carrier, Robert | Alfred-Pellan | Québec | BQ |
| Casey, Bill | Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley | Nova Scotia | Ind. |
| Casson, Rick | Lethbridge | Alberta | CPC |
| Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda | Guelph | Ontario | Lib. |
| Chan, Hon. Raymond | Richmond | British Columbia | Lib. |
| Charlton, Chris | Hamilton Mountain | Ontario | NDP |
| Chong, Hon. Michael | Wellington—Halton Hills | Ontario | CPC |
| Chow, Olivia | Trinity—Spadina | Ontario | NDP |
| Christopherson, David | Hamilton Centre | Ontario | NDP |
| Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario | Parry Sound—Muskoka | Ontario | CPC |
| Coderre, Hon. Denis | Bourassa | Québec | Lib. |
| Comartin, Joe | Windsor—Tecumseh | Ontario | NDP |
| Comuzzi, Hon. Joe | Thunder Bay—Superior North | Ontario | CPC |
| Cotler, Hon. Irwin | Mount Royal | Québec | Lib. |
| Crête, Paul | Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup | Québec | BQ |
| Crowder, Jean | Nanaimo—Cowichan | British Columbia | NDP |
| Cullen, Nathan | Skeena—Bulkley Valley | British Columbia | NDP |
| Cullen, Hon. Roy | Etobicoke North | Ontario | Lib. |
| Cummins, John | Delta—Richmond East | British Columbia | CPC |
| Cuzner, Rodger | Cape Breton—Canso | Nova Scotia | Lib. |
| D'Amours, Jean-Claude | Madawaska—Restigouche | New Brunswick | Lib. |
| Davidson, Patricia | Sarnia—Lambton | Ontario | CPC |
| Davies, Libby | Vancouver East | British Columbia | NDP |
| Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety | Okanagan—Coquihalla | British Columbia | CPC |
| DeBellefeuille, Claude | Beauharnois—Salaberry | Québec | BQ |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Del Mastro, Dean | Peterborough | Ontario | CPC |
| Demers, Nicole | Laval | Québec | BQ |
| Deschamps, Johanne | Laurentides—Labelle | Québec | BQ |
| Devolin, Barry | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes— Brock | Ontario | CPC |
| Dewar, Paul | Ottawa Centre | Ontario | NDP |
| Dhaliwal, Sukh | Newton—North Delta | British Columbia | Lib. |
| Dhalla, Ruby | Brampton—Springdale | Ontario | Lib. |
| Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition | Saint-Laurent—Cartierville | Québec | Lib. |
| Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal | Vancouver South | British Columbia | Lib. |
| Doyle, Norman | St. John's East | Newfoundland and Labrador | CPC |
| Dryden, Hon. Ken | York Centre | Ontario | Lib. |
| Duceppe, Gilles | Laurier—Sainte-Marie | Québec | BQ |
| Dykstra, Rick | St. Catharines | Ontario | CPC |
| Easter, Hon. Wayne | Malpeque | Prince Edward Island | Lib. |
| Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics | Vancouver Kingsway | British Columbia | CPC |
| Epp, Ken | Edmonton—Sherwood Park | Alberta | CPC |
| Eyking, Hon. Mark | Sydney—Victoria | Nova Scotia | Lib. |
| Faille, Meili | Vaudreuil-Soulanges | Québec | BQ |
| Fast, Ed | Abbotsford | British Columbia | CPC |
| Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration | Haldimand—Norfolk | Ontario | CPC |
| Fitzpatrick, Brian | Prince Albert | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance | Whitby—Oshawa | Ontario | CPC |
| Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary for Health | Charleswood—St. James— Assiniboia | Manitoba | CPC |
| Folco, Raymonde | Laval—Les Îles | Québec | Lib. |
| Freeman, Carole | Châteauguay—Saint-Constant | Québec | BQ |
| Fry, Hon. Hedy | Vancouver Centre | British Columbia | Lib. |
| Gagnon, Christiane | Québec | Québec | BQ |
| Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker | Ottawa—Orléans | Ontario | CPC |
| Gallant, Cheryl | Renfrew—Nipissing— Pembroke | Ontario | CPC |
| Gaudet, Roger | Montcalm | Québec | BQ |
| Godfrey, Hon. John | Don Valley West | Ontario | Lib. |
| Godin, Yvon | Acadie—Bathurst | New Brunswick | NDP |
| Goldring, Peter | Edmonton East | Alberta | CPC |
| Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana | Wascana | Saskatchewan | Lib. |
| Goodyear, Gary | Cambridge | Ontario | CPC |
| Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec | Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la- Chaudière | Québec | CPC |
| Gravel, Raymond | Repentigny | Québec | BQ |
| Grewal, Nina | Fleetwood—Port Kells | British Columbia | CPC |
| Guarnieri, Hon. Albina | Mississauga East—Cooksville | Ontario | Lib. |
| Guay, Monique | Rivière-du-Nord | Québec | BQ |
| Guergis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport) | Simcoe—Grey | Ontario | CPC |
| Guimond, Michel | Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord | Québec | BQ |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hanger, Art | Calgary Northeast | Alberta | CPC |
| Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister | Calgary Southwest | Alberta | CPC |
| Harris, Richard | Cariboo—Prince George | British Columbia | CPC |
| Harvey, Luc | Louis-Hébert | Québec | CPC |
| Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence | Edmonton Centre | Alberta | CPC |
| Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans | St. John's South—Mount Pearl | Newfoundland and Labrador | CPC |
| Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification | South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale | British Columbia | CPC |
| Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip | Prince George—Peace River | British Columbia | CPC |
| Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs | Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo | British Columbia | CPC |
| Holland, Mark | Ajax—Pickering | Ontario | Lib. |
| Hubbard, Hon. Charles | Miramichi | New Brunswick | Lib. |
| Ignatieff, Michael | Etobicoke—Lakeshore | Ontario | Lib. |
| Jaffer, Rahim | Edmonton—Strathcona | Alberta | CPC |
| Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities | Fort McMurray—Athabasca | Alberta | CPC |
| Jennings, Hon. Marlene | Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine | Québec | Lib. |
| Julian, Peter | Burnaby—New Westminster | British Columbia | NDP |
| Kadis, Susan | Thornhill | Ontario | Lib. |
| Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans | Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission | British Columbia | CPC |
| Karetak-Lindell, Nancy | Nunavut | Nunavut | Lib. |
| Karygiannis, Hon. Jim | Scarborough—Agincourt | Ontario | Lib. |
| Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency | South Shore—St. Margaret's | Nova Scotia | CPC |
| Keeper, Tina | Churchill | Manitoba | Lib. |
| Kenney, Hon. Jason, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity) | Calgary Southeast | Alberta | CPC |
| Khan, Wajid | Mississauga—Streetsville | Ontario | Ind. |
| Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration | Souris—Moose Mountain | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Kotto, Maka | Saint-Lambert | Québec | BQ |
| Kramp, Daryl | Prince Edward—Hastings | Ontario | CPC |
| Laforest, Jean-Yves | Saint-Maurice—Champlain | Québec | BQ |
| Laframboise, Mario | Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel | Québec | BQ |
| Lake, Mike | Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont | Alberta | CPC |
| Lalonde, Francine | La Pointe-de-l'Île | Québec | BQ |
| Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario | Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry | Ontario | CPC |
| Lavallée, Carole | Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert | Québec | BQ |
| Layton, Hon. Jack | Toronto—Danforth | Ontario | NDP |
| Lebel, Denis | Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean | Québec | CPC |
| LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic | Beauséjour | New Brunswick | Lib. |
| Lee, Derek | Scarborough—Rouge River | Ontario | Lib. |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Lemay, Marc | Abitibi—Témiscamingue | Québec | BQ |
| Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages | Glengarry—Prescott—Russell | Ontario | CPC |
| Lessard, Yves | Chambly—Borduas | Québec | BQ |
| Lévesque, Yvon | Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou | Québec | BQ |
| Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform | Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources | Saanich—Gulf Islands | British Columbia | CPC |
| Lunney, James | Nanaimo—Alberni | British Columbia | CPC |
| Lussier, Marcel | Brossard—La Prairie | Québec | BQ |
| MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence | Cardigan | Prince Edward Island | Lib. |
| MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency | Central Nova | Nova Scotia | CPC |
| MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety | Oxford | Ontario | CPC |
| Malhi, Hon. Gurbax | Bramalea—Gore—Malton | Ontario | Lib. |
| Malo, Luc | Verchères—Les Patriotes | Québec | BQ |
| Maloney, John | Welland | Ontario | Lib. |
| Manning, Fabian | Avalon | Newfoundland and Labrador | CPC |
| Mark, Inky | Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette | Manitoba | CPC |
| Marleau, Hon. Diane | Sudbury | Ontario | Lib. |
| Marston, Wayne | Hamilton East—Stoney Creek | Ontario | NDP |
| Martin, Hon. Keith | Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca | British Columbia | Lib. |
| Martin, Pat | Winnipeg Centre | Manitoba | NDP |
| Martin, Right Hon. Paul | LaSalle—Émard | Québec | Lib. |
| Martin, Tony | Sault Ste. Marie | Ontario | NDP |
| Masse, Brian | Windsor West | Ontario | NDP |
