



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 160 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, October 5, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 5, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

INCREASING OFFENDERS' ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VICTIMS ACT

The House resumed from September 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question now be put.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see you enter the chamber and be our Speaker for the day, it seems. We know you will perform your duties professionally, as usual.

I rise in the House to reiterate my position on Bill C-37 as the justice critic for the official opposition. We repeat: we will be voting for this bill, which will be sent to committee.

We have spent long hours here debating Bill C-37, the Increasing Offender's Accountability for Victims Act, whose purpose is to amend the Criminal Code by increasing victim surcharges. We have spent long hours doing our utmost to show that there will be work to be done in committee. We cannot give the Conservative government a blank cheque, for the simple reason that this bill raises a lot of questions.

It was extremely interesting to hear my New Democratic Party colleagues try so hard to make our colleagues opposite understand the weaknesses in this bill. At the very least, we are going to have to ask for some serious answers.

I am going to summarize the problematic aspects of Bill C-37. One of the bill's major weaknesses is that, once again, it takes away the judge's discretion, by repealing subsection 737(5) of the Criminal Code. It takes away the judge's power not to impose a surcharge when the offender can show that he is unable to pay or when the judge has particular reasons for not imposing the surcharge.

It must be understood that the surcharge is in addition to the sentence already imposed. That may be a term of imprisonment or a fine; it may be many things. That is what subsection 737(5) provides.

The bill has not yet been sent to committee, and already some people are arguing that this change could lead to unequal treatment for certain types of offenders. Consider aboriginal women, the first nations, and various categories of people who may not have the ability to pay this kind of fine.

We often hear the other side say, "You did the crime, well, you pay the fine". We can all agree with that. It is indeed hard to have any sympathy sometimes. But here, it is not a question of sympathy, it is a question of justice and rehabilitation for a person who is released from prison.

The surcharge is in addition to each of the counts of which the person was convicted. If a person was charged with 10 counts of breaking and entering, for example, and decided to plead guilty to each of those counts, a surcharge would be levied for each count. That provides a small idea of the astronomical sum that would get added, if the bill were to be enacted.

If a person was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, a \$200 surcharge would be imposed automatically for each count. That can add up to quite a lot of money. These people really have no income. The Minister of Public Safety seems to think that \$4 or \$5 an hour is a high wage, but that is not really the case.

Bill C-350 then lays down a new order for payment of the amounts owing. In short, the Criminal Code is well designed, in that it allows the judge to consider all cases on their own merits and make the best decision possible.

As a brief aside, yesterday evening, I attended the committee meeting to vet the Supreme Court of Canada nominee, Richard Wagner, of the Quebec Court of Appeal. In response to a question asked by a Conservative member, he explained the importance of the discretionary aspect of a judge's powers in relation to the independence of the three branches: legislative, judicial and executive. This discretionary power assures us that we live in a true democracy and not an anarchistic system that impinges on the powers of each of those branches.

The legislative authority must have confidence in its judicial branch, because without that, we have a serious problem.

Government Orders

Often, when it comes to justice bills, when you get right down to it, this government really seems to have a problem with allowing judges to exercise their discretion. This is a serious accusation for this government to level, and it is dangerous for our society, for Canadian society. I am not saying that all decisions are perfect, since to err is human, but overall, our system works well.

Here is my message to my colleagues: I hope we will work on this bill at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in the same way we worked together for the screening of the new Supreme Court justice—that is, in an entirely non-partisan fashion. We worked with a view to allowing the minister and the Prime Minister to appoint one of the three individuals recommended from among the best we have to offer Canadians to sit on the Supreme Court of Canada. I hope we can work as collaboratively once again.

Judicial discretion is referred to in subsection 737(5) of the Criminal Code, and there is a very strong argument in favour of it. During the first hours of debate on this issue, I was here, in the House, to encourage colleagues speaking to the bill, and I listened to the speeches. The Conservatives had little to say. That seems to be their approach: they introduce bills without anyone knowing what they are thinking, because they do not tell us. We see the minister or the parliamentary secretary briefly, and then they vanish. By asking a few questions, we sometimes manage to get to the bottom of what they are thinking.

I listened to the member from Yukon, who will surely raise his head because I am talking about him. I am standing right across from him, talking about him. He sees me and is listening to me. He said the following a number of times:

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of discussion around fines and whether the offenders would have to make application or why the offender would be predetermined to have a victim fine surcharge and that it should be up to the judge's discretion. Judges are ultimately still deciding the fines and the fine amount. Fines are an alternative to jail [not necessarily], which is positive and allows offenders to remain in the community to contribute to their families and social and economic development.

That is the first misinterpretation of what Bill C-37 seeks to do. Fines are not being used as an alternative to jail. This bill spells out how much the victim surcharge will be for a person who is sentenced to jail. Everyone will be fined. There will be no exceptions. A person sentenced to jail used to be fined \$100. Now they will be fined \$200. If a fine is imposed instead of a prison sentence, then the amount will be based on a percentage. The percentage used to be 15%; now it will be 30%. That is what this bill will do. It is important that government members understand the bills that the government is introducing.

However, the point of accountability is that when a victim surcharge is assessed automatically, the offender still has the option of presenting undue hardships or mitigating circumstances where a judge could consider reducing the fine option. That is what subsection 737(5) is about. The Conservatives are using Bill C-37 to remove this subsection. They want to repeal it.

I agree with the hon. member for Yukon. I do not take issue with the fact that the onus is on the offender to prove that he is unable to pay or that there are fundamental reasons why he should not pay the surcharge.

I agree with the way the hon. member for Yukon sees things, but I feel like telling him to read Bill C-37, because it has the totally opposite effect of what he keeps saying about it in the House.

In closing, that is the message I want to send to my colleagues from all the parties. Bill C-37 will probably pass because the NDP will support it and I imagine that the Conservatives will do the same, at least, and so will the Liberals. At the very least we have to refer this bill to committee to be studied thoroughly. We have to find out what impact it will have, why the government wants to change this, why it wants to eliminate judicial discretion, whether there have been any abuses or bad decisions. That is what we need to know. It is not right to take the ideological approach that judges do not know what they are doing and cannot make a proper decision.

• (1010)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Gatineau for an excellent speech. The member for Gatineau is the best member of Parliament that Gatineau has ever had, bar none.

This bill will affect aboriginal people in a number of ways. I would like her to explain how aboriginal people may be affected by these legislative changes.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Nickel Belt for his welcome compliments. It is always nice to receive them. In politics, you generally do not receive many. So it is a little boost, particularly on a Friday, right before Thanksgiving weekend and a return to my constituency.

He has indeed hit upon one of the major problems with Bill C-37. It pertains to those who will be unable to pay. No one is bothered if a Conrad Black has to pay a higher surcharge at the judge's discretion when the judge knows that he has the ability to pay. Not many people will be very upset to see that people like Vincent Lacroix or Conrad Black have to pay a slightly higher surcharge.

Statistics show that in our Canadian prisons and detention centres, the first nations are overrepresented, as are aboriginal people and sometimes women. That being the case, they are often extremely disadvantaged. What impact will legislation like this have on this prison population?

Extreme caution and compassion are necessary, because we are aware of the severity of the problem that has arisen in some locations, where people are often neglected by the federal government, because this is a federal jurisdiction. Extreme caution is necessary to ensure that no additional problems are created by passing Bill C-37.

• (1015)

[English]

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member raised the example of an offender who had been charged with 10 break and enters and has to go before the court. I am just wondering if my hon. colleague understands that to mean that each one of those counts would be considered separately, and a fine surcharge would be applied to each one of them regardless of whether or not they were sanctioned with a term of imprisonment.

Government Orders

Does she understand the legislation to read that, on top of jail as a sanction, the individual would also receive a fine surcharge for every one of those offences?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, that is my understanding at this point in time unless somebody wants to correct me.

[*Translation*]

My understanding of the bill is that a surcharge will be imposed, no matter what the punishment, for every count to which someone pleads guilty. It is important to understand this. That is what needs to be clear in people's minds: the surcharge is not the punishment as such. The bill says what it says, which is that it is a surcharge added to the punishment handed down by the judge. It means that if someone pleads guilty on six counts, there will be six surcharges. I have no problem with that. Allow me to repeat: the question has nothing to do with the concept of the surcharge.

Everyone is aware of the fact that the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime has said that victims need to see this fund. One might well ask whether this is the right way to help victims or whether there ought perhaps to be other dedicated funds. Few people here would be against having offenders contribute to compensation for their victims. In any event, that is what I think.

That being said, in attempting to solve one problem, we should not create a new one.

[*English*]

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-37, an act to amend the Criminal Code, respecting the doubling of the victim surcharge and making it mandatory for all offences and from all offenders.

Like my colleagues in the House, we have the deep and shared concern with victims of crime and we recognize the importance of ensuring that victims have access to the high quality service they require in their moment of need. In that regard, we support the underlying principle of this legislation, which is that victims services need dependable and appropriate funding. However, the government has not produced any evidence indicating that the bill would do anything to accomplish the goal of sustaining victims services across all provinces and over time.

Moreover, and central to our opposition to the bill, is that by removing from the judiciary the discretion to consider the adverse effect that the surcharge may have in particular circumstances, something that my colleague from Gatineau referred to as well in her comments, something that judges are allowed to do under the current statute in relation to assessing undue hardship caused by the fine's imposition, the bill ignores the complex relationship between poverty and crime. It ignores the complex fallouts with respect to inequality that would result from the legislation, as my colleague from Gatineau also pointed out in her remarks, and, in so doing, may even exacerbate the effects of poverty on individuals and their communities, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

The government suggests that the bill would increase the accountability of offenders, without providing any rational basis to indicate that the across the board doubling of the surcharge amount is sufficient to sustain adequate funding levels for victim services in all provinces and territories. Indeed, this approach ignores the reality

that victims of crime exist and require services even when offenders are not apprehended or convicted, for whatever reason, be it due to lack of evidence, problems with the evidence or, alternatively, when the matter has not gone to trial and the like.

It should be recalled that one of the most common crimes in the country, sexual assault, is one of the least likely to result in a conviction and, in many cases, charges are not pressed for various reasons, including because one may not feel comfortable facing one's attacker in court, or otherwise. Certainly a survivor of sexual assault deserves access to funded support and assistance even though the perpetrator has not been convicted of a crime under the Criminal Code.

If the government wants to propose legislation to ensure that victim services will receive consistent support across the board, anchored in the principle of equality and the like, it should commit to the direct funding of these services. We will be the first party to stand up and support such an initiative. Regrettably, there is no evidence that the bill currently before the House would accomplish the goal of sustaining adequate levels of support for victims of crime. Indeed, how soon will we be back here debating additional increases? How were the numbers arrived at? Indeed, a doubling, at first glance, appears arbitrary. Why not triple or quadruple the fines while we are at it?

Let me be clear that I am not advocating any such thing. The point is that there must be some evidentiary basis for government action in this regard. We have yet to see any evidence adduced in this matter to justify the doubling of the surcharge, nor have we seen that adequate attention has been paid to the provinces and their differing and particularized programs and needs when it comes to the use of surcharge fees.

This again raises the whole question of the federalist principle. In what manner are the provinces consulted in this regard? In what manner are their views taken into account? In what manner is there any equality of application with respect to the differing and particularized programs and needs in the matter of surcharge fees?

Continuing in that regard, and on this point in particular, we have to be mindful that even though the amount collected may be consistent across all jurisdictions, there is no question that to ensure the same quality of program the costs are different. In the north, for example, a smaller population means fewer people paying into the system since there are fewer convictions. Combine this with the fact that there is an increased cost to providing services in remote areas, how does the legislation propose to even out the gaps in access to and provision of services across Canadian jurisdictions? This is a question of equality and one to which my colleague from Gatineau also referred.

Government Orders

● (1020)

Beyond just the seeming arbitrariness of the increase is the fact that the bill would remove judicial discretion. Currently, Canadian judges are empowered by section 737 to exempt an accused from the surcharge based on the specific finding that the surcharge would result in undue hardship on that individual or on dependants.

Regrettably, the removal of judicial discretion, as contemplated by the bill, testifies yet again to the government's lack of respect for the Canadian judiciary, for the independence of the judiciary and for their experience and expertise in these matters.

By removing from our courts the authority to consider the undue hardship that may result in the imposition of the surcharge in specific instances, the bill essentially mandates that the courts turn a blind eye to the disproportionate and prejudicial consequences that mandatory sentencing would have on low-income and minority communities, two demographics that are already significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

As members of Parliament, we do not have the ability to consider the unique facts and circumstances of specific cases. Judges who have the facts, witnesses and evidence before them are the persons best placed to exercise such discretion, and we must authorize them to do so.

Certainly we could place limits on the exercise of this discretion as appropriate. We can define undue hardship and we can list factors that comprise it as to better guide judicial decision-making in this regard. We should not, however, pre-emptively cut off all access to this defence as impecunious litigants would be particularly penalized and punished, perhaps not even in proportion to the offence for which they have been prosecuted.

Our judiciary is well-equipped and qualified to make factual determinations and more than capable to apply the law fairly and impartially. Moreover, the reasoning of judges in specific instances is recorded in opinions that are public, reviewable and appealable, thus making our judiciary the ideal forum in which these types of decisions should be made.

During previous debate on the bill, the member for Kootenay—Columbia suggested that the proper solution for those offenders “who do not want to pay the victim surcharge” is to not commit crime.

Besides the generally flawed logic underlying this theory of deterrence, which presumes that potential offenders reference their copies of the Criminal Code prior to contemplating or committing a particular offence, I do not believe there is any evidence to suggest that because of the victim surcharge, any would-be criminals would reconsider their plans, nor do I believe that offenders, particularly first-time offenders, are even aware that such a thing as a victim surcharge even exists, let alone that it might be collected from them upon conviction in a court of law.

The new provisions in Bill C-37 would require the collection of the victim surcharge for all offences and yet, by the government's own acknowledgement, there exists so-called victimless crimes. I am curious if any government member could explain to me how, in cases such as hate speech criminalized under the Criminal Code,

where exactly the government sees the collected victim surcharge going, particularly, if, indeed, in its view, such an offence has no victim.

As noted at the outset, this House stands united in its recognition of the importance of providing services, support and assistance to victims. That said, the Liberals reject the premise of the bill that social problems can easily be solved by simply increasing criminal penalties and that judicial discretion should be curtailed.

The undue hardship exemption that currently exists in section 737 enables judges to be mindful of the relationship between poverty and crime. By removing this discretion, Canadian judges will be unable to take this into account and, as such, the bill would ultimately exacerbate the existing economic burden experienced by low-income Canadians and their communities, exacerbate inequality, impact disproportionately and continue the vicious cycle of poverty and crime in which some Canadians are trapped.

● (1025)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member's speech. I keep coming back to one issue. Once offenders have served their sentence, they must re-enter society. Does the member have anything to say about the adverse effects this mandatory surcharge could have on crime? I do not want to generalize, but there is sometimes a link between a person's socio-economic conditions and the fact that they commit certain crimes.

Would the member not agree that this bill does not give us ways to attack crime at its roots and lower the crime rate?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, as the member just said and as the member for Gatineau said in her speech this morning, it is a matter of justice, rehabilitation, equality, protection against poverty and judicial discretion.

For all these reasons, we are opposed to this bill. We agree with the principle and the objective, but we do not agree with how the government has addressed this issue.