| Mathysen, Irene | London—Fanshawe | Ontario | NDP |
| Matthews, Bill | Random—Burin—St. George's | Newfoundland and Labrador | Lib. |
| Mayes, Colin | Okanagan—Shuswap | British Columbia | CPC |
| McCallum, Hon. John | Markham—Unionville | Ontario | Lib. |
| McDonough, Alexa | Halifax | Nova Scotia | NDP |
| McGuinty, David | Ottawa South | Ontario | Lib. |
| McGuire, Hon. Joe | Egmont | Prince Edward Island | Lib. |
| McKay, Hon. John | Scarborough—Guildwood | Ontario | Lib. |
| McTeague, Hon. Dan | Pickering—Scarborough East | Ontario | Lib. |
| Ménard, Réal | Hochelaga | Québec | BQ |
| Ménard, Serge | Marc-Aurèle-Fortin | Québec | BQ |
| Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance | Macleod | Alberta | CPC |
| Merrifield, Rob | Yellowhead | Alberta | CPC |
| Miller, Larry | Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound | Ontario | CPC |
| Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker | Kingston and the Islands | Ontario | Lib. |
| Mills, Bob | Red Deer | Alberta | CPC |
| Minna, Hon. Maria | Beaches—East York | Ontario | Lib. |
| Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics | Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam | British Columbia | CPC |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada | Fundy Royal | New Brunswick | CPC |
| Mourani, Maria | Ahuntsic | Québec | BQ |
| Mulcair, Thomas | Outremont | Québec | NDP |
| Murphy, Brian | Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe | New Brunswick | Lib. |
| Murphy, Hon. Shawn | Charlottetown | Prince Edward Island | Lib. |
| Nadeau, Richard | Gatineau | Québec | BQ |
| Nash, Peggy | Parkdale—High Park | Ontario | NDP |
| Neville, Hon. Anita | Winnipeg South Centre | Manitoba | Lib. |
| Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada | Niagara Falls | Ontario | CPC |
| Norlock, Rick | Northumberland—Quinte West | Ontario | CPC |
| O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Revenue | Carleton—Mississippi Mills | Ontario | CPC |
| Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs | Calgary East | Alberta | CPC |
| Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation | Durham | Ontario | CPC |
| Ouellet, Christian | Brome—Missisquoi | Québec | BQ |
| Pacetti, Massimo | Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel | Québec | Lib. |
| Pallister, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation | Portage—Lisgar | Manitoba | CPC |
| Paquette, Pierre | Joliette | Québec | BQ |
| Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture) | Mégantic—L'Érable | Québec | CPC |
| Patry, Bernard | Pierrefonds—Dollard | Québec | Lib. |
| Pearson, Glen | London North Centre | Ontario | Lib. |
| Perron, Gilles-A. | Rivière-des-Mille-Îles | Québec | BQ |
| Petit, Daniel | Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles | Québec | CPC |
| Picard, Pauline | Drummond | Québec | BQ |
| Plamondon, Louis | Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour | Québec | BQ |
| Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board | Nepean—Carleton | Ontario | CPC |
| Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Industry | Calgary Centre-North | Alberta | CPC |
| Preston, Joe | Elgin—Middlesex—London | Ontario | CPC |
| Priddy, Penny | Surrey North | British Columbia | NDP |
| Proulx, Marcel | Hull—Aylmer | Québec | Lib. |
| Rajotte, James | Edmonton—Leduc | Alberta | CPC |
| Ratansi, Yasmin | Don Valley East | Ontario | Lib. |
| Redman, Hon. Karen | Kitchener Centre | Ontario | Lib. |
| Regan, Hon. Geoff | Halifax West | Nova Scotia | Lib. |
| Reid, Scott | Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington | Ontario | CPC |
| Richardson, Lee | Calgary Centre | Alberta | CPC |
| Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board | Battlefords—Lloydminster | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Rodriguez, Pablo | Honoré-Mercier | Québec | Lib. |
| Rota, Anthony | Nipissing—Timiskaming | Ontario | Lib. |
| Roy, Jean-Yves | Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia | Québec | BQ |
| Russell, Todd | Labrador | Newfoundland and Labrador | Lib. |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Savage, Michael | Dartmouth—Cole Harbour | Nova Scotia | Lib. |
| Savoie, Denise | Victoria | British Columbia | NDP |
| Scarpaleggia, Francis | Lac-Saint-Louis | Québec | Lib. |
| Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker | Regina—Qu'Appelle | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Schellenberger, Gary | Perth—Wellington | Ontario | CPC |
| Scott, Hon. Andy | Fredericton | New Brunswick | Lib. |
| Sgro, Hon. Judy | York West | Ontario | Lib. |
| Shipley, Bev | Lambton—Kent—Middlesex | Ontario | CPC |
| Siksay, Bill | Burnaby—Douglas | British Columbia | NDP |
| Silva, Mario | Davenport | Ontario | Lib. |
| Simard, Hon. Raymond | Saint Boniface | Manitoba | Lib. |
| Simms, Scott | Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor | Newfoundland and Labrador | Lib. |
| Skelton, Hon. Carol | Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Smith, Joy | Kildonan—St. Paul | Manitoba | CPC |
| Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development | Medicine Hat | Alberta | CPC |
| Sorenson, Kevin | Crowfoot | Alberta | CPC |
| St-Cyr, Thierry | Jeanne-Le Ber | Québec | BQ |
| St-Hilaire, Caroline | Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher | Québec | BQ |
| St. Amand, Lloyd | Brant | Ontario | Lib. |
| St. Denis, Brent | Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking | Ontario | Lib. |
| Stanton, Bruce | Simcoe North | Ontario | CPC |
| Steckle, Paul | Huron—Bruce | Ontario | Lib. |
| Stoffer, Peter | Sackville—Eastern Shore | Nova Scotia | NDP |
| Storseth, Brian | Westlock—St. Paul | Alberta | CPC |
| Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians | Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon | British Columbia | CPC |
| Stronach, Hon. Belinda | Newmarket—Aurora | Ontario | Lib. |
| Sweet, David | Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale | Ontario | CPC |
| Szabo, Paul | Mississauga South | Ontario | Lib. |
| Telegdi, Hon. Andrew | Kitchener—Waterloo | Ontario | Lib. |
| Temelkovski, Lui | Oak Ridges—Markham | Ontario | Lib. |
| Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thai | Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot | Québec | BQ |
| Thibault, Louise | Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques | Québec | Ind. |
| Thibault, Hon. Robert | West Nova | Nova Scotia | Lib. |
| Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs | New Brunswick Southwest | New Brunswick | CPC |
| Thompson, Myron | Wild Rose | Alberta | CPC |
| Tilson, David | Dufferin—Caledon | Ontario | CPC |
| Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board | Provencher | Manitoba | CPC |
| Tonks, Alan | York South—Weston | Ontario | Lib. |
| Trost, Bradley | Saskatoon—Humboldt | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Turner, Hon. Garth | Halton | Ontario | Lib. |
| Tweed, Mervin | Brandon—Souris | Manitoba | CPC |
| Valley, Roger | Kenora | Ontario | Lib. |
| Van Kesteren, Dave | Chatham-Kent—Essex | Ontario | CPC |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Province of Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform | York—Simcoe..... | Ontario | CPC |
| Vellacott, Maurice | Saskatoon—Wanuskewin..... | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages | Louis-Saint-Laurent..... | Québec | CPC |
| Vincent, Robert..... | Shefford | Québec | BQ |
| Volpe, Hon. Joseph | Eglinton—Lawrence | Ontario | Lib. |
| Wallace, Mike | Burlington | Ontario | CPC |
| Wappel, Tom | Scarborough Southwest..... | Ontario | Lib. |
| Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment | Langley | British Columbia | CPC |
| Warkentin, Chris | Peace River..... | Alberta | CPC |
| Wasylycia-Leis, Judy | Winnipeg North | Manitoba | NDP |
| Watson, Jeff | Essex..... | Ontario | CPC |
| Wilfert, Hon. Bryon..... | Richmond Hill | Ontario | Lib. |
| Williams, John..... | Edmonton—St. Albert..... | Alberta | CPC |
| Wilson, Blair | West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.... | British Columbia | Ind. |
| Wrzesnewskyj, Borys | Etobicoke Centre..... | Ontario | Lib. |
| Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development..... | Blackstrap | Saskatchewan | CPC |
| Zed, Paul..... | Saint John | New Brunswick..... | Lib. |
| VACANCY | Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River..... | Saskatchewan | |
| VACANCY | Westmount—Ville-Marie | Québec | |
| VACANCY | Toronto Centre | Ontario | |
| VACANCY | Willowdale | Ontario | |
| VACANCY | Vancouver Quadra | British Columbia | |

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

Second Session—Thirty Nine Parliament

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| ALBERTA (28) | | |
| Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Secretary of State (Small Business and Tourism) | Calgary—Nose Hill | CPC |
| Ambrose, Hon. Rona, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification | Edmonton—Spruce Grove | CPC |
| Anders, Rob | Calgary West | CPC |
| Benoit, Leon | Vegreville—Wainwright | CPC |
| Calkins, Blaine | Wetaskiwin | CPC |
| Casson, Rick | Lethbridge | CPC |
| Epp, Ken | Edmonton—Sherwood Park | CPC |
| Goldring, Peter | Edmonton East | CPC |
| Hanger, Art | Calgary Northeast | CPC |
| Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister | Calgary Southwest | CPC |