[*English*]

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague on highlighting so many of the issues that would have a clear impact if this legislation were to go forward.

Given the concern that many of us have when it comes to judicial review and fairness in the judicial system, would the hon. member be prepared to comment on how he sees this fitting in with the government's continued mandate on the persecution of so many different people?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, the legislation really reflects and represents the generic problems associated with the government's approach to crime and punishment. I use the words “crime and punishment” because there is a generic absence with respect to issues of prevention, but only with after the fact punishment.

Government Orders

Even when it comes to that issue, here, too, we find, as in this legislation and in others, a lack of consultation with the provinces, a lack of appreciation to differential impacts that such legislation would have given different provinces, a lack of appreciation of the prejudicial impact that this would have on minority groups in this country, particularly aboriginal people, a lack of appreciation for the importance of judicial discretion and, indeed, in that regard, a lack of appreciation with respect to the separation of powers and the importance of the independence of the judiciary, let alone the experience and expertise of the judiciary in matters of this kind, and a lack of appreciation for the overall role, as I said, with respect to prevention to begin with.

When one looks at this legislation, it yet again reflects the exacerbation of the problems we have with crime and punishment rather than approaching it in a manner that would be preventive, rehabilitative, egalitarian and, on the whole, respectful of our separation of powers and the role of the judiciary.

•(1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could comment on the victim support programs. That is something which the government should support, but it does not need to be solely through surcharges.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question because it is precisely the approach to victim support programs where we can fulfill the very objective that the legislation has underlying it, but not do so in the particularist and prejudicial fashion that this legislation would.

Again, we support the principle underlying this legislation but not the means chosen to implement that principle.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-37.

I will remind members of what our critic, the member for Gatineau, has stated. We support the bill at second reading. We are anxious to see it move forward to committee where we will give the matter more examination.

There is no question that members of the official opposition support victims of crime and their families. We recognize the value of provincial and federal services that have been provided to victims of crime and their families. However, there is a concern whether these services are adequate and sufficiently funded. I certainly have not heard an adequate explanation from the government whether this additional surcharge would ensure that those services are properly funded. If we are going to provide services to victims and their families to try to address some of the impact of the crimes to which they have been affected, then the support needs to be there and it needs to be properly funded.

We have raised our concern with the idea that the discretion of the courts has been removed in terms of deciding whether the surcharge creates an undue burden and hardship on the offender. This goes to the point that the Conservative government seems to continually move in on the jurisdiction of the judiciary to remove the learned discretion the courts have earned over many decades. This is a concern. In other words, the government is moving into an area in which, frankly, it has no business being. The Conservatives seem to

be cherry-picking to restrain the judiciary in areas they think are politically advantageous to them.

There is certainly no evidence as to whether this achieves any positive outcome in terms of addressing crime and making our communities and Canadians any safer. They appear to continually penalize the people who are trying to ensure there is a balance of fairness in restitution and rehabilitation within the system, which has been shown to be much more responsive to the demands that we ensure that our communities are safer for Canadians.

I have some experience with the Nova Scotia victim fine surcharge and its implementation. It is an important measure, but I have not heard the government talk about the consultations it has had with provincial jurisdictions. Is there a standard application for the victim fine surcharge across the country?

I have not heard if the government has worked in any way to make sure that there is some standardization across the country or that the application of this victim fine surcharge is being applied in a uniform fashion across the country and that it complements what already exists in provincial jurisdictions. That is an important question. Certainly it is one members on this side will be pursuing at committee and in further debate in this chamber.

•(1035)

We recognize that more has to be done. We are concerned that members opposite are looking for an easy fix, for measures that would appear to be having some impact. They could be doing more in a substantive way to get at the issues of crime and punishment, to ensure that victims are properly compensated, that services are in place to deal with the impacts of the crimes on victims and their families in the most effective way possible. As we have said, the intent of the bill, which is to ensure that services for victims of crime are properly funded, is laudable and is something we support. Whether this increase would properly fund those programs, we have not heard as yet. These questions will be forthcoming.

I have not heard anything from government members during the second reading debate to answer some of our questions. I am not the first member to raise these questions, but we have not heard anything in response. They are important questions. We are not here simply to pass laws that fulfill a political objective. We are here to ensure the laws of this land do what they are supposed to do, that they are properly thought out and have the intended impact.

It is unfortunate that we are dealing with a piece of legislation in this House when there does not seem to have been an attempt to coordinate it with what exists at the provincial level. There is Bill C-350 and there are some conflicts between it and Bill C-37. Those things have to be clarified. We have to ensure that the work we are doing here is adding in a positive and constructive way to the laws of this land and not creating more conflict. We have already seen that legislation passed by the government, as it deals with crime and justice, has been challenged in various jurisdictions. Various provisions have been struck down by the courts. I suggest that these things happen because the legislation is not well thought out and members of this House who have much experience and knowledge to bring to bear are not given the opportunity to fully engage in debate and examination of legislation.

Government Orders

In conclusion, we on this side will be supporting this bill in principle to send it to committee. However, we have a number of outstanding questions that we will be pursuing. I hope members opposite will recognize the need to co-operate to ensure that this legislation, if it passes this House at the end of the process, is the best piece of legislation it can possibly be.

● (1040)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we very much support victim service funds and realize how important they are for victims of crimes. Having said that, we want to see a more proactive approach in preventing crimes.

Some of the Conservative members try to give the impression that these surcharges would have an impact on preventing crimes from taking place in the first place. I question that. We need to be very clear that there is nothing in this legislation that would prevent crimes from taking place. If we canvass the public, we would find that there is a higher degree of interest in implementing measures that would prevent crimes. I would appeal to the Prime Minister to take that more seriously.

The government needs to take a more proactive approach in preventing crime from taking place in the first place. Does the member agree?

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Speaker, as the member from Winnipeg North has indicated, there is much more rhetoric from the government about what some of this legislation would do than there is reality. There is some question as to what the government in fact is doing to make our communities more safe.

People in the communities of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour recognize the need to deal with the underlying causes of crime at the community level. We need to deal with issues such as poverty, security, and providing activities for youth. We need to make sure the community is involved in dealing with these issues. While punishment and accountability for actions are important pieces of the puzzle, they are not everything. The government needs to have more confidence in Canadians, communities and the police on the street in dealing with these issues, rather than thinking that carrying a big stick will solve all the problems.

● (1045)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about something that seems increasingly evident in the Conservative government's bills. They always seem to polarize things. It is black or white, and in this case, it is good or bad. I think that reality is completely different and that there are many shades of grey.

For example, take the case of someone who suffers from mental illness and who commits a reprehensible act. Would this person not need support more than a surcharge? This seems to be a situation that is completely ignored in the bill before us.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. He has hit the nail on the head. We know, and Canadians understand, that we are not dealing in a forthright manner with the root causes of crime. We are not dealing with people who are

institutionalized. We are not dealing with one of the main contributors to crime, that being mental health issues. There is a sad lack of support by the federal government in dealing with these issues. As a result, we have a level of recidivism that is simply unnecessary. It fails to recognize that we need to identify and treat the problems, and make sure that Canadians are able to return to their communities and make constructive and positive contributions.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my other colleagues have said, we will be supporting this bill but do have reservations about it.

I agree entirely with my colleague from Trois-Rivières when he says that sometimes the government portrays things only in black and white, pitting good against evil and not seeing all the shades of grey that might exist in the middle.

I would like to share a story. I was actually a victim of crime, so I have a personal take on this issue. In 1997, I was 25 years old and had just returned to Victoria, B.C. from a year of teaching English in South Korea. One night shortly after I got back, I think it was a few weeks later, I was at a friend's house party, someone whom I had gone to art school with. It was a peaceable party with art students and we were having a good time that night.

Around midnight two gentlemen came in. They were skinheads. I would estimate one was about 200 pounds, wore a white power t-shirt, was bald and had a lazy eye that went one way. He was not exactly the kind of guy that one would start a friendly conversation with.

Now the host of the party was uncomfortable. She wanted these gentlemen to leave. I took it upon myself that night to tell these gentlemen they were not welcome at the party and that they would have to go. Everything was fine, as they seemed to get the message and they were going to go. I was standing by the door, and as the two gentlemen were leaving one of them gave me what was called a sucker punch. He punched me in the head. He had a spike ring on and left a scar by my eye.

I was bleeding and in shock. The police came and arrests were made. Basically, as I was getting cleaned up in the bathroom downstairs, I realized that I had been physically assaulted. I immediately gave the police my witness statement.

After that, I waited. I waited in fear. I changed my look. I shaved my head. I did not want this guy to find me, because he was out on parole. I had just returned from a foreign country where I had been for a year. I was having trouble navigating the system at the time because I was experiencing reverse culture shock.

I want to add that I could have looked at the man who assaulted me as evil, but I had actually seen him in the neighbourhood quite a bit before I went to Korea and knew that he had a baby at home. I knew that his financial situation was not that good, because I saw him and his wife and his baby going to social services quite often, I guess to get their social services cheque. They were not exactly in a good situation.

Government Orders

The neighbourhood that we lived in was North Park, where I lived on Mason Street at the time. It was a rough-and-tumble neighbourhood. I can say that we both shared one thing at the time because we were both poor. I had used the bulk of the money I had made in South Korea to pay off my student loan, which was quite burdensome. Therefore, in some ways we were both victims of poverty, but he much worse. I had a university education, and I do not think he had even finished high school.

In that situation the damage was much more psychological for me than economic, and so throwing money or a fine at the fact I had been physically assaulted was not going to change anything. I also doubt that Dennis would have been able to pay that.

I experienced a loss of income because I was a stress case after that happened. At the time I refused or was in denial about being labelled a victim. I knew victim compensation existed, but I refused to take on that label.

I see now that I clearly was the victim of a crime, but I do not know if a fine would have necessarily put a salve on the problem I had. I know other people who were assaulted that night by the same two gentlemen did take the victims compensation they were offered. I chose not to.

● (1050)

As I said, we support the bill because we support victims of crime and their families and are following the recommendation of the Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, but we have reservations about the bill itself.

After having been assaulted I trusted the judge and the decision he made. He let one of the gentlemen go because he had seen that he had done quite a bit of work to distance himself from white supremacist groups, whereas he gave a bit of a harsher sentence to the other gentleman who had a record.

I trust judges' discretion. They have studied and thought about the concept of justice. Therefore, I would be more comfortable letting judges decide what is best rather than mandating a judge to do something. It is an insult to our judicial system to impose certain measures on them when they are in the best position to judge.

The other issue we are concerned about is the downloading of costs. I am wondering whether that has been looked at sufficiently and if all provinces and territories are ready to take on the costs that will effectively be downloaded onto them by this legislation. With the other bills that have touched on the Criminal Code for certain political purposes, we have seen costs downloaded onto the provinces. We have serious questions about that. We know that downloading of costs can put undue pressure on the budgets of provincial and territorial governments.

The other thing I really want to point out from my story is that we can say that there are criminals and victims and that criminals are evil and victims are good. In my case as a victim of assault, I agree that the actions of the gentleman who assaulted me were not acceptable in society. However, throwing money at the problem would not have solved the fact I had been victimized by assault. It was not going to change my psychological stress. It was not going to repair the damage that had been done. We cannot just throw money at a problem and expect that everything will be solved.

At committee I would question whether we have invested enough money in services to help victims. I know that the government wants to help victims and their families, but I would hope it would tone back its rhetoric in using this issue as a political issue and look at the issue more from a compassionate point of view and the experience of victims and to understand that not every story of every victim is the same, and not every story of every person who commits a crime is the same. These are complex issues. These people have complex stories and it is too easy for us here in this place to caricature victims and criminals. For example, I am always amazed by the kidnapping of young Kienan Hebert and how the father reached out to kidnapper and how they found forgiveness together.

● (1055)

There are different ways we can deal with crime and victims, and we have to take a more compassionate approach rather than turning it into a political caricature of white hat cowboy, black hat cowboy, good and evil. There is a lot more to be said and it is much more complex.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when my colleague first rose today he said he agreed totally with his colleague who had spoken previously. That colleague had indicated that we were not investing in mental health care and did not care about mental health issues.

I want to make it very clear to all members in the House that there has never been a government that has invested more in improving our mental health strategies in this country than our government. We have invested a lot of money in that and are also spending a lot of political and human capital trying to get the message out on our websites and so on. Just yesterday in the House I made a statement regarding the importance of Mental Health Awareness Week.

I would like the member to clarify the record as to whether or not he understands that our government has invested a lot of money and effort in improving mental health outcomes. Our government has invested money in suicide prevention and many other initiatives. We provided \$240,000 to Calgary to help with mental health disabilities. We are providing \$12.5 million over five years to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. These investments will give long-term results not just quick fixes. It is not just a bit of money to try to help with the current crisis, but long-term initiatives that will improve mental health outcomes across Canada.

Statements by Members

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, I do not deny the government's efforts to improve mental health services. However, the issue is two-fold. The government can have the right intentions and invest in programs but there is the other side of trying to convince people that not all criminals are evil people, that some have a mental illness. For example, there is the story of the girl who went through, I do not know, how many prisons for originally throwing an apple at a postman. She was obviously mentally ill but she was lost in the system.

When we have the social attitude that all criminals are bad and should be treated the same, we are not taking into account their mental illness, and that becomes a problem.

The Deputy Speaker: We will move on to statements by members. The member will have approximately three minutes remaining for questions and comments when the House resumes on this matter.

The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Essex.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

HIGHGATE FAIR

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of attending the Highgate Fair, which has been celebrated for the last 158 years in the eastern part of my riding of Chatham-Kent—Essex. It is a wonderful event, with everything one has come to expect from a country fair.

One of the favourite events is the annual pie auction. This year I was especially honoured to auction off four pies baked by four young ladies aged eight to 13: Karen Scott, Amanda Litwin, Hannah Clark and Zoe Frazier-Clark. The enthusiasm and generosity of the crowd, along with the anticipation of digging into these great pies, resulted in raising over \$1,400. The money raised will be used for the breakfast programs at St. Michael's school and the Naahii Ridge Public School, both located in Ridgetown.

I look forward to celebrating the 159th Highgate Fair and I take this opportunity to congratulate all those who work so hard to make the fair a great success year after year.

* * *

[Translation]

GILLES ROY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, the Lower St. Lawrence region lost a great man who made his mark on the area's recent history. Gilles Roy was the founder of Opération dignité III and a strong supporter of rural living and regional development.

It is builders such as Mr. Roy who have kept the Lower St. Lawrence region vibrant and dynamic. The launch of the Opération dignité movement in the 1970s was a defining moment in eastern Quebec. People throughout the region took a stand and told the Quebec government that they would not allow their towns to be shut

down. This was a major popular resistance movement that caused the government to back down.

Gilles Roy was on the front lines of this fight, and he then continued to show his commitment to the survival of the regions for many years after that. I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Roy in April when he received an award from the Université du Québec à Rimouski. This week, he was supposed to receive the 2012 Grand prix de la ruralité award, but fate decided otherwise.

On behalf of my colleagues from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup and Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, I would like to salute this man who devoted his life to his region, a region that I am fortunate to represent in the House of Commons.

Mr. Roy, your work, your dedication and your commitment to the Lower St. Lawrence region will never be forgotten.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this fall marks the end of a series of cross-Canada consultations on official languages, ably carried out by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

[English]

I had the pleasure of participating in two of the 23 round tables that took place across our beautiful and vast country.