| Hawn, Laurie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence | Edmonton Centre | CPC |
| Jaffer, Rahim | Edmonton—Strathcona | CPC |
| Jean, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities | Fort McMurray—Athabasca | CPC |
| Kenney, Hon. Jason, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity) ... | Calgary Southeast | CPC |
| Lake, Mike | Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont ... | CPC |
| Menzies, Ted, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance | Macleod | CPC |
| Merrifield, Rob | Yellowhead | CPC |
| Mills, Bob | Red Deer | CPC |
| Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs | Calgary East | CPC |
| Prentice, Hon. Jim, Minister of Industry | Calgary Centre-North | CPC |
| Rajotte, James | Edmonton—Leduc | CPC |
| Richardson, Lee | Calgary Centre | CPC |
| Solberg, Hon. Monte, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development | Medicine Hat | CPC |
| Sorenson, Kevin | Crowfoot | CPC |
| Storseth, Brian | Westlock—St. Paul | CPC |
| Thompson, Myron | Wild Rose | CPC |
| Warkentin, Chris | Peace River | CPC |
| Williams, John | Edmonton—St. Albert | CPC |
| BRITISH COLUMBIA (35) | | |
| Abbott, Hon. Jim, Parliamentary Secretary for Canadian Heritage | Kootenay—Columbia | CPC |
| Atamanenko, Alex | British Columbia Southern Interior | NDP |
| Bell, Catherine | Vancouver Island North | NDP |
| Bell, Don | North Vancouver | Lib. |
| Black, Dawn | New Westminster—Coquitlam | NDP |
| Cannan, Ron | Kelowna—Lake Country | CPC |
| Chan, Hon. Raymond | Richmond | Lib. |
| Crowder, Jean | Nanaimo—Cowichan | NDP |
| Cullen, Nathan | Skeena—Bulkley Valley | NDP |
| Cummins, John | Delta—Richmond East | CPC |
| Davies, Libby | Vancouver East | NDP |
| Day, Hon. Stockwell, Minister of Public Safety | Okanagan—Coquihalla | CPC |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Dhaliwal, Sukh | Newton—North Delta | Lib. |
| Dosanjh, Hon. Ujjal | Vancouver South | Lib. |
| Emerson, Hon. David, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics | Vancouver Kingsway | CPC |
| Fast, Ed. | Abbotsford | CPC |
| Fry, Hon. Hedy | Vancouver Centre | Lib. |
| Grewal, Nina | Fleetwood—Port Kells | CPC |
| Harris, Richard | Cariboo—Prince George | CPC |
| Hiebert, Russ, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification | South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale | CPC |
| Hill, Hon. Jay, Secretary of State and Chief Government Whip | Prince George—Peace River | CPC |
| Hinton, Betty, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs | Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo | CPC |
| Julian, Peter | Burnaby—New Westminster | NDP |
| Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans | Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission | CPC |
| Lunn, Hon. Gary, Minister of Natural Resources | Saanich—Gulf Islands | CPC |
| Lunney, James | Nanaimo—Alberni | CPC |
| Martin, Hon. Keith | Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca | Lib. |
| Mayes, Colin | Okanagan—Shuswap | CPC |
| Moore, James, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and for the Pacific Gateway and the Vancouver-Whistler Olympics | Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam | CPC |
| Priddy, Penny | Surrey North | NDP |
| Savoie, Denise | Victoria | NDP |
| Siksay, Bill | Burnaby—Douglas | NDP |
| Strahl, Hon. Chuck, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians | Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon | CPC |
| Warawa, Mark, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment | Langley | CPC |
| Wilson, Blair | West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country | Ind. |
| VACANCY | Vancouver Quadra | |
| MANITOBA (14) | | |
| Bezan, James | Selkirk—Interlake | CPC |
| Blaikie, Hon. Bill, The Deputy Speaker | Elmwood—Transcona | NDP |
| Bruinooge, Rod, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians | Winnipeg South | CPC |
| Fletcher, Steven, Parliamentary Secretary for Health | Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia | CPC |
| Keeper, Tina | Churchill | Lib. |
| Mark, Inky | Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette | CPC |
| Martin, Pat | Winnipeg Centre | NDP |
| Neville, Hon. Anita | Winnipeg South Centre | Lib. |
| Pallister, Brian, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade and to the Minister of International Cooperation | Portage—Lisgar | CPC |
| Simard, Hon. Raymond | Saint Boniface | Lib. |
| Smith, Joy | Kildonan—St. Paul | CPC |
| Toews, Hon. Vic, President of the Treasury Board | Provencher | CPC |
| Tweed, Mervin | Brandon—Souris | CPC |