[Translation]

These round tables have presented an opportunity for the government to highlight that our roadmap for 2008-13 has had its budget increased by 40% in comparison to the last—the largest investment in the history of Canada.

Even in times of global economic uncertainty, our government increased the roadmap budget from \$787 million to \$1.1 billion.

[English]

Moreover, in our last budget, this government did not cut a single penny from the official languages budget.

[Translation]

This is proof that the current government holds official languages in the highest esteem.

* * *

[English]

TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Teachers' Day and I would like to pay tribute to the thousands of professionals who help guide and stimulate the leaders of tomorrow. In particular, I would like to offer a special note of thanks to Darlene Jones. Darlene is a grade six teacher at Toronto's Brookview Middle School located in my great riding, near the intersection of Jane and Finch.

Statements by Members

Recently Darlene's students nominated her as Toronto's teacher of the year, and she won. The students readily acknowledged that Ms. Jones is tough, that she gives homework and that she is relentless in her demands that the work be done and be done correctly. The students also acknowledged that Darlene is a role model in what can be a very challenging environment. For her part, Darlene credits her success to believing that her students can be whatever they want to be.

It has been said that a good teacher teaches but a great teacher inspires. With this in mind, I would like to congratulate Darlene, a great teacher who has made a tremendous difference in the lives of the leaders of tomorrow.

* * *

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has a low-tax plan to create jobs and to bring long-term prosperity and economic growth to this country. What does the opposition have? It has a tax plan and an election promise, a promise that would raise taxes on everything and a promise that would kill jobs and stop economic growth.

Page 4 of the NDP 2011 election platform lays it out: a carbon tax through a government-imposed cap and trade system with the intent of raising \$21 billion from taxpayers and Canadian businesses. The present leader of the NDP promised at the leadership debates that he would go even further than the last leader, that his plan would raise billions more. That money comes directly from the wallets of hard-working Canadians. This plan could not have been laid out any more clearly. Now, for some reason, the NDP just does not want to talk about it.

Canadians cannot afford the no-development party and its hare-brained, high-tax schemes.

* * *

● (1105)

[Translation]

QUEBEC CITY JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Junior Chamber International Canada held its national convention in Kootenay, British Columbia, from September 19 to 23. The Jeune chambre de commerce de Québec distinguished itself for the second consecutive year by winning the award for best young chamber in Canada.

I congratulate the president of the Jeune chambre de commerce de Québec, Jonathan Gagnon, the general manager, Sophie Gingras, and all the members of their team for making this achievement possible.

It is thanks to the initiative and determination shown by our young men and women in launching businesses that our region has one of the lowest unemployment rates on the continent and enjoys an outstanding level of prosperity. This also reflects the vitality of Quebec City and the courage shown by our young business people when confronted with an increasingly difficult economic environment.

I should also point out that the next national convention of Junior Chamber International Canada will take place in Quebec City, from September 18 to 21, 2013. I am convinced that the Jeune chambre de commerce de Québec will do a good job of welcoming delegates from all across Canada.

* * *

[English]

PATRIOTISM

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the good people of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry sent me here today to lay claim to a great distinction.

Today, October 5, 2012, I have the honour to announce to the whole country that I am the member of Parliament for the most patriotic riding in Canada. That is right, after a hotly contested competition among 40 of my colleagues and their ridings, Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry can proudly claim the title of most patriotic riding in Canada.

Because of the patriotism of the constituents of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, our riding proudly displayed more Canadian flags on Canada's 145th birthday than any other riding in Canada.

That is just one of the many reasons I am so proud to stand here and tell the whole world that I have the honour of being the member of Parliament for the great people of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

I wish a happy Thanksgiving to all.

* * *

GREY CUP

Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week I had the honour of watching an advanced screening of a fantastic Canadian documentary series, *Engraved on a Nation*, from TSN and Bell Media, which was commissioned to celebrate the 100th Grey Cup.

Directed by some of Canada's most acclaimed and award-winning filmmakers, the series proves that Canadians telling Canadian stories to Canadians is alive and well. This series is special, as it transcends football and brings to life eight powerful stories of history, politics, culture, family, passion and loyalty.

I watched *Stone Thrower: The Chuck Ealey Story*. Ealey, a gifted Ohio-born quarterback, found refuge in Canada and the CFL. Finding no home in the NFL, he led the Hamilton Tiger-Cats in 1972 to a Grey Cup victory in his rookie season. Along with giving him a place to play the game he loved, Canada became the place Ealey chose to raise his family and where he proudly remains rooted today. This story speaks to our nation and our values.

I truly hope all Canadians watch this series and I want to thank Bell Media for investing in such a worthwhile endeavour.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

THÉRÈSE POIRIER

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important to take the time to recognize volunteers who are making a difference in their communities. I rise here today to commend the outstanding contribution made by Thérèse Poirier of Lachute, who was awarded the *Hommage Aînés Argenteuil* by the Table de concertation Parole aux aînés—a committee that gives a voice to seniors—on the occasion of seniors' day.

Ms. Poirier dedicates a great deal of her time, and plenty of energy, to residents of the assisted living facility at the CSSS in Argenteuil. For the past 27 years, she has been visiting them nearly every day. She helps them, listens to them, advocates on their behalf and sometimes even spoils them a little. She is regarded as a guardian angel whose generosity knows no bounds.

When people tell her that the residents are lucky to have her, Ms. Poirier replies that she is the lucky one—lucky to be healthy enough to continue to help them at age 77.

In closing, I would like to thank and congratulate all of the people like Thérèse Poirier in Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel.

* * *

• (1110)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of our economic action plan that focuses on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

Today Statistics Canada announced that during the month of September, 50,000 net new jobs were created. Since July 2009, this brings a grand total of over 820,000 net new jobs that have been created in Canada.

Unfortunately, if the NDP leader had his way, these jobs and more would be lost because he would impose a new \$21 billion carbon tax on the people of Canada.

Our Conservative government will oppose this new NDP tax and we will continue working hard to support the economy and Canadian families with the positive, pro-growth measures of economic action plan 2012.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDALS

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, I had the pleasure of awarding 15 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medals in recognition of the contributions, for the most part, by members of the Canadian Forces. These men and women of all ages have shown a level of commitment that we in our community are all proud of. I would like to thank the officials of the armoury in Trois-Rivières, the Naval Reserve and HMCS *Ville de Québec* for opening their doors to welcome the recipients with the full honours they deserve.

However, I would like to express my disappointment and sadness at the Minister of National Defence's refusal to grant me access to these locations, which deprived the medal recipients of a reception that they deserved in a location that has such significance to each one of them.

I would hate to think that this was a partisan decision, as that would imply that there are two classes of federal MPs. I would like to apologize to all those who were very pleased to be honoured on HMCS *Ville de Québec*. I assure them that they have and will always have my sincerest gratitude.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I invite Canadians to celebrate the first ever International Day of the Girl on Thursday, October 11. Canada has been a leader in promoting this day at the United Nations. The day is aimed at making a difference in the lives of girls and young women as citizens and as powerful voices of change within their families, their communities and their nations.

Girls throughout the world face higher rates of violence, poverty and discrimination. Becoming aware of the barriers that girls face is the first step to removing those barriers. The International Day of the Girl will ensure that girls get the investment and recognition that they deserve. Equal opportunity for girls is good for all of us.

I have many activities planned in my riding of London North Centre, which will celebrate this great day. Canada can continue to lead by example, as we know that the achievements and successes of girls and young women are a key part of what makes a strong Canada.

* * *

AL TOULIN

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian journalists in the Parliament Hill family lost one of the great ones when Al Toulain passed away suddenly last Monday. Al worked for the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *Hamilton Spectator*, the *Toronto Star* and the *Financial Post*, to name a few, in a career that spanned 40 years.

Al was known for always being able to ferret out that elusive scoop with great contacts and respect across government. In 2004, he served as director of communications to the Liberal government House leader, Tony Valeri, and later shared his impeccable communications talents in election campaigns. He was an avid reader. Nobody read more than Al and nobody seemed to have a deeper well of knowledge about politics, the economy and so much more.

Al was quiet, never overbearing, but he was also courageous and unstoppable when there was a job to be done, a gentle giant and a cool head in a crisis. Most of all, we will miss the big warm heart that beat in his towering frame.

On behalf of all of us on the Hill, I send our condolences to his wife Mary Beth and his entire family. We thank Al, the "Big Guy", for everything.

Oral Questions

and tell Canadians the truth, that it wants to raise the price on everything?

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

FOOD SAFETY

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on September 13 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency yanked XL's exporter licence at the request of U.S. officials. The Minister of Agriculture and his department determined that this meat was not safe enough to be sold to American consumers, yet he did not pull XL's Canadian licence for another 14 days. Therefore, for 14 days the Minister of Agriculture allowed the same tainted meat that was not safe enough for Americans to be sold to Canadian families. Why?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from the member opposite. It gives me another chance to say that food safety is a priority for this government.

The CFIA began acting on September 4 and has continued to act based on science and information as it becomes available.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister's response is again very short on the facts, so let us review those.

The minister said he was aware from day one of all of the activities, which means he knew about the broken safety equipment. That means he knew on September 6 that XL Foods was withholding critical data from government officials. It means he knew on September 13 that meat from XL was not safe enough for American consumers. Why then did he withhold vital public health information from Canadians?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the CFIA, based on science and timely access to information, began operating on September 4 in the best interests of Canadian consumers. It continued to do that. There is a timeline that has been well published on the CFIA website that answers a lot of those questions, which the member opposite chooses to ignore.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a watershed day for taking responsibility. First, the CFIA took responsibility for its part in this recall. Then XL took responsibility for the faulty operations at the plant. The only person with the infallibility complex who refuses to take responsibility is the Minister of Agriculture himself. When will he apologize for his failure to keep Canadians informed, and when will he tender his resignation?

FOOD SAFETY

Ms. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government takes the safety of Canadians seriously and we are fully committed to ensuring that Canada's food safety system remains one of the best in the world. Yes, it is true, Canada's beef is among the safest in the world. Our government has brought in the safe food for Canadians act, which would further strengthen the beef sector.

Bill S-11 would introduce mandatory traceability for all farm animals, including cattle, and traceability for all food when it is processed. These provisions would give the Canadian Food Inspection Agency the tools it needs to respond even faster and more effectively to ensure beef is safe.

However, what do the New Democrats do? They have opposed the safe food for Canadians act every step of the way until their eleventh-hour conversion earlier this week under intense pressure from Canadians. Why did it take the NDP so long to support this legislation and to support our beef sector?

* * *

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Vaudreuil—Soulanges sent me here to represent them, protect their interests, voice their concerns and share their accomplishments.

I am pretty sure that from Moose Jaw to Charlottetown, voters expect the same from their MP: a worthy representative of their interests and not a worthless representative who simply reads phony attacks written by some junior Machiavelli.

The period for statements by members becomes more absurd every day. The hon. members opposite are not stupid. They know that when they get up and parade the latest NDP bogeyman to be created in the Prime Minister's lab, what hides behind their words is utter contempt for our democratic institutions.

My friends, there is nothing to say that we have to keep up this charade. The ball is your court.

* * *

[*English*]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the holiday weekend approaches, families from coast to coast to coast gather to give thanks. I would like to wish the people in my riding and all Canadians a happy Thanksgiving.

One thing we are very thankful for this year is that the opposition leader is not able to impose a carbon tax that would raise the cost on everything. The NDP believes that when two wrongs do not make a right, it should try a third. It is easy to tell when New Democrats are not telling Canadians the truth: their lips move.

It is clear that the NDP has a plan to put a price on carbon. It is written in black and white in its platform. When will it come clean

Oral Questions

• (1120)

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course all of these decisions and actions are undertaken by the officials at the CFIA. They continue to work on science-based reasoning and timelines as information becomes available. My job as minister is to ensure that they have the capacity, from a budgetary process, and human resources to get that important job done.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people simply no longer have confidence in this government that refuses to take responsibility.

The tainted meat crisis stretches from coast to coast. The number of people infected keeps growing. Public health officials in Alberta, Saskatchewan and other provinces are currently investigating numerous cases of E. coli.

Could the minister tell us how many cases are currently under investigation and how many have been reported since September 13?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those numbers are available on the public Health Canada website. I am certain the member will check that number out.

The CFIA began acting on September 4. It continues to work on a science-based system that it has in place and will continue to do that job on recalls as they become necessary.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, frankly, this crisis is a complete fiasco.

There are many problems. Broken sprinklers, improper cleaning and an inadequate monitoring system allowed thousands of pounds of beef to become contaminated. This went on for weeks, and the proper authorities, the minister included, did nothing.

As a result, tainted meat ended up on the tables in thousands of Canadian households.

The minister does not want to take responsibility. Why not replace him with someone who will?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the CFIA continues to act on science-based reasoning. One illness is too much. Everybody agrees with that.

We continue to build a robust food safety system. We also have Bill S-11, the safe food for Canadians act, coming to us from the Senate. I invite the members opposite to help us expedite that, to give the CFIA more powers of recall.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision was made by the CFIA to delist XL products from companies that are permitted to export to the United States. Can the minister tell the House whether that decision was one that was requested by the American authorities or made independently by the food agency, and was the minister aware of that decision at the time it was made?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a robust food safety system, recognized by the Americans as well. We work in concert, due to the integrated nature of our beef industry in North America.

Having said that, the CFIA works with its counterparts on the American side to put forward the best interests of Canadian and American consumers, and it will continue to do that.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, however robust that system is, the minister is not very robust at answering simple questions.

I would like to ask the minister again this time. The only conclusion one can come to is that the American authorities appear to have been more concerned about the safety of all American consumers than the minister was concerned about the safety of Canadian consumers, because if that was not the case, why is it that CFIA decided to close the border to Canadian products going to the United States, to all American consumers, but did not at the same time close access to the Canadian market?

It took a further two weeks for the government to protect the Canadian consumer. Why the delay? Why would the Americans be doing a better job on behalf of their consumers than our government is doing on behalf of our consumers?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, we have a robust food safety system. There are differences between what the Americans do and what the Canadian CFIA does.

Having said that, we are both focused on our priority. Job number one is food safety for our Canadian consumers. As scientific evidence becomes available, as timelines began to become available, and the documentation that was required, CFIA continued to act, starting on September 4 and right up to today.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the facts and the science are the same in the United States. There is no difference between American science and Canadian science when it comes to the protection and safety of consumers.

It is incomprehensible that the Minister of Agriculture closed the border so that these products would not be made available to Americans, but then allowed the same products to be made available to Canadians for two more weeks. It makes no sense. The minister was seriously negligent in this regard.

How can he explain these inadequacies?

• (1125)

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually CFIA has explained those inadequacies, as the member tries to call them. They are certainly not that.

There are differences in our systems. What we have is secondary testing at the CFIA level here in Canada. The Americans do not do that particular step.

At the same time, recall notices were put out for the most at-risk products, ground beef and trim, on September 16. The Americans did it the exact same day. As we continued to build our recall system later in September, the Americans did it on exactly the same day.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2011, XL received \$1.6 million in growing forward grants to install “state-of-the-art technology that will...double its per-day capacity for ground beef”.

The downside of this high-speed processing is that there is no room for error. In other words, the Conservatives helped build this ultra-modern facility.