| Wasylycia-Leis, Judy | Winnipeg North | NDP |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| NEW BRUNSWICK (10) | | |
| Allen, Mike | Tobique—Mactaquac | CPC |
| D'Amours, Jean-Claude | Madawaska—Restigouche..... | Lib. |
| Godin, Yvon | Acadie—Bathurst | NDP |
| Hubbard, Hon. Charles..... | Miramichi..... | Lib. |
| LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic..... | Beauséjour..... | Lib. |
| Moore, Rob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada | Fundy Royal | CPC |
| Murphy, Brian | Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe | Lib. |
| Scott, Hon. Andy | Fredericton | Lib. |
| Thompson, Hon. Greg, Minister of Veterans Affairs | New Brunswick Southwest..... | CPC |
| Zed, Paul | Saint John | Lib. |
| NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7) | | |
| Byrne, Hon. Gerry..... | Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte | Lib. |
| Doyle, Norman | St. John's East..... | CPC |
| Hearn, Hon. Loyola, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans..... | St. John's South—Mount Pearl | CPC |
| Manning, Fabian..... | Avalon | CPC |
| Matthews, Bill | Random—Burin—St. George's | Lib. |
| Russell, Todd | Labrador | Lib. |
| Simms, Scott..... | Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor..... | Lib. |
| NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1) | | |
| Bevington, Dennis..... | Western Arctic | NDP |
| NOVA SCOTIA (11) | | |
| Brison, Hon. Scott..... | Kings—Hants | Lib. |
| Casey, Bill | Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley | Ind. |
| Cuzner, Rodger | Cape Breton—Canso | Lib. |
| Eyking, Hon. Mark..... | Sydney—Victoria | Lib. |
| Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency | South Shore—St. Margaret's | CPC |
| MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency | Central Nova | CPC |
| McDonough, Alexa..... | Halifax | NDP |
| Regan, Hon. Geoff | Halifax West..... | Lib. |
| Savage, Michael | Dartmouth—Cole Harbour | Lib. |
| Stoffer, Peter | Sackville—Eastern Shore..... | NDP |
| Thibault, Hon. Robert | West Nova | Lib. |
| NUNAVUT (1) | | |
| Karetak-Lindell, Nancy | Nunavut..... | Lib. |
| ONTARIO (104) | | |
| Albrecht, Harold..... | Kitchener—Conestoga | CPC |
| Alghabra, Omar..... | Mississauga—Erindale..... | Lib. |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Allison, Dean | Niagara West—Glanbrook | CPC |
| Angus, Charlie | Timmins—James Bay | NDP |
| Bains, Hon. Navdeep | Mississauga—Brampton South | Lib. |
| Baird, Hon. John, Minister of the Environment | Ottawa West—Nepean | CPC |
| Barnes, Hon. Sue | London West | Lib. |
| Beaumier, Colleen | Brampton West | Lib. |
| Bélanger, Hon. Mauril | Ottawa—Vanier | Lib. |
| Bennett, Hon. Carolyn | St. Paul's | Lib. |
| Bevilacqua, Hon. Maurizio | Vaughan | Lib. |
| Bonin, Raymond | Nickel Belt | Lib. |
| Boshcoff, Ken | Thunder Bay—Rainy River | Lib. |
| Brown, Bonnie | Oakville | Lib. |
| Brown, Gord | Leeds—Grenville | CPC |
| Brown, Patrick | Barrie | CPC |
| Cannis, John | Scarborough Centre | Lib. |
| Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry | Oshawa | CPC |
| Chamberlain, Hon. Brenda | Guelph | Lib. |
| Charlton, Chris | Hamilton Mountain | NDP |
| Chong, Hon. Michael | Wellington—Halton Hills | CPC |
| Chow, Olivia | Trinity—Spadina | NDP |
| Christopherson, David | Hamilton Centre | NDP |
| Clement, Hon. Tony, Minister of Health and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario | Parry Sound—Muskoka | CPC |
| Comartin, Joe | Windsor—Tecumseh | NDP |
| Comuzzi, Hon. Joe | Thunder Bay—Superior North | CPC |
| Cullen, Hon. Roy | Etobicoke North | Lib. |
| Davidson, Patricia | Sarnia—Lambton | CPC |
| Del Mastro, Dean | Peterborough | CPC |
| Devolin, Barry | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock | CPC |
| Dewar, Paul | Ottawa Centre | NDP |
| Dhalla, Ruby | Brampton—Springdale | Lib. |
| Dryden, Hon. Ken | York Centre | Lib. |
| Dykstra, Rick | St. Catharines | CPC |
| Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration | Haldimand—Norfolk | CPC |
| Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance | Whitby—Oshawa | CPC |
| Galipeau, Royal, The Acting Speaker | Ottawa—Orléans | CPC |
| Gallant, Cheryl | Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke | CPC |
| Godfrey, Hon. John | Don Valley West | Lib. |
| Goodyear, Gary | Cambridge | CPC |
| Guarnieri, Hon. Albina | Mississauga East—Cooksville | Lib. |
| Guergis, Hon. Helena, Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs and International Trade) (Sport) | Simcoe—Grey | CPC |
| Holland, Mark | Ajax—Pickering | Lib. |
| Ignatieff, Michael | Etobicoke—Lakeshore | Lib. |
| Kadis, Susan | Thornhill | Lib. |
| Karygiannis, Hon. Jim | Scarborough—Agincourt | Lib. |