My question to the minister is: Will he admit that he failed to provide the needed food safety resources to operate such an intense high-volume facility?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we have done as a government is make sure that CFIA has the inspection capabilities and the capacity to manage a plant such as this.

We have 46 inspectors on site on a daily basis. That is a 20% increase over the last few years.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us imagine this. The Brooks plant can now process 4,000 to 5,000 cows per day, yet since 2006 not a single new inspector position has been hired at the Brooks plant, except to fill vacancies.

The minister says otherwise. Will he now provide this House with the names, locations and job descriptions of all CFIA inspectors across this country, and let us end the confusion once and for all?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are things like privacy laws in Canada.

What I can say is that the officials at CFIA continue to work diligently on food safety in this country, and they will continue doing that job.

[Translation]

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not only XL Foods that is being targeted by the American authorities. There are now concerns south of the border regarding our food inspection standards, which are simply not high enough for the American market. The Conservatives' incompetence when it comes to food safety could be costly for our ranchers.

Oral Questions

Are the Conservatives beginning to understand the scope of the impact of their budget cuts on food safety?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been absolutely no cutbacks to the food safety capacity in this great country. It is quite the opposite, as a matter of fact.

Over the last number of budgets and papers that we have produced, members can see a growing amount of dollars, some 20% increase in the budgetary capacity of the CFIA plus a 20% increase in the inspections in this particular plant alone.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2011, XL Foods pocketed no less than \$1.6 million from the government to increase its production. The company doubled its production of ground beef, yet the number of inspectors remained the same. Canadian families should be able to feel confident that meat from XL Foods is properly inspected. They also deserve enough front-line inspectors so that they can enjoy their meat pies in safety.

Why have the Conservatives abandoned consumers?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we continue to do just the opposite. We bring in legislation that gives the Public Health Agency and CFIA more powers. We are doing that now with Bill S-11. I hope that the member opposite will rise in support of that bill at every stage as it moves through.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every day, the minister goes on and on about Bill S-11, which puts off the review of CFIA activities until 2017. The current crisis proves that the agency's activities absolutely must be reviewed immediately. The NDP is calling for it; meat consumers are calling for it; and Canadian families are calling for it. Yet the minister still refuses and continues to delay it.

To respond to the concerns of Canadian families, will the minister promise to review the agency's activities now, and not five years from now?

• (1130)

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that we have actually gone beyond that.

Oral Questions

Countries around the world come to review what the CFIA is doing plant by plant. We have to do that in order to maintain our requirements to export to certain countries around the world. We continue to be buoyed by their results.

We will continue to work with the CFIA to build a robust food safety system. I am hopeful that the NDP will start to support budgetary actions that do that.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, \$116 million was spent on food safety and biosecurity risk management systems in 2011. The government is cutting that number by nearly \$32 million to just \$85 million for 2012-13. Our food safety program is being cut by 5%. This information can be found in the government's financial documents that the Conservatives themselves tabled in the House of Commons.

Why do they insist on saying the opposite? The question remains: can we rely on their financial documents, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member is new here but he should know that the budgetary process of the government stops on March 31 of each year and then renews itself on April 1. There are supplementary estimates and other things that are done during the year to add to the capacity of situations like the CFIA. We continue to do that but they continue to vote against those.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the NDP did was vote against the cuts, and we are proud of that.

Am I to understand that what the Conservatives are now saying is that the documents they tabled in the House of Commons were inaccurate?

[English]

The government's own financial documents show that food safety is down by 5%. Food safety and biosecurity risk management systems are being cut by 27%, and that is a fact. How can the Conservatives expect families to believe that their cuts will have no effect?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is quoting from an incomplete report. What the report does not show is the ongoing ability of the government to continue sunset programs. He should probably be aware of that and help us move that through in the next budgetary cycle.

* * *

[Translation]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nothing is sacred when the Conservatives decide to make cuts. Inmates who turn to their religion to help in their rehabilitation process are being told, "Sorry, we only accept Christians." Rabbis, imams, and granthis are being laid off. Maybe the minister can get

rid of aboriginal elders while he is at it. The thing is, this is not a costly program.

Will the minister reverse his decision to cut religious services for Sikh, Muslim and Jewish inmates?

[English]

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of that question. Our government strongly supports the freedom of religion for all Canadians. Convicted criminals continue to have reasonable access to any religious counselling or services of their choice on a voluntary basis.

The government does fund full-time chaplains. In addition to serving members of their own faith, these chaplains also make themselves available on a by request basis to provide spiritual advice to the general population.

The Canadian Forces have used this type of chaplaincy program for years. If it is good enough for our armed forces, then it is good enough for inmates in our federal penitentiaries.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, picking and choosing on this subject just will not wash. This is not a costly program. The minister has no justification for cutting it.

The parliamentary secretary should listen to her colleague who said that "religious freedom is a fundamental freedom, one we are very, very supportive of and feel very strongly about". That was said by her colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

How can the Conservatives be so hypocritical in being strong apparently on religious freedom abroad when they will not support it at home?

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is completely inaccurate. It is sad to hear him say these kinds of mistruths. The government funds full-time chaplains based on the number of inmates requesting services from each faith determined by region.

As I said, in addition to serving members of their own faith, these chaplains also make themselves available on a by request basis to provide spiritual advice to the general population.

This is a common practice. The Canadian Forces has used this same chaplaincy program and it has been successful for many years.

* * *

●(1135)

FOOD SAFETY

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a rare appearance yesterday, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food begged Canadians to look at the tainted meat timeline. Many Canadians did exactly that and they were quite shocked by what they saw.

Oral Questions

They saw that it was the United States that discovered the E. coli, not Canada. They also saw the government's clear foot-dragging and the minister's continually changing stories.

When will the Conservatives start paying attention to the health and safety of Canadians or are you waiting for another Walkerton tragedy?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind all members to address their comments through the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food safety is a priority for this government. We continue to build a robust system with the capacity to move forward.

As I have often said in the House, the timeline on the website is nothing like the member opposite talks about. The CFIA, in the same timeframe as the Americans, discovered a contaminated product on September 4 and it has continued working through ever since. The timeline is there for all Canadians to see. I am certainly happy to answer real questions on it.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, this minister is being careless, negligent and most certainly incompetent. He claims he is innocent. Indeed, we on this side of the House think he is a special kind of innocent.

He chose to protect the interests of the Americans by stopping the exports instead of protecting the health of Canadians. This is a public health issue.

My question is for the Minister of Health.

Could she put down her iPad and answer the questions and do her job? Why has she kept mum on this? Let her answer some questions. We want to know. Let her stand up for once.

[*English*]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): What a diatribe, Mr. Speaker. We need to raise the quality of debate in the House, not lower it.

The Minister of Health is doing an admirable job. We work in partnership with our provincial colleagues in public health, as well as the federal department of public health. Everyone is anxious to get to the bottom of this and move on.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is day 31 since the Americans notified Canada on E. coli and the Prime Minister still fails to hold his ministers to account for the biggest recall ever.

I have a list of the products for Canada alone, which is some 240 pages long. Do members remember that the minister claimed that no products reached store shelves?

The incompetence of both the Minister of Health and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board knows no bounds. Truck drivers knew there was a problem and meat cutters knew there was a problem but the minister failed to act and the health minister was lost in silence.

When will the Prime Minister take charge of this issue?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will never apologize for the size of the recall. This is based on science and on protocols that are developed well in advance of these types of situations.

We take this very seriously, which is why we continue to build a robust food safety system. We have Bill S-11 coming to us from the Senate and I am hoping the Liberals will support it when it gets here.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PORT OF MONTREAL

Ms. H el ene Laverdi ere (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the antics of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario have led to growing interest in the Robert Abdallah affair, and the Conservatives are going to have to answer questions.

Therefore, I will ask a simple question: why did the PMO, Dimitri Soudas and Leo Housakos push for Abdallah's appointment? What were they going to receive in exchange?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the hon. member is referring to an appointment that was not made and that we do not have the power to make.

The question that I will now put before the House is this: why did the NDP accept \$340,000 in illegal money from a union?

Why are the New Democrats refusing to support the bill before the House of Commons to make union finances transparent? What do they have to hide?

• (1140)

Ms. H el ene Laverdi ere (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as far as we are concerned, the RCMP does not have to raid our offices.

This is not just an attempt to make a partisan appointment, as was the case at the Port of Qu ebec and the Port of Toronto, for example. We are talking about someone who is facing serious allegations in an inquiry on corruption and collusion that is taking place right now.

Why did the Prime Minister's press secretary, Senator Housakos and Frank Zampino support Abadallah's appointment?

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, she did not answer the question. Why would her party pose questions in the House of Commons about an appointment that was never made, and one that we do not have the power to make, when her party was caught red-handed accepting \$340,000 in illegal union money? That was money that was taken out of the pockets of hard-working, blue collar Canadians who gave no consent for that money to be funnelled into the coffers of the NDP. The NDP did not care. It had no shame. The NDP was happy to just scoop up that illegal money—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning, we learned that the Chinese embassy organized a party for Canada Border Services officials. Alcohol was flowing so freely that some senior officials were falling down drunk by the end of the party.

This raises concerns about the fact that state secrets may have been leaked during this so-called drunk fest. This is not the first time that we have been exposed in this manner. We have already had a former minister leave extremely confidential documents lying around his girlfriend's place.

Why do the Conservatives not take the risk of espionage seriously?

[English]

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect law enforcement officers to act with integrity at all times. The CBSA is looking into the facts of this situation. Anyone found to have behaved inappropriately or acted inappropriately will face sanctions and discipline.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am astounded by the Conservative's indifference, which is a sharp contrast to the seriousness of the situation and the potential risk.

When foreign countries get our customs officers so drunk that they are vomiting in their government vehicles, the Conservatives should be asking questions.

When our intelligence service is concerned about equity participation in our natural resources by foreign state-owned enterprises, the Conservatives should be asking questions.

When will the Conservatives start taking threats to national security seriously?

[English]

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely not

indifferent. We, as all Canadians, do expect our law enforcement officers to act with integrity at all times. The CBSA is looking into the facts of the situation. I would think the hon. member would appreciate that and would approve of that. There is due process for this kind of scenario, and anyone found to have acted inappropriately will face sanctions and will face discipline.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, NDP MPs day after day recite their tired old socialist talking points: low taxes are bad; trade is bad; business is bad; economic growth is bad. In the NDP world, the solution to everything would be its high tax, big government schemes, such as its job-killing carbon tax which would rip money out of the hands of Canadian families and employers to feed the NDP's big government dreams.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs share with the NDP, Parliament and all Canadians the results of our low-tax, pro-trade and pro-growth plan?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP members keep talking down the Canadian economy. They keep complaining that Canadians are not paying enough taxes. That is why they want to impose a \$21.5 billion carbon tax on Canadians. The NDP can continue to do this, but Canadians know that our job creation plan is working.

Today we saw the announcement of the creation of more than 50,000 net new jobs. There were 800,000 jobs created, 90% of them full-time, 80% of them in the private sector. That is good news for Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is really cute to hear them talk; meanwhile, they do not mention the carbon tax.

Workers are not the only ones paying for the employment insurance reforms. The employers are too. Workers are quitting their jobs because it simply is not worthwhile to work part-time. The employers contribute just like the workers do. Why should they be punished if they need part-time workers? The Conservatives' approach is completely unacceptable.

When will they help employers and workers by fixing the problem with the working while on claim project?

●(1145)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP, we find it encouraging that there are more people working than before. That is good news.

For example, more than 820,000 jobs have been created since the recession. This is good news. She should encourage people to work. That is what they need.

*Oral Questions**[English]***SENIORS**

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a rising unemployment rate and a higher deficit are not things to cheer about.

I would like to relate a Tim Hortons moment gone bad involving a man who helps keep minor hockey alive in my riding. Robert is 63 years old. He has worked at a hockey rink for over 35 years. He has collected the Canada pension plan since he turned 60 and collects EI for the months the ice is off the rink. Come January, Robert's Canada pension plan will be clawed back 50¢ on the dollar from his EI cheque.

Why is the government so set on punishing seniors?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is we have done more to support seniors and make them financially better off than any other government in Canada.

Let us look at the things we brought in and which the NDP opposed. We brought in pension income splitting for seniors. The NDP opposed that. We increased the age tax credit for seniors, not once but twice. The NDP opposed that. We also brought in the largest increase in 25 years to the guaranteed income supplement to help the poorest seniors. As usual, the NDP opposed that too.

* * *

*[Translation]***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like all Canadian children, first nation children deserve a high-quality education. We simply cannot continue to deprive an entire generation of this fundamental right.

And yet, this government continues to make unilateral decisions instead of respecting first nations and working in partnership with them. In Manitoba, for instance, provincial funding in some communities is nearly twice as much per student compared to what the federal government spends on first nation students.

When will the minister commit to investing in and supporting first nation education?

[English]

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are taking concrete steps. We are working together with first nations and we are starting to see improved student outcomes. We have comprehensive first nations education agreements in Nova Scotia and British Columbia demonstrating improved student outcomes.

The NDP should stop spreading misinformation and start standing with us as we support first nations students in reaching their goals.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the facts are clear. On first nations reserves across Canada, there are schools that do not have enough paper. They do not have enough materials. The classes are overcrowded. The rooms are full of mould.

When will the minister realize that to fix the crisis, he and his government have to sit down with aboriginal leaders and work with them with respect?

When will the minister and the government negotiate in a meaningful way with first nations? At the end of the day, the question is, how many more generations of aboriginal children have to be deprived of a proper education in Canada?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the investments that we have made in first nations education. We are leading an initiative that is long overdue and we expect outcomes. This is what first nations students, their parents and their educators want. It is what we want to work with. We will not be distracted by misinformation and polarization coming from the opposition.

We are investing in individual students. We are also committed to introducing a first nations education act which would improve governance and accountability for first nations.

* * *

● (1150)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is cancelling the contracts of non-Christian chaplains in federal prisons, thereby requiring inmates of other faiths to turn to Christian chaplains for religious guidance. The minister says he “is not in the business of picking and choosing which religions will be given preferential status”, but by providing funding only for Christian chaplains, he is doing precisely that.

Will the minister recognize this contradiction, reinstate funding for chaplains of all faiths, and uphold the values of freedom of conscience and religion, and equality before the law, as enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Ms. Candice Bergen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada strongly supports freedom of religion for all Canadians.

Last month the Minister of Public Safety asked for an immediate review of the chaplaincy program to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being used wisely and appropriately. Upon reviewing the program, it was determined that changes were necessary so that this program supports the freedom of religion of inmates while respecting taxpayers' dollars.

Convicted criminals will continue to have access to religious services of their choice on a voluntary basis.

*Oral Questions***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians thought Bev Oda wasted money on limos, but the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism makes Bev Oda look like a frugal campaigner against government waste. The Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism racked up \$32,000 in limo fees, while refugees cannot get life-saving medications and basic health care. Who is abusing the Canadian taxpayer dollar now?

How can the minister justify the cuts to refugee health care when he himself is spending thousands on luxury transportation?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government treats taxpayers' money with the utmost respect. We require that government business be done at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

Ministers' office budgets are in fact down over 16% compared to those in the last year the Liberals were in power. The PMO budget is down a further 13.7% since 2010. We have reduced hospitality spending by over a third. Travel costs are down by over 15% compared to those of the former Liberal government.

We are taking action to reduce the cost of government.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Privacy Commissioner confirmed that the Conservatives have made many, many mistakes when it comes to protecting veterans' personal information.

According to the report, the Department of Veterans Affairs is outsourcing the disposal of veterans' files.

The report also reveals a lack of monitoring to ensure the secure destruction of files containing personal information on veterans.

When will the Conservative government take privacy protection seriously?

[English]

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the recommendations brought forward by the independent Privacy Commissioner.

[Translation]

We are taking steps to ensure our processes meet the highest possible standards.

[English]

Our department is implementing all 13 of her recommendations.

Our Conservative government treats the privacy of our nation's heroes as paramount. We will always act to ensure that their privacy is respected.

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are once again on the defensive

regarding their treatment of veterans. They are the ones who ignored the advice of the Surgeon General by making irresponsible cuts affecting the treatment of soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Yet, the ombudsman is clear: only 0.2% of the total defence budget is spent on mental health.

Why did the Conservatives not listen to the NDP and spare veterans from their irresponsible cuts?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that over our time in office we have seen the budget for health, including the mental health needs of the Canadian Forces, go up significantly. Some \$100 million of additional money has been made available for the Canadian Forces' health concerns.

We will continue to make investments for those ill and injured, those in need, in particular, of mental health counselling. We have recently announced an increase of \$11.4 million to that overall budget, specifically to hire more mental health professionals to allow that support to flow to them, to their families and to our veterans.

* * *

●(1155)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP member for Beaches—East York used a member's statement to attack Conservative members for speaking the truth about the NDP's economic policies.

It is understandable why that member and the NDP want to stop us from talking about their policies. The NDP's plan for the economy is to impose a new \$21 billion job-killing carbon tax that would raise the price of everything.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources tell this House what our Conservative government is doing to help grow the economy and create jobs?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Sault Ste. Marie knows, and Canadians are discovering, that the 2011 NDP campaign promise in which the NDP made a commitment to a carbon tax imposed through a cap and trade process would force Canadians to turn over \$21 billion of their money.

Our policies have helped create 800,000 jobs across this country. Just last month alone there were another 50,000 new jobs. The NDP members would cancel those 50,000 jobs and hundreds of thousands of others if they got their way. That is why they cannot be allowed to implement their dangerous policies.

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the acclaimed American actor, Samuel L. Jackson, has posted a powerful YouTube video encouraging people to wake up and realize that some of their fellow citizens are experiencing hardship and pain. I would encourage all members to check out the video.

Low-income earners who are receiving EI benefits are experiencing such pain, but it seems that the minister is sleepwalking past their hardship.

My plea is to the Prime Minister. Will he take charge of this file and wake up the members on the front bench?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the working while on claim pilot project, our government's aim is to encourage EI claimants to accept all available work while they are on claim. In doing that, we want to make sure the work does pay so that they are better off working than not.

We will always work to ensure that our goals are met.

* * *

[Translation]

HOMOSEXUALITY

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after trying to reopen the abortion debate, a Conservative member is doing it again. He will be in my riding this weekend to take part in an event held by Quebec's Campaign Life Coalition with the *Ta vie ton choix* group, which promotes therapy for those struggling with unwanted attractions to persons of the same sex.

In addition to opposing women's right to choose, does the member also believe that homosexuality is a disease that should be treated?

[English]

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member opposite is referring to some recent comments on private member's Bill C-279.

Our government is proud of the fact that Canada is recognized internationally as a country that is deeply committed to the principles of respect for diversity and equality.

That private member's bill is currently before the justice committee. We should allow that committee to do its work. We look forward to the report from that committee.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are all used to the NDP's recklessness and its rabid determination to impose a radical, Canada-wide, anti-trade, anti-development program.

While the opposition insists on playing petty partisan politics, our government is remaining focused and working hard on creating jobs for Canadians.

Can the minister give the House an update on the progress that has been made with regard to employment?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his excellent question.

We know that the NDP is proposing a radical approach involving a \$21 billion carbon tax that would kill the economy and jobs, while, on our side, we have a good, responsible government.

I am pleased to report that Statistics Canada has announced that over 52,100 net jobs were created in September, for a total of 820,000 net new jobs since the recession. We have the best record of the G7: 90% full-time employment, 80% in the private sector.

Instead of lowering our standards, we are supporting the economy and families and we are rejecting the carbon tax.

* * *

● (1200)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment announced the new phase of the project to clean up the country's contaminated sites. In 2011, Quebec had 100 sites that were deemed to be a priority because they posed risks to public health and the environment. And yet, this government chose only 67 sites in Quebec. The government is neglecting the Valcartier military base, the Lachine Canal and the PCB-contaminated sites on the Kahnawake reserve.

Is the federal government going to come up with a more comprehensive clean-up plan, or is it going to stick Quebec with the bill?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we said earlier this week in the House on this particular issue and with our announcement this week to ensure the continuation of the federal contaminated sites action plan, our government is making excellent progress in this regard. We have invested over \$1 billion over three years to 2014 to manage this program, and we earmarked additional funding this week for sites across the country. We also have a review process, which through a scientific process, makes sure we are cleaning up those that are most affected first. We are halfway through that plan and we are making good progress.

[Translation]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the announcement made yesterday by the Minister of the Environment is nothing to be proud of. He announced that only 67 of the 2,300 contaminated sites in Quebec will be cleaned up. This does not even cover all of the high-priority sites, such as the site in Shannon, which has been much discussed here in the House, or the sites contaminated with PCBs or heavy metals that pose a risk to Quebeckers. This also clearly means that Quebec is getting less funding for clean-up than other jurisdictions.

Routine Proceedings

How could the minister announce such a weak plan for Quebec when this problem has been going on for too long, when there are too many contaminated sites and when it is taking too long to remedy this problem?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just stated, our government is in fact making excellent progress in cleaning up contaminated sites across the country. The announcement we made this week shows our government's commitment to this plan by earmarking additional funds for sites across the country. We have a very strong plan, a very strong review process, to assess these sites and then to clean them up afterwards. We are making good progress.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government wants to bulldoze a reckless route through B.C. to ship raw bitumen to communist China as fast as possible, while eastern Canadians are captive to expensive, insecure imported oil. Easterners pay a lot for gasoline and home heating oil. We must build a new pipeline to bring western petroleum to eastern Canada. Will the Minister of Natural Resources support a new pipeline to the east that ensures our energy security and shares energy and value-added jobs with eastern Canadians?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, across this country we have a strong review process. We have a strong National Energy Board that looks at those applications. I am sure if the application is made, the board will be taking a look at it.

However, the pipelines are being reviewed. The member mentioned the Northern Gateway pipeline and that is being reviewed by an independent panel, and we are trying to ensure that is not a political process but one that is based on science, as with any other decision.

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I quoted from a document, "XL Foods - List of Recalled Products", during question period, which includes all the beef products that have been recalled in every province and every retailer. It is a very serious issue.

I am wondering if I might have unanimous consent to table the document in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member across asked a question of the Minister of

Foreign Affairs that certainly did not belong in the category of government orders.

I would also like to clarify that the question from our side referred to an event that the MP from Kitchener Centre will be attending tomorrow morning in Granby, in Quebec, along with a second speaker who will be offering therapies for homosexuality. That is what the MP will be involved in.

● (1205)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I will have to review the blues and come back to the House, if necessary.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for the year 2011-2012.

[Translation]

These reports are deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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[English]

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2011 annual report of the Global Centre for Pluralism.

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[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the reports of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie respecting its participation at the Bureau Meeting and the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie, held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from July 4 to 8, 2011; and the 28th Regional Assembly and the Conference of Branch Chairs of the America Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie, held in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from August 8 to 10, 2012.

[English]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian section of ParlAmericas respecting its participation at the Annual Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, held in Valparaiso, Chile, May 8 and 9.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, in relation to Bill C-24, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Panama, the Agreement on the Environment between Canada and the Republic of Panama and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Panama.

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

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NATIONAL LOCAL FOOD DAY ACT

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-449, An Act respecting a National Local Food Day.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and good friend from Pontiac who works extremely hard in this House on behalf of his constituents, especially in the agricultural field.

The bill speaks to this very day, the Friday before Thanksgiving, as a day when we would honour those primary producers and those who put that feast, as we like to call it, on our tables at Thanksgiving. We would simply like to thank and commemorate them by having an official day to recognize them. This is not a cost to the government. It is not about declaring a holiday. This is about declaring a day of thanks.

Quite often when we are sitting with our families, for those of us who are blessed to have that opportunity, we give thanks to our family, and perhaps some people choose to give thanks in a spiritual way. However, we do not always give our thanks to those who actually gave us the food and helped produce it in the first place, which is what this bill is all about.

The bill is to give thanks to those primary producers for the hard work they do all year long. We are thankful for what they are going to put on our table at Thanksgiving. We should recognize this by ensuring that the Friday before Thanksgiving is set aside in honour of all Canadians and to thank those producers across this great land.

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

* * *

● (1210)

PETITIONS

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Thunder Bay, Mobert and the Pic Mobert First Nation and other communities along the north shore of Lake Superior in support of bringing back passenger rail service to the spectacular north shore of Lake Superior.

The petitioners are asking parliamentarians to support Motion No. 291 to return passenger rail from Sudbury through White River, Thunder Bay to Winnipeg and beyond.

[Translation]

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by a number of people from the greater Montreal area. This petition highlights the fact that, although the government committed to contributing 0.7% of the GDP to development assistance, with this government our assistance is currently less than 0.3%, which is one of the lowest rates among donor countries. The petition also points out the cuts made to Development and Peace, a well-known organization that does important work.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to adopt the following policy goals: demonstrate international responsibility by re-committing Canada to contribute 0.7% of GDP to official development assistance; prioritize responsive funding to those NGOs that Canadians support and which have seen their funding cut by CIDA; and in the spirit of global solidarity, provide in full the funding of \$49.2 million requested by Development and Peace over the next five years.

[English]

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition from constituents in Manor, Cando, Langbank, Fertile, Wakaw and other areas who are calling upon Parliament to assemble to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as a human, by amending section 223 of our Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect the 21st century medical evidence.

PENSIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I table a petition from constituents of mine in Winnipeg North indicating support for old age security, the guaranteed income supplement, and the Canada pension plan. The petitioners are asking that these programs be supported by the government, particularly that the retirement age be maintained at age 65.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 836 and 849 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 836—**Mr. Mike Sullivan:**

With regard to the disposition of federal heritage properties: (a) since 2006, how many federal heritage properties lost their heritage designation, broken down by year and province, and for what reason; (b) of the properties in (a), how many were disposed of by the federal government, broken down by year and province, and to whom; and (c) since 2006, how many federal heritage properties have been disposed of by the federal government, broken down by year and by province, and to whom?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 849—**Mr. Matthew Kellway:**

With regard to the F-35 JSF Program: (a) what is the total Canadian dollar value of benefits received by Canadian industry from Canada's participation in the F-35 JSF Program (i) from the start of the program until December 1, 2011, (ii) from December 2, 2011 to June 22, 2012; (b) what is the projected value of future contracts, from June 22, 2012, onwards, that come as a result of Canada's participation in the JSF program; (c) for the contracts in (a), what is the value of each contract that was awarded and on what date was each contract signed; (d) what methodology was used to determine the value of (i) the contracts in (a), (ii) the contracts in (b); (e) was there industry involvement in determining the values of (i) the contracts in (a), (ii) the contracts in (b); (f) do these valuations include analysis related to the global supply chain; (g) do these valuations include and/or anticipate changes in the domestic supply chain; (h) is the information used in the valuations updated periodically and, if yes, how frequently; (i) was the methodology used to arrive at the values in (a) and (b) independently audited and, if yes, by whom and what was the result of the audit; (j) since the start of the program, have there been discrepancies between projected and actual value of benefits received by Canadian industry; (k) if the answer to (j) is in the affirmative, what are the specific instances and contracts where discrepancies occurred, including (i) the value of each discrepancy, (ii) the name of each company that was meant to receive the benefit; (l) what, if any, changes have been made to the valuations and projection processes used to determine all and any cost projections related to the F-35 JSF program in response to the recommendations in the April 2, 2012, Auditor General's report; (m) for the contracts in (a), is there a means of ensuring that the contracts are being fulfilled as stated in terms of dollar value; (n) for the benefits in (a), how many jobs have been created as a result of participation in the program, (i) are these new jobs and, if so, how is "new jobs" defined, (ii) how long are these jobs projected to last (i. e., are they start-up or long-term jobs), (iii) who calculates these job numbers and is there independent auditing of these numbers?

(Return tabled)

•(1215)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCREASING OFFENDERS' ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VICTIMS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: We had three minutes left in questions and answers.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Vaudreuil-Soulanges for sharing his personal experience with us. It was very interesting and reminded me of an organization in Quebec City called L'Autre Avenue, which offers an alternative to the judicial process in some cases, such as in the case of a dispute between a minor offender, so to speak, and the victim, for instance. It is very interesting.

When I had the opportunity to meet the executive director, she told me that victims are not always looking for compensation nor do they necessarily want the offender to be convicted. They simply want to be informed of the process and to know that the offender is remorseful. This allows the police to avoid automatically prosecuting every individual they arrest. This also helps victims feel like an important part of the judicial system, because often, they feel forgotten.

I wonder if my colleague could share his thoughts on such alternative measures.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important to look at what the Province of Quebec is doing for young offenders. Clearly, Quebec's approach is different. Every scientific study shows that Quebec's approach is producing positive results. Quebec's recidivism rate is lower than in the other provinces.

I suggest that the government take note of the fact that every province takes a different approach to dealing with young offenders and to look at Quebec as a positive example.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, who contributed a well-informed and different point of view to fuel debate on Bill C-37, the Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act.

Let us review the provisions of Bill C-37, which have been discussed at considerable length already. The bill proposes to amend provisions of the Criminal Code concerning victim surcharges in order to double the amount offenders must pay when they are sentenced. The bill also makes the surcharge mandatory for offenders.

This morning, we heard a moving account from the member for Vaudreuil Soulanges, and it made a deep impression on me. Unfortunately, in discussing this bill, we are also talking about victims. It cannot be avoided, because victims are the ones who are the most affected and who suffer the most from such events.

We heard the account by the member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges this morning, and I would like to add something else.

Yesterday evening, I was having supper with my family, who told me that bus drivers are often assaulted. Someone this happened to personally told me that a person had got on the bus and punched them in the face. The person in question was simply angry because the bus did not pull up to the stop quickly enough, which sometimes happens when a car is in the way, for example.

Government Orders

There have been several assaults of this kind in our province. Bus drivers are attacked at the end of their shift. These people feel powerless, as the member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges demonstrated clearly this morning.

People feel powerless when they are attacked, first of all because they do not expect things like that to happen to them. People also do not expect offenders to do things like that, because it is not part of our upbringing to be assaulted and to have to be on the defensive. People believe they live in a safe country.

This bill proposes to amend Criminal Code provisions in order to double the victim surcharge. Needless to say, we support this. The surcharge would increase to 30% from 15% of any fine imposed on the offender. Where no fine is imposed, the surcharge would be \$100, up from \$50, for summary conviction offences. It would increase from \$100 to \$200 for indictable offences. This section is somewhat complex, but in short, the fines are being doubled.

These amounts are significant. Particularly as those who receive them to assist victims are often community groups. In Quebec, they are called Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels, or CAVACs, and there are equivalent centres across Canada. They are often groups that intervene to provide assistance to victims.