| Khan, Wajid | Mississauga—Streetsville | Ind. |
| Kramp, Daryl | Prince Edward—Hastings | CPC |
| Lauzon, Guy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario | Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry | CPC |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Layton, Hon. Jack | Toronto—Danforth | NDP |
| Lee, Derek | Scarborough—Rouge River | Lib. |
| Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages | Glengarry—Prescott—Russell | CPC |
| MacKenzie, Dave, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety | Oxford | CPC |
| Malhi, Hon. Gurbax | Bramalea—Gore—Malton | Lib. |
| Maloney, John | Welland | Lib. |
| Marleau, Hon. Diane | Sudbury | Lib. |
| Marston, Wayne | Hamilton East—Stoney Creek | NDP |
| Martin, Tony | Sault Ste. Marie | NDP |
| Masse, Brian | Windsor West | NDP |
| Mathysen, Irene | London—Fanshawe | NDP |
| McCallum, Hon. John | Markham—Unionville | Lib. |
| McGuinty, David | Ottawa South | Lib. |
| McKay, Hon. John | Scarborough—Guildwood | Lib. |
| McTeague, Hon. Dan | Pickering—Scarborough East | Lib. |
| Miller, Larry | Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound | CPC |
| Milliken, Hon. Peter, Speaker | Kingston and the Islands | Lib. |
| Minna, Hon. Maria | Beaches—East York | Lib. |
| Nash, Peggy | Parkdale—High Park | NDP |
| Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada | Niagara Falls | CPC |
| Norlock, Rick | Northumberland—Quinte West | CPC |
| O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of National Revenue | Carleton—Mississippi Mills | CPC |
| Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation | Durham | CPC |
| Pearson, Glen | London North Centre | Lib. |
| Poillievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board | Nepean—Carleton | CPC |
| Preston, Joe | Elgin—Middlesex—London | CPC |
| Ratansi, Yasmin | Don Valley East | Lib. |
| Redman, Hon. Karen | Kitchener Centre | Lib. |
| Reid, Scott | Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington | CPC |
| Rota, Anthony | Nipissing—Timiskaming | Lib. |
| Schellenberger, Gary | Perth—Wellington | CPC |
| Sgro, Hon. Judy | York West | Lib. |
| Shiple, Bev | Lambton—Kent—Middlesex | CPC |
| Silva, Mario | Davenport | Lib. |
| St. Amand, Lloyd | Brant | Lib. |
| St. Denis, Brent | Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking | Lib. |
| Stanton, Bruce | Simcoe North | CPC |
| Steckle, Paul | Huron—Bruce | Lib. |
| Stronach, Hon. Belinda | Newmarket—Aurora | Lib. |
| Sweet, David | Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale | CPC |
| Szabo, Paul | Mississauga South | Lib. |
| Telegdi, Hon. Andrew | Kitchener—Waterloo | Lib. |
| Temelkovski, Lui | Oak Ridges—Markham | Lib. |
| Tilson, David | Dufferin—Caledon | CPC |
| Tonks, Alan | York South—Weston | Lib. |
| Turner, Hon. Garth | Halton | Lib. |
| Valley, Roger | Kenora | 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 and Minister for Democratic Reform | York—Simcoe | CPC |
| Volpe, Hon. Joseph | Eglinton—Lawrence | Lib. |
| Wallace, Mike | Burlington | CPC |
| Wappel, Tom | Scarborough Southwest | Lib. |
| Watson, Jeff | Essex | CPC |
| Wilfert, Hon. Bryon | Richmond Hill | Lib. |
| Wrzesnewskyj, Borys | Etobicoke Centre | Lib. |
| VACANCY | Toronto Centre | |
| VACANCY | Willowdale | |

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------|
| Easter, Hon. Wayne | Malpeque | Lib. |
| MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence | Cardigan | Lib. |
| McGuire, Hon. Joe | Egmont | Lib. |
| Murphy, Hon. Shawn | Charlottetown | Lib. |

QUÉBEC (74)

| | | |
|---|--|------|
| André, Guy | Berthier—Maskinongé | BQ |
| Arthur, André | Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier | Ind. |
| Asselin, Gérard | Manicouagan | BQ |
| Bachand, Claude | Saint-Jean | BQ |
| Barbot, Vivian | Papineau | BQ |
| Bellavance, André | Richmond—Arthabaska | BQ |
| Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of Foreign Affairs | Beauce | CPC |
| Bigras, Bernard | Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie | BQ |
| Blackburn, Hon. Jean-Pierre, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec | Jonquière—Alma | CPC |
| Blais, Raynald | Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine | BQ |
| Blaney, Steven | Lévis—Bellechasse | CPC |
| Bonsant, France | Compton—Stanstead | BQ |
| Bouchard, Robert | Chicoutimi—Le Fjord | BQ |
| Boucher, Sylvie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Status of Women | Beauport—Limoilou | CPC |
| Bourgeois, Diane | Terrebonne—Blainville | BQ |
| Brunelle, Paule | Trois-Rivières | BQ |
| Cannon, Hon. Lawrence, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities | Pontiac | CPC |
| Cardin, Serge | Sherbrooke | BQ |