People often do not know that such a system exists and that they can contact a CAVAC if they are victims of a crime.

The CAVACs are funded as follows. They receive funds that are generated in part by offenders, and contribute them towards the activities conducted by groups that provide assistance to victims of crime.

The NDP members will be supporting this bill, but they have reservations. They would like it to be re-examined in committee, simply because judges are not being allowed to impose sentences that may vary, as needed and depending on the person before them. Once again, this is something that comes up in many of the bills I have seen recently in the House.

Many offenders live in poverty. These are criminal groups or individuals with records. In some cases mental illness is involved, but not necessarily. For example, these people may be dropouts who have lived on the street with nothing and who systematically resist integrating into our society, because it does not suit their values. They want something different and they want to make their own laws.

•(1220)

We must intervene and educate them; this is important.

I would like to remind the House of something. In 2003, crime cost about \$70 billion, \$47 billion of which was borne by victims. That figure represents 70% of the total cost. A 2004 study estimated that the cost of the pain and suffering suffered by victims was in the region of \$36 billion. It is truly important to understand the victims, and the NDP will continue to support families in this regard.

Many eligible victims very rarely seek compensation, one reason being that they do not know these services exist. The member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges said this again this morning. He did not know that there might be a system like that. The system also helps to

reassure the victim and lets them know these measures exist and sometimes helps them cover various expenses. When a person is a victim of violence, they are scared, they do not take the same routes they used to, they are afraid to get on the bus or go out in a car, afraid of being accosted even when they are walking on the street, and so on. We have to offer these people services, and that has a social cost. Often, the victims do not even think of asking for anything.

Our concerns relate to the elimination of the judge's discretion to decide whether paying a surcharge would cause undue hardship. In Quebec, and I imagine things are the same in the other provinces, although I have not checked, judges sometimes decide to require a person to do community service when they do not have the means to pay the surcharge in question. These surcharges are important, because they largely fund the assistance provided for victims. They may even cover up to 100%.

Sometimes, when a person is unable to pay the surcharge, they are required to perform community service. It must be open to the judge, at their discretion, to decide that the young person in question will have to approach a community group, and the group will have them do painting, wash windows, and so on. An entire system is in place to help the young person. I say "young person" because young people are often the ones on whom surcharges are imposed, in the case of petty crimes committed by gangs, for example, as the member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges described this morning.

It is important to retain community service. The measure would be too punitive if it were applied in its simple form. That is why we are asking that this bill be referred to committee. We will then be able to examine it and fix some of its flaws. We hope the surcharges will not be disproportionate to the offender's ability to pay.

I will support this bill at this stage of the legislative process in the hope that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights will take all the time it needs to examine it, meet with stakeholders and perhaps amend certain aspects that need to be reconsidered. This bill is good for families, but it could be even better and at the same time preserve the right, the power and the flexibility that are needed for making the best possible decisions.

•(1225)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have put a lot of emphasis on the importance of victims, and justifiably so. There are many victims of violence who are looking to the government to do what it can to ensure that there is some form of assistance available, either directly or indirectly.

We do not necessarily believe that it is just the surcharges that are there to support victims but also that the government has a role to play in terms of direct assistance.

I am wondering if my colleague could provide some thoughts on the importance of the government coming to the table to support victim support groups or victim services agencies?

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. Funding is often the lifeblood of community organizations that support victims. We have to really make an effort. Taxes and surcharges are not going to meet the needs of all these organizations.

Government Orders

My answer to the hon. member is quite simply this: yes, organizations that help victims of violence should receive direct funding.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles if she has noticed what seems to be a general trend. We see it again with this bill, which would eliminate judicial discretion. In a fair number of bills introduced by the Conservative government, the responsibility is shifting increasingly to those who administer the law. The latter will be reduced to establishing relationships, with charts and tables, instead of relying on their judgment. However, a judge—as the term suggests—can weigh the pros and cons, and take into account the circumstances of each situation.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. The government has a strong tendency of taking away judicial discretion. That is what we have noticed in a number of their bills and here in the House. The NDP is calling on the government to restore judges' ability to choose and to have a certain flexibility when they hand down a sentence to an offender and in other situations. I would say that this is a dangerous trend. Judges are intelligent and capable of discernment and handing down a sentence that is commensurate with the crime in order to protect society.

• (1230)

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to support Bill C-37 so that it can be referred to committee. This bill proposes amendments to the provisions of the Criminal Code on victim surcharges, including subsection 737, in order to double the amount that offenders have to pay when they are sentenced, and to make the surcharge mandatory for all offenders. The surcharge is imposed at the time of sentencing for guilty offenders. It is used to finance crime victims programs and services in the province or territory where the crime was committed.

The Criminal Code requires that a judge impose a victim surcharge in all cases, but the judge also has discretionary power to waive it if the offender can demonstrate that it would cause undue hardship to him or his dependants. If the court decides not to impose a federal surcharge, a rationale has to be provided for the decision and the reasons have to be entered into the court record of deliberations. I am in favour of enhanced funding for victims programs.

[*English*]

On the surcharge for victims, I have some statistics. On May 27, 2010, 729 victim service agencies in Canada reported serving nearly 9,500 clients on that day. It is worth noting that three-quarters of them were women. Of those victims who received services, 81% said that they had been a victim of a violent crime.

[*Translation*]

In 2009-10, the most frequent types of assistance provided directly by victim services providers in Quebec included court-related guidance or information, courtroom assistance, information about the process and structure of the criminal justice system, preparing victims or witnesses, and assistance in compensation claims.

[*English*]

It is clear that helping victims of crime is costly and that we need to devote more to those who are suffering after a violent crime or any crime that has been done to them or to their family.

Although I support the essence of this bill and I agree that a larger levy on victims' service is, in general, a good idea as it would help us contribute more to victims, I do have some concerns and I hope the committee will closely examine this bill. For instance, the provincial programs that would be funded by this increased surcharge are essential and they need the support. There are not enough victim support services in the provinces. People who are the victims of crime often require psychological and social support during and after the legal process. Therefore, I approve of this. It is quite appropriate that those who commit the crimes be forced to invest in the programming that would help heal, not only for specific victims but for those who are similarly in need.

I call attention to the fact that the most glaring example of an underserved demographic of victims is the families of missing and murdered aboriginal women. Yesterday, Ottawa had a strong show of solidarity with the families who have lost daughters, mothers, sisters and wives to horrible violence and unsolved disappearances. A hard-working group called Families of Sisters in Spirit organized a massive vigil on Parliament Hill yesterday. Its message was very strong and clear. Hundreds of women who have been taken will not be forgotten and the families and allies will not rest until the government recognizes its responsibility to these victims and to aboriginal women across the country who remain in danger.

Some of the saddest stories we heard on the Hill yesterday were about cases where crimes were not thoroughly investigated for months and sometimes years and where the victims of crime had to take it upon themselves to investigate the disappearances of their own loved ones because they could not get access to the services they needed. One of the repercussions of this phenomenon of disproportionately unsolved murders is that the families were told that they could not receive the victim services until the cases were solved. If no one is solving the cases, then, unfortunately, these families are left to themselves entirely.

When it comes to aboriginal women, it is not just the victims of kidnapping and murder who badly need the victim services. It is for the families and communities that we really need to invest in prevention. An aboriginal woman is five times as likely as a non-aboriginal woman to be the victim of a violent crime. This is mostly due to extreme rates of poverty. Over 40% of aboriginal women are living below the poverty line. These women have a shameful lack of access to police services, legal services, shelter and psychiatrists, let alone provincial victim services.

We do need better and more effective victims' services. If we can do something in this House to increase those kinds of services to those who need it, we especially need to think about increased funding to first nations, Métis and Inuit communities for those both on and off reserve.

Government Orders

●(1235)

[Translation]

This bill would make it impossible for a court to order that no victim surcharge be imposed on an offender when it is demonstrated that the payment of such a surcharge would cause the offender—or his dependants—undue hardship. Currently, judges have discretionary power to order the payment of a higher surcharge or to waive such a surcharge.

[English]

We on this side of the House have one concern and that is the power of judicial discretion. This discretionary power allows judges to waive the surcharge for criminals to whom it would cause undue harm or cause undue harm to their families. This is important for people who have committed crimes and are very poor.

Poverty is often the root cause of crime and financially crippling a person on top of sentencing them could make rehabilitation impossible. It could also make it difficult for their children to properly integrate into society and so on. With respect to the withdrawal of the clause on undue hardship and the provision seeking to double the surcharge amount, this would be problematic for low income offenders.

I will share with the House some statistics about who a lot of these people are. Eighty per cent of all federally sentenced women report having been physically or sexually abused. This rises to 90% when we are talking about aboriginal women. Two-thirds of federally sentenced women are mothers and they are more likely than men to have primary child care responsibilities. There are about 25,000 children whose mothers are either in federal prisons or provincial jails, and that was as of last year. Separation from their children and the inability to deal with problems concerning them are major anxieties for women in prison. If poverty is a contributing factor, then we can imagine the situation facing these families.

Women who have been in prison also have much lower employment rates than men who have been incarcerated. Not only do women experience more poverty than men but most criminalized women have low levels of education, limited employment and economic records and usually live alone in extremely poor housing conditions. In the Prairie region, most of the women in prison are indigenous. They represent 85% of the female prison population.

As I said earlier, these are people who are living in poverty and do not have access to social services. They also lack access to health care and education.

The issue of judicial discretion needs to be examined more closely. If it is used often, we may need to look at more prevention. We may need to look at providing more help to those on the ground who are living in poverty and may end up becoming criminals in the future. We really do need to be concentrating more on prevention.

I will be voting to send the bill to committee in order to examine it further because I agree that we should be funding more services for victims.

●(1240)

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for her very informative comments, which were much appreciated.

I would like to point out that this bill would once and for all do away with the discretion judges currently have with respect to penalties, sentences and fines. Could the member comment a bit more on this matter?

[English]

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, this was a recommendation made to the government. It was found that judges were often using their discretionary power to waive the fee. We really need to look at why that is. Judges are human. They are going to see things differently. They are not always going to apply the law perfectly unless it is made mandatory.

If it is being invoked often, the problem is more likely because of the fact that a lot of people who live in poverty become criminals. We need to look at addressing that problem before we start taking away the discretionary power of judges, who are really trying to help. Many of those women are mothers with dependents. If they are unable to pay, then in a sense we are creating more victims.

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech. She is a very brave and highly intelligent woman, and I found her remarks very relevant.

As we are all aware, this bill is an election promise made by the Conservatives during the last election. The Conservatives would like to show the world that they want to provide better protection to victims and families, but we know that everyone here is in favour of justice and safe communities.

There is something that worries me. In my colleague's opinion, what would be the repercussions of taking away judges' discretionary power to waive a surcharge, particularly for aboriginal people who do not have the means to pay these surcharges?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert for her very important question.

A bill like this one goes hand in hand with prevention. The federal government needs to understand that it is responsible for the first nations, the Inuit and aboriginals.

It seems as though the Conservatives do not understand that it is their responsibility to provide services to these communities.

[English]

We need to provide them with greater access to culturally relevant education.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Providing preventive measures would mean fewer victims in the future. As I was saying, this has to go hand in hand with more funding for the victims. There will always be victims, but I think there could be fewer. I also think the government should focus its efforts on prevention.

•(1245)

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to participate in the debate on this bill.

Clearly, this bill would benefit greatly from additional debate in committee. It is very important that all the points that are raised there be debated.

Once again, the Conservatives are trying to pass a bill that will take discretionary power away from judges. We have to ask ourselves why that is. What is the reasoning behind this? What impact will it have?

In court, during the testimony and sentencing, judges are in the best position to understand and to determine the proper sentence for the offence committed. Why is this not being taken into consideration? This bill takes away judges' discretion, and I am very concerned about that.

Canada's legal system allows a judge to clearly understand the testimony, the evidence and the circumstances. The burden is on him to impose a fair and equitable sentence. We in the House of Commons must not think that we know all the facts and that we are always right, when all of this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

We do not know the circumstances of the crime or the offender's ability to pay the fines. We thus do not know what sentence would be fair and equitable. Let us not forget that the purpose of a sentence should be rehabilitation; it should not encourage the offender to reoffend.

I will come back to that in a moment, but I would first like to share with the House what the Quebec justice minister has to say about fines on his website:

A fine is a sum of money that must be paid to the State by an offender within a time frame determined by the judge.

He then adds the following, and this is the part that seems important to me:

Before imposing a fine, the judge must be satisfied that the individual has the means to pay it.

This is not the first time in Canada's legal history or in our legal system that we have heard this said. In a legal system such as ours, the sentence must fit the crime. In the past, there were debtors' prisons, prisons for people who did not pay their debts. We can impose all the fines that we want on a homeless offender who does not have any money, but that will not change the fact that he does not have any and that he will never be able to afford to pay those fines.

We should not take away from a judge the power to waive a surcharge when he is fully aware that the offender does not have the means to pay that surcharge. The judge knows that because he is the judge of the facts and he is well informed.

Yet, that is what the bill will do. The judge will be fully aware that a fine will never be paid, but he will still have to impose it. It makes no sense. It is absolutely illogical that a judge who knows the facts should have to do that.

There a reason why we have our modern legal system. The trial judge looks at the facts and he is the one who has the responsibility of imposing a sentence, based on the offence and on the offender's ability to serve that sentence.

The sentence should also be an incentive to rehabilitate. I find it hard to believe that imposing a series of fines can lead to rehabilitation.

•(1250)

There is one thing we often hear and cannot ignore: jails are a place where offenders increase their ability to break the law, to remain offenders. Jails are crime schools. We should not feed jails like that. If we create this situation and the offender cannot pay his fine, what are we going to do? Are we just going to ignore the fact that a fine was imposed? No, we cannot do that. The fine exists and the offender must pay it. If he is unable to do so, he will be fined again and this will generate yet another legal process. We are imposing a burden that cannot be supported. It is important to understand that.

The current act already provides for a 15% surcharge on any fine imposed on the offender. If no fine is imposed, the surcharge is \$50. That surcharge must be imposed because that is what the law says. Now, we want to increase the burden twofold, from 15% to 30% when a fine is imposed, and from \$50 to \$100 for offences punishable by summary conviction, when no fine is imposed.

Under the current act, the judge has a discretionary power. Section 737(5) of the Criminal Code reads as follows:

When the offender establishes to the satisfaction of the court that undue hardship to the offender or the dependants of the offender would result from payment of the victim surcharge, the court may, on application of the offender, make an order exempting the offender from the application of subsection (1).

As we can see, the lawmakers who wrote this legislation were wise enough to understand that, sometimes, one is not in a position to pay a surcharge. They even went a little further and said that the court must take into consideration the offender's ability to pay the surcharge. They also thought about a dependent: would imposing a surcharge harm this dependent? A dependent is usually a child, but it could be anyone.

I would point out that in international law and Canadian law, the needs of the child must always be given priority when a bill is drafted. And whenever judges have to interpret legislation, they have a duty, an obligation, to consider the impact it may have on a child. Looking at the bill that is before us, it may be that a judge will have no choice but to impose a surcharge, knowing not only that the burden is too heavy for the offender, but also that it might cause hardship for a dependent child of the offender. What this means is that it would be contrary not only to a number of Canadian laws, but also to international obligations.

Government Orders

It is incomprehensible that we could enact bills in Canada that might impose an unreasonable burden on a child who, clearly, does not have the means to pay a victim surcharge levied against the child's parents. We have to avoid, at all costs, imposing that kind of burden on a child who is an innocent party in the situation. And yet what we are doing is creating a situation that could cause hardship for a child. Frankly, and I will say it again, we would benefit from a longer and more thorough discussion in committee. That is why I will probably vote to send the bill to committee, but that does not mean it would not benefit from being amended.

I also want to note that the popular encyclopedia Wikipedia, which I often find to be an inspiring source, talks about surcharges and fines. This is what it says:

[*English*]

Fines are counter-productive if the offender commits more offences to get the money to pay the fine.

● (1255)

[*Translation*]

What that means is that there is little point in imposing fines when the person is not able to pay them, because that could actually encourage recidivism. A person who is not able to pay their fines has to get the money somewhere, or they will be charged with another offence. And again, that encourages recidivism. We are potentially creating a vicious circle. I hope that everyone will think carefully about this and there will be a good debate in committee.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my riding neighbour for his speech on Bill C-37. I have a specific question to ask him. We talk a lot about judges' discretionary power, but I would like to address another matter Senator Boisvenu raised with respect to the bill, when he presented it to Canadians. According to his comments, increasing the victim surcharge will be a deterrent to crime.

Can my colleague comment on the statement the senator made when introducing the bill?

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I thank my riding neighbour, who represents a riding with a name that is too long to say today.

The surcharges and fines have a definite purpose. However, I do not believe that this purpose is properly reflected in the bill being studied, where surcharges are not used to rehabilitate, but to punish the offender. In that sense, it would be effective. The problem is that we must have a balanced judicial system. We must balance the desire to punish and the desire to prevent recidivism. The bill only deals with punishment, and there is nothing about rehabilitation.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to what my colleague said in this debate, which is an important one because it concerns victims and crime. I heard him talk mainly about judicial discretion. What does he think is dangerous about tampering with judicial discretion?

Mr. Philip Toone: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, whose riding name is much longer than that of my neighbour from Témiscouata, Les Basques and so on.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Pontiac is easy.

Mr. Philip Toone: Indeed, Pontiac is easier.

To answer the question, our legal system goes back hundreds of years. It has been well developed and is very pragmatic. There is a reason why we have trial judges who are familiar with cases. They know what went on; they hear testimony. It is up to them to come up with a sentence to fit the crime committed.

That is why appeal courts do not hear testimony. They make rulings on specific legal questions. In our system, the trial judge is the one familiar with the case. Neither the appeal court nor the Supreme Court, and certainly not the House of Commons, is familiar with every case.

Members of Parliament must not think that they know everything about everything. It would be quite a bill if it took every possible situation into account. If people truly wanted to work on such a bill, it would be a lifelong project and it would never be done. We must not think that we are that smart in the House. We do not know all the facts. The trial judge is the one who knows the facts, and it is up to him to impose an appropriate punishment.

● (1300)

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour for me to address the House.

On May 17, 2012, the government introduced Bill C-37, which amends the Criminal Code provisions on victim surcharges as currently set out in section 737.

I have listened to many of the speeches given by my colleagues on both sides of the House, but mainly on this side, since few government members have spoken about this bill. I trust the judgment of my hon. colleague from Gatineau, who was the first to say that we would be supporting this bill at second reading. I also respect her legal experience. For my part, I worked for quite some time as a special constable, for I have always had a special interest in saving lives and keeping the people in my community safe.

At the beginning of this Parliament, I was our party's public safety critic. I care deeply about the safety of my fellow citizens. Now while debating this bill, it is our duty as legislators to ensure that victims of crime have the support they need.

Many people here have pointed out the lack of funding for programs and services offered to victims, and like my colleague, I am very concerned about this. That is why I will vote in favour of this bill, for we in the NDP support many of the recommendations made by the ombudsman for victims of crime, many of which are addressed in this bill. Furthermore, we have always supported increased funding for programs and services offered to victims of crime.

Government Orders

Bill C-37 amends the Criminal Code sections dealing with victim surcharges. A victim surcharge is an additional penalty imposed on offenders at the time of sentencing after they have been convicted of an indictable offence. This bill doubles the amount of victim surcharges and makes them mandatory for all offenders.

The surcharge would be the equivalent of 30% of any fine imposed on the offender at sentencing. Currently, the surcharge is 15%. If a judge does not impose a fine with the sentence or if no fine applies, then the surcharge would be \$100 for summary offences and \$200 for indictable offences.

Judges will be able to impose a higher victim surcharge if circumstances warrant and if the offender has the means to pay it. This provision is interesting because it leaves room to adjust the fine, but especially because it gives judges discretionary power in cases where this might apply. These fines will be collected by the provincial and territorial governments and allotted to the programs and services for victims of crime. These fines are not supposed to end up in the consolidated fund of any province or territory. We must ensure that this will indeed be the case.

A number of my colleagues have also mentioned that the programs and services are severely underfunded and that the precarious finances of these organizations often jeopardize the success of their mission. Crimes have considerable socio-economic repercussions on victims, including funeral costs, the need for psychological counselling and lost revenue. There are many repercussions for the families of victims of crime.

The statistics say it all. In 2003, crime cost roughly \$70 billion, \$47 billion of which was assumed by the victims. In other words, the victims assumed 70% of the cost. In 2004, a study estimated that the pain and suffering of the victims was in the neighbourhood of \$36 billion. That is huge and, unfortunately, the victim surcharge is not going to fully cover this cost, but it will help.

Did the government do its homework and use the best possible tool for maximizing the funding for these organizations? That remains to be seen, and I hope we can determine that when we study the bill in committee.

This bill could contribute to funding these organizations and if that is the case, then I am most pleased. If it also—although I have my doubts—helps make an offender accountable and prevents recidivism, then just like the government, I will be very happy. But make no mistake, this is not a magic solution. The provisions in Bill C-37 will not solve all the problems, but they will be another good tool to help provide funding to the organizations.

• (1305)

We should not, however, expect that the impact of this bill will be significant enough to dissuade a person from committing a crime, as some members mentioned in their remarks.

This is where policies and programs on crime prevention and offender accountability come into play. Since the beginning of this parliament, the Conservatives have introduced many justice bills involving mandatory minimum sentences. Yet, they have done very little in the way of crime prevention and offender rehabilitation.

That is why, when I was a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety, I endorsed a balanced approach to crime and rehabilitation, as did my other colleagues. It is important to invest in prevention and rehabilitation in order to minimize the chances of people committing a first offence or reoffending. We must not focus all our efforts on punishment. The Conservative Party's vision of this concept is rather shameful.

For the Conservatives, punishment solves all problems. There are so many factors that lead to crime that we must take a multi-faceted approach to dealing with it. Poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing and low levels of education are all factors that contribute to a rise in crime. A preventive approach must address all these problems in order to achieve effective results.

It is also important to have intelligent corrections legislation and policies accompanied by rehabilitation programs that help to reduce recidivism. It is everyone's duty, as a community, to help victims of crime and to do everything possible to prevent people from becoming victims of crime.

The bill also contains provisions regarding offenders who are unable to pay the fine. Under Bill C-37, these people can participate in a provincial fine option program. These programs allow offenders to pay their debts by earning credits for work done in the province or territory where they committed their crime. I think this is a worthwhile approach because it could get offenders involved in their communities and make them feel accountable, which will greatly contribute to their rehabilitation.

However, the government will have to regulate these programs, since they must be fair and equitable, in light of the sentence, and must be standardized across Canada. I hope the government has done its homework, and we will be able to check that once the bill is sent to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. We must not blindly rush into this, since these programs do not currently exist in all the provinces and territories. What happens when a program does not exist? This is a legitimate question that my colleague raised during the first debate.

If a province must create a new program, it will require funding to do so, and once again, like with Bill C-10, the government may end up passing the bill on to the provinces. Has the government consulted the provinces about this? Will the provinces once again be on the hook for financing the government's crime agenda? I would like a clear answer to that question.

The bill will eliminate the court's ability to exempt the mandatory surcharge if undue hardship to the offender or the dependants of the offender would result from payment of the surcharge. I have some concerns about this provision. The bill indicates, in order of priority, the debts that the offender will have to pay, and support payments are at the top of the list.

In conclusion, like my colleagues, I have a number of concerns about Bill C-37, but I support the spirit of the bill and some provisions that deserve to be studied more carefully in committee. A number of the questions we asked the government have not yet been answered, and we think that they deserve to be discussed in committee. We must talk about the proposed elimination of the judge's discretionary power to decide whether paying a surcharge would cause undue hardship to the offender or dependants of the offender. I think that discretionary powers for judges are very important and that we must protect their autonomy.

• (1310)

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Conservatives this question, but they are not making any speeches. I am not quite sure why. I wonder if this is a new way for them to block the debate. We will see in the end.

I would like to ask the member a question, but I do not know if he will be able to respond. Perhaps the committee will respond. Will the money from the fines that are being doubled go straight to victims of crime and the groups that represent them? Does my colleague know the answer to that question?

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. Indeed, we have some concerns about that. We are wondering if all of the money that comes from these fines and increased surcharges will be completely turned over to victims' funds. There is no guarantee in this bill. Will all of that money be paid to organizations that help victims? This issue needs to be clarified.

I am sure we will have an opportunity to ask these questions when the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights examines this bill. For now, we will have to wait and see, for this is very important.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-37 proposes to amend the Criminal Code provisions concerning victim surcharges in order to double the amount offenders must pay when sentenced, and to make the surcharge mandatory for all offenders. I have concerns about that. Therefore, I will be voting to send the bill to committee.

I have a concern about the surcharge. I would like my colleague, who gave a fine presentation, to tell me about the discrepancy that will arise between the nature of the crimes committed and the surcharge imposed.

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the excellent question. There are a number of reasons why we are concerned that judicial discretion to apply this victim surcharge is being eliminated.

The inmate population in certain provinces includes people who are from very poor and disadvantaged backgrounds. Will they be able to pay this mandatory surcharge? Will they be able to participate in a provincial program that allows them to work instead of paying the surcharge? Is such a program available in all provinces? According to what I was told, that is unfortunately not the case.

The minister does not seem to have confidence in judicial discretion because he wants to eliminate it. That is rather worrisome. The government is constantly trying to restrict the discretion that

judges have when imposing sentences by introducing bills with minimum sentences. Once again, judicial discretion is being eliminated. The government wants to impose a victim surcharge that a poor offender may not be able to pay and that would cause him undue hardship.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion that the question be now put. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1315)

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions between the whips, and pursuant to Standing Order 45 (7) I would ask that the recorded division on this motion be deferred to Tuesday, October 16, at the end of government orders.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 45(7) the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, October 16, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I ask that we see the clock at 1:30.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement to see the clock at 1:30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from September 24 consideration of Bill C-299, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (kidnapping of young person), as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I provide some thoughts regarding the amendment that is being brought forward by my colleague from Mount Royal. He is an individual who has contributed immensely to the whole justice debate over the years, not only as a justice critic but also as a former justice minister. Not only members in this chamber but many people outside the House of Commons listen to what he provides, whether it is in the form of legislation, private members' business or amendments. I emphasize how important it is that the sponsor of this bill listen very closely to what the member for Mount Royal talks about regarding his amendment. I believe it would make a whole lot of sense for the government to accept the amendment.

We can recall other times when the member for Mount Royal, in dealing with justice, brought forward amendments to substantial government legislation at the committee stage, but the government voted all of them down. Neither we nor the government members were allowed to bring forward the amendments at third reading. The legislation had to go to the other house in order to introduce the amendments which the member for Mount Royal was unable to get passed in committee because the Conservatives voted them down. In the other place, the Conservative senators were able to introduce the amendments and send the amended legislation back to the House.

I raise that to highlight how important it is that the sponsor of the bill recognize that the amendments that are being brought forward by the member for Mount Royal on behalf of the Liberal caucus are of a very serious nature. If the member wants to improve the legislation, we highly recommend that he vote in favour of the amendments.

Having said that, I ask that the government not see our bringing forward these amendments as an endorsement of the bill itself. We are trying to improve the bill. The bill still has a fundamental flaw in it with regard to about minimum sentences. My Liberal colleagues and I, and I would like to think all members of the House of Commons are appalled when we see news stories about a missing child. We know the very profound impact that situation has on the community, and more specifically on the parents and family members of the child. We know that if a child is not located in a short period of time after being reported as missing, the chances of the child returning are not good. Far too often, unspeakable things are done to children who are abducted. Victims are created. I would like to think everyone believes, as I do, that the primary victims would be the parents.

•(1320)

My children are older now, 23 and 20, but I shudder to think of one of them going to school and never returning when they were growing up. We can sympathize with people who have to go through that trauma, but we can never genuinely empathize with them because it is such a shocking and horrible experience. Having said that, our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to those victims.

As my constituents of Winnipeg North watch the news, they may want a kidnapped child to be brought back home but, sadly, it may not happen. Quite often, the remains of the child may be found or we may apprehend the person who perpetrated the crime. When that name is flashed on TV and people read about it in the newspaper, the gut feeling of the vast majority of Canadians is to put that person in jail and throw away the key.

I do not want to defend a pedophile or some of the twisted minds that might be out there, but I do want to defend our judicial system. I might not agree with it all the time but I will defend the decisions of the courts. Who we are as a nation includes having independence within our judicial system.

I choose to believe that our judges are in the best position to get an accurate assessment of what has taken place. Through the support of our judicial system and the different stakeholders, they are able to make an educated decision as to what the consequence should and could be in all situations, including one where a child is kidnapped.

After having had the opportunity to listen and talk to others regarding the legislation, I have not heard examples or specific cases of an offender being let out of jail within a year or so after kidnapping, murdering or raping a child. I do not hear members of the public saying that our judicial system is letting us down on that front.

Prior to this debate, we were debating a government bill that would take away the opportunity for judges to recognize, on compassionate and humanitarian grounds, when an offender may not be able to pay fines. I think we have to be very careful when we do that.

I will conclude with a study from the University of Ottawa and Carleton University entitled, "Mandatory Minimum Penalties: Their Effects on Crime, Sentencing Disparities, and Justice System Expenditures". It observes that mandatory minimum sentences calling for lengthy prison terms can carry a massive financial cost and grossly disproportionate sentences.

It also notes that where prison overcrowding results from mandatory minimums, such increases in incarceration rates can lead to the early release of other offenders who were not the subjects of mandatory minimums, thereby weakening the justice system's response to other crimes.

•(1325)

We need to have the facts on the table. I do not believe the government has done the background work to provide the information necessary to justify this, but I hope it will recognize the value of passing the amendments brought forward by the member for Mount Royal.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand before all members of Parliament today to speak to private member's bill C-299, an act to amend the Criminal Code to impose a mandatory minimum sentence on a stranger who is convicted of kidnapping a child under the age of 16.

The smile of a child is one of innocence, based on an understanding that those in authority will watch over him or her. When a child reaches his or her hand out, it is in trust. It is the human touch that provides children with the security in which they find comfort. Every parent, grandparent or person who has the opportunity to feel that innocence and trust of a child knows exactly what I mean.

Private Members' Business

However, there is a small segment of society who do not appreciate the innocence of a child. They, on the other hand, see the vulnerability of the child and the ability to manipulate them, with Clifford Olson and Paul Bernardo being two of the most notorious.