| Carrier, Robert | Alfred-Pellan | BQ |
| Coderre, Hon. Denis | Bourassa | Lib. |
| Cotler, Hon. Irwin | Mount Royal | Lib. |
| Crête, Paul | Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup | BQ |
| DeBellefeuille, Claude | Beauharnois—Salaberry | BQ |
| Demers, Nicole | Laval | BQ |
| Deschamps, Johanne | Laurentides—Labelle | BQ |
| Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Leader of the Opposition | Saint-Laurent—Cartierville | Lib. |
| Duceppe, Gilles | Laurier—Sainte-Marie | BQ |
| Faille, Meili | Vaudreuil—Soulanges | BQ |
| Folco, Raymonde | Laval—Les Îles | Lib. |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Freeman, Carole | Châteauguay—Saint-Constant | BQ |
| Gagnon, Christiane | Québec | BQ |
| Gaudet, Roger | Montcalm | BQ |
| Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec | Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière | CPC |
| Gravel, Raymond | Repentigny | BQ |
| Guay, Monique | Rivière-du-Nord | BQ |
| Guimond, Michel | Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord | BQ |
| Harvey, Luc | Louis-Hébert | CPC |
| Jennings, Hon. Marlene | Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine | Lib. |
| Kotto, Maka | Saint-Lambert | BQ |
| Laforest, Jean-Yves | Saint-Maurice—Champlain | BQ |
| Laframboise, Mario | Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel | BQ |
| Lalonde, Francine | La Pointe-de-l'Île | BQ |
| Lavallée, Carole | Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert | BQ |
| Lebel, Denis | Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean | CPC |
| Lemay, Marc | Abitibi—Témiscamingue | BQ |
| Lessard, Yves | Chambly—Borduas | BQ |
| Lévesque, Yvon | Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou | BQ |
| Lussier, Marcel | Brossard—La Prairie | BQ |
| Malo, Luc | Verchères—Les Patriotes | BQ |
| Martin, Right Hon. Paul | LaSalle—Émard | Lib. |
| Ménard, Réal | Hochelaga | BQ |
| Ménard, Serge | Marc-Aurèle-Fortin | BQ |
| Mourani, Maria | Ahuntsic | BQ |
| Mulcair, Thomas | Outremont | NDP |
| Nadeau, Richard | Gatineau | BQ |
| Ouellet, Christian | Brome—Missisquoi | BQ |
| Pacetti, Massimo | Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel | Lib. |
| Paquette, Pierre | Joliette | BQ |
| Paradis, Hon. Christian, Secretary of State (Agriculture) | Mégantic—L'Érable | CPC |
| Patry, Bernard | Pierrefonds—Dollard | Lib. |
| Perron, Gilles-A. | Rivière-des-Mille-Îles | BQ |
| Petit, Daniel | Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles | CPC |
| Picard, Pauline | Drummond | BQ |
| Plamondon, Louis | Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour | BQ |
| Proulx, Marcel | Hull—Aylmer | Lib. |
| Rodriguez, Pablo | Honoré-Mercier | Lib. |
| Roy, Jean-Yves | Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia | BQ |
| Scarpaleggia, Francis | Lac-Saint-Louis | Lib. |
| St-Cyr, Thierry | Jeanne-Le Ber | BQ |
| St-Hilaire, Caroline | Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher | BQ |
| Thi Lac, Ève-Mary Thaï | Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot | BQ |
| Thibault, Louise | Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques | Ind. |
| Verner, Hon. Josée, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages | Louis-Saint-Laurent | CPC |
| Vincent, Robert | Shefford | BQ |

| Name of Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| VACANCY | Westmount—Ville-Marie | |
| SASKATCHEWAN (13) | | |
| Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board | Cypress Hills—Grasslands | CPC |
| Batters, Dave..... | Palliser | CPC |
| Breitkreuz, Garry | Yorkton—Melville | CPC |
| Fitzpatrick, Brian | Prince Albert | CPC |
| Goodale, Hon. Ralph, Wascana..... | Wascana | Lib. |
| Komarnicki, Ed, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration | Souris—Moose Mountain | CPC |
| Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform | Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre..... | CPC |
| Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board..... | Battlefords—Lloydminster | CPC |
| Scheer, Andrew, The Acting Speaker | Regina—Qu'Appelle | CPC |
| Skelton, Hon. Carol | Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar..... | CPC |
| Trost, Bradley..... | Saskatoon—Humboldt | CPC |
| Vellacott, Maurice | Saskatoon—Wanuskewin..... | CPC |
| Yelich, Lynne, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development | Blackstrap | CPC |
| VACANCY | Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River . | |
| YUKON (1) | | |
| Bagnell, Hon. Larry | Yukon..... | Lib. |

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of February 1, 2008 — 2nd Session, 39th Parliament)

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