More so, as a society, we soon forget that the families who are directly affected by these tragedies then live with the emotional scars for the remainder of their lives.

First, there is the struggle of wondering if the child is safe. Then there is the struggle of wondering if they will ever see their child again. Unfortunately, in most cases, reality strikes and hope turns to despair.

Someone asked me why I have such a deep desire to deal with kidnapping and, in particular, the kidnapping of young children. I have two reasons, one more close to home than the other.

The first involves Michael Dunahee, Mindy Tran and Kienan Hebert. I will speak to those three children in a few minutes.

As the House knows, I was a member of the RCMP for over 20 years. I have investigated everything from murder to domestic disputes to grow ops. I have dealt with death more times than I wish to remember and, to some degree, have become insensitive to it. However, the toughest thing I ever had to do as a police officer was to give a next-of-kin notification to a parent. On four occasions I have had to tell a parent that his or her child would not be coming home. It is not something that I would wish upon anyone inside or outside of this place. I have no words to describe the feeling of watching the heart and soul being ripped out of a mother and father. That is why I feel so strongly about this issue.

On Sunday, March 24, 1991, Michael Dunahee went missing from a playground in Victoria, B.C. He was four years old. Michael has never been found and the person who kidnapped him has never been captured.

During committee hearings, Crystal Dunahee gave testimony. It was heart-wrenching to watch her struggle after all those years without knowing where Michael was and hoping that he would still walk through the door of her Victoria home some day.

Mindy Tran was eight years old when she went missing while riding her bicycle on the street in Kelowna, British Columbia, in August of 1994.

Along with hundreds of other police officers, I was part of the ground search team desperately trying to find Mindy. Unfortunately, she was found dead six weeks later in a shallow grave not far from where she was taken. I cannot imagine what was going through that young girl's mind after being kidnapped, but I am certain it was not pleasant.

Kienan Hebert was three years old when he was kidnapped from his home in Sparwood, British Columbia, in September of 2011. A suspect was identified early in the investigation and Kienan was returned safely home to his parents.

We had three different outcomes, all started with a kidnapping by a stranger.

Whether it is the Clifford Olsons, the Paul Bernardos or others of the world, one thing is for sure: the acts they committed all started with a stranger kidnapping a child under the age of 16.

● (1330)

They have absolutely no concern whatsoever for the emotional toll they placed on families affected for the remainder of their lives. They have no concern for the child they kidnapped, for if they did, they would surely never commit the crime in the first place.

Society must be assured that the crime of stranger kidnapping of a child under the age of 16 is dealt with severely. This is why we must ensure that a mandatory minimum sentence be placed upon anyone convicted of this crime.

Do not forget that most people who commit this act have increased their propensity for violence, and their need for self-gratification becomes worse over time. Unlike some commentators I have heard, I do not believe that these people can receive any type of program available that would ensure they can safely integrate back into society.

I have listened to those who say that in some cases the perpetrator has mental issues and should be treated differently. I disagree. Most, if not all, individuals who kidnap children are cold and calculating and know exactly what they are doing.

I have listened to the opposition parties state that mandatory minimum sentences are an intrusion on the judges' powers. In my opinion, and for the children who are kidnapped by strangers every year, they are wrong.

This is not about judges' power. This is about children's rights and our obligation as a society to protect them from the evils of the world. In fact, most of the speakers from the other side who come from the legal profession know full well how the judicial system works, and in fact creating questionable language only opens up the opportunity for court and charter arguments, and does nothing for the victims of crime.

Canadians know what the word "stranger" means. In fact, at committee the amendment was made to define stranger as "not a parent, guardian or person having lawful care or charge of the child". I believe that is fairly clear.

Let us get beyond the stick-handling of legal jargon and pass the bill. It is about our obligation as parliamentarians and law-makers that we do our utmost to ensure we give as much confidence to society in our criminal laws as is humanly possible.

I will be cutting short my speech because I do believe I have made my point. All I would say to the members of this House is that I encourage every member of Parliament to vote in favour of Bill C-299.

● (1335)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to speak to Bill C-299.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, I have worked on this bill with my 11 other colleagues to look at its strengths and weaknesses.

Private Members' Business

I must say that I understand where the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia is coming from. I am sensitive to that and I absolutely do not doubt his desire to improve things.

Unfortunately, the bill before us may not have the scope or produce the results that my colleague is looking for. I think that is a shame.

I will provide two sound reasons why we strongly oppose the passage of this bill.

When we look at case law and the sentences handed down in court, we see that the sentences far exceed the five-year minimum proposed in this bill. The minimum sentence of five years has no practical purpose. It is almost impossible to find a case where the sentence was less than five years.

When we go back a number of years, we can see that generally, sentences imposed in similar cases ranged between 12 years and 14 years. That is what one of our witnesses, retired Supreme Court Justice John C. Major, told us during the work of the committee. In addition to confirming that he did not find a sentence that was less than 10 years for this type of crime no matter how far back he looked, the honourable justice questioned the purpose of including a minimum sentence in the legislation.

I must say that this concept, this option, lends itself to discussion. I am perfectly open to that. It is not a problem at all to think it may be useful to contemplate mandatory minimum sentences for certain categories of crime. Unfortunately, hon. members opposite do so too systematically, without any basis. They do not rely on experience, or on research that support the fact that it is good to have mandatory minimum sentences for certain categories of crime.

I can even mention the *R. v. Mills* case, in 1998, in which a court of appeal judge decided, after reviewing the accused's conviction, to reduce from 13 years to 11 years the sentence that had been imposed and which was significantly longer than the five years proposed in Bill C-299.

Therefore, the concern raised by the member for Kootenay—Columbia is totally unjustified.

The second reason is the deterrent effect invoked in many bills amending—or dare I say “altering”—the Criminal Code. Unfortunately, this deterrent effect has never been clearly shown in our work.

• (1340)

Of course, I am not referring to belief, which is one thing. I must admit that some witnesses firmly believed in the deterrent value of a mandatory minimum sentence in the act. Our work in committee also clearly showed it, and this was even supported by Michel Surprenant, who was representing the Murdered or Missing Persons' Families Association.

Mr. Surprenant talked about the most despicable, the most shocking aspect of a child abduction, namely the sexual assault. He said that sexual predators ignored logic and were primarily, if not exclusively, guided by their instinct.

This raises a question. If we follow Mr. Surprenant's reasoning, no sexual predator will take into account this kind of clause, even if it is

included in the Criminal Code, since he will never have it in mind. Rather, he will be guided by his instinct.

I think this is somewhat simplistic. During our work, we often received confirmation from experts that the typical criminal, regardless of the category of crime, does not act thinking he may get caught in the act. He always thinks he can commit a crime with impunity, without ever being caught. Therefore, since criminals believe they can get away with it, why include this type of clause as a deterrent?

I would like to add to that the fact that in the course of our work, some of my colleagues unfortunately demonstrated a degree of confusion when they attempted to support arguments of this kind. For example, my colleague from Delta—Richmond-East cast doubt on the value of studies conducted in the United States on minimum sentences of up to 20 years. When she questioned our witness, Michael Spratt, he clearly stated that no studies in the United States had been able to demonstrate that a 20-year minimum sentence had a deterrent impact. How then could a five-year minimum sentence have such an impact? Unfortunately, this did not convince my colleague. I therefore leave her to her own reasoning, and to her conscience, because I do not want to give people a false sense of security.

Confusion reigned for my colleague from Brampton West as well, who in speaking of deterrence confused it with the restraint represented by incarceration. During the appearance of one of our witnesses, the member for Brampton West interrupted frequently to say that incarceration was deterrence when it is nothing of the kind. Those who are incarcerated cannot do harm, but prior to incarceration, the threat thereof is not a deterrent.

From my standpoint, it is rather unfortunate to see this bill go forward, when a rather serious study is known to have shown that it might give people a false sense of security.

I call upon my colleagues in this House to consider this unintended impact and the possibly very harmful effects it might have, and to reject Bill C-299. The problem is not the Criminal Code, but rather the mechanisms used to implement it within society.

• (1345)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Private Members' Business

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 17 immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 1:47 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 15 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:46 p.m.)

APPENDIX

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

CHAIR OCCUPANTS

The Speaker

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. JOE COMARTIN

The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole

MR. BRUCE STANTON

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

MR. NATHAN CULLEN

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

MS. NYCOLE TURMEL

HON. PETER VAN LOAN

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

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

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

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

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

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.....	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam	British Columbia	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Morin, Dany	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord	Québec	NDP
Morin, Isabelle	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marc-André	Laurentides—Labelle	Québec	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude.....	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot	Québec	NDP
Mourani, Maria.....	Ahuntsic	Québec	BQ
Mulcair, Hon. Thomas, Leader of the Opposition	Outremont	Québec	NDP
Murray, Joyce	Vancouver Quadra	British Columbia	Lib.
Nantel, Pierre	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher ...	Québec	NDP
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	Ontario	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie	Vaudreuil-Soulanges	Québec	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	Ontario	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	Ontario	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José	Laval.....	Québec	NDP
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.....	Calgary East.....	Alberta	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills....	Ontario	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	Ontario	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	New Brunswick.....	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre.....	Ontario	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel ..	Québec	Lib.
Papillon, Annick	Québec.....	Québec	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)	Mégantic—L'Érable.....	Québec	CPC
Patry, Claude	Jonquière—Alma	Québec	NDP
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat.....	Alberta	CPC
Péclet, Ève.....	La Pointe-de-l'Île.....	Québec	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador.....	CPC
Perreault, Manon	Montcalm.....	Québec	NDP
Pilon, François	Laval—Les Îles	Québec	NDP
Plamondon, Louis	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour	Québec	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	Ontario	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London ...	Ontario	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu	Beauharnois—Salaberry	Québec	NDP
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Ontario	Lib.
Rafferty, John.....	Thunder Bay—Rainy River ...	Ontario	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	Ontario	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	Alberta	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert.....	Alberta	CPC
Ravnat, Mathieu.....	Pontiac.....	Québec	NDP
Raynault, Francine	Joliette	Québec	NDP
Regan, Hon. Geoff.....	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	Ontario	CPC
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	NDP
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie)	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversi- fication)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	British Columbia	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
VACANCY	Durham	Ontario	
VACANCY	Calgary Centre	Alberta	
VACANCY	Victoria	British Columbia	

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALBERTA (27)		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	CPC
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl	Red Deer	CPC
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	NDP
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Ind. Cons.
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	CPC
Lake, Hon. Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance)	Macleod	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob	Yellowhead	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Calgary East	CPC
Payne, LaVar	Medicine Hat	CPC
Rajotte, James	Edmonton—Leduc	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent	Edmonton—St. Albert	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	CPC
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	CPC
VACANCY	Calgary Centre	
BRITISH COLUMBIA (35)		
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	NDP
Cannan, Hon. Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	CPC
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	NDP
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	CPC
Findlay, Kerry-Lynne D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Delta—Richmond East	CPC

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

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic	Beauséjour	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob	Fundy Royal	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly	Miramichi	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie)	Madawaska—Restigouche	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	CPC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)		
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Lib.
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	NDP
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Lib.
Harris, Jack	St. John's East	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada	Labrador	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Lib.
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)		
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	NDP
NOVA SCOTIA (11)		
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Lib.
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	CPC
Leslie, Megan	Halifax	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence	Central Nova	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	NDP
NUNAVUT (1)		
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	Nunavut	CPC
ONTARIO (105)		
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe, The Deputy Speaker	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Minister of International Cooperation	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	NDP
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ind.

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauzon, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	CPC
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
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 State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	CPC
Poillievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Scott, Craig	Toronto—Danforth	NDP
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shiple, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	CPC
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	CPC
VACANCY	Durham	

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence	Cardigan	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue	Egmont	CPC

QUÉBEC (75)

Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	NDP
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	BQ
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Lévis—Bellechasse	CPC
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	NDP
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	NDP
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	NDP
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	NDP
Choquette, François	Drummond	NDP
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Lib.
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Lib.
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	NDP
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	NDP
Dusseault, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	NDP

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

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

LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of October 5, 2012 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Chair:	Chris Warkentin	Vice-Chairs:	Carolyn Bennett Jean Crowder	
Dennis Bevington Ray Boughen Rob Clarke	Jonathan Genest-Jourdain Carol Hughes	Blake Richards Greg Rickford	Kyle Seeback David Wilks	(12)

Associate Members

Eve Adams	Corneliu Chisu	Ed Komarnicki	Scott Reid
Mark Adler	Michael Chong	Daryl Kramp	Michelle Rempel
Dan Albas	Nathan Cullen	Mike Lake	Romeo Saganash
Harold Albrecht	Joe Daniel	Kevin Lamoureux	Andrew Saxton
Chris Alexander	Patricia Davidson	Guy Lauzon	Gary Schellenberger
Mike Allen	Bob Dechert	Ryan Leef	Bev Shipley
Dean Allison	Dean Del Mastro	Kellie Leitch	Devinder Shory
Stella Ambler	Earl Dreshen	Pierre Lemieux	Joy Smith
Rob Anders	Rick Dykstra	Chungsen Leung	Robert Sopuck
David Anderson	Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay	Wladyslaw Lizon	Kevin Sorenson
Charlie Angus	Hedy Fry	Ben Lobb	Brian Storseth
Scott Armstrong	Royal Galipeau	Tom Lukiwski	Mark Strahl
Niki Ashton	Cheryl Gallant	James Lunney	David Sweet
Jay Aspin	Parm Gill	Dave MacKenzie	David Tilson
Joyce Bateman	Shelly Glover	Colin Mayes	Lawrence Toet
Leon Benoit	Robert Goguen	Phil McColeman	Brad Trost
Tyrone Benskin	Jacques Gourde	Cathy McLeod	Bernard Trotter
Candice Bergen	Nina Grewal	Costas Menegakis	Susan Truppe
James Bezan	Richard Harris	Rob Merrifield	Merv Tweed
Kelly Block	Laurie Hawn	Larry Miller	Dave Van Kesteren
Peter Braid	Bryan Hayes	Rob Moore	Maurice Vellacott
Garry Breitkreuz	Russ Hiebert	Rick Norlock	Mike Wallace
Gordon Brown	Jim Hillyer	Deepak Obhrai	Mark Warawa
Lois Brown	Randy Hoback	Tilly O'Neill Gordon	Jeff Watson
Patrick Brown	Ed Holder	Ted Opitz	John Weston
Rod Bruinooge	Roxanne James	LaVar Payne	Rodney Weston
Brad Butt	Brian Jean	Pierre Poilievre	John Williamson
Paul Calandra	Peter Julian	Joe Preston	Stephen Woodworth
Blaine Calkins	Randy Kamp	James Rajotte	Terence Young
Ron Cannan	Gerald Keddy	Brent Rathgeber	Wai Young
John Carmichael	Greg Kerr	Mathieu Ravignat	Bob Zimmer
Colin Carrie			

ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Chair:

Pierre-Luc Dusseault

Vice-Chairs:

 Scott Andrews
 Patricia Davidson

 Charlie Angus
 Charmaine Borg
 Alexandre Boulerice

 Brad Butt
 Blaine Calkins

 John Carmichael
 Dean Del Mastro

 Earl Dreeshen
 Colin Mayes

(12)

Associate Members

 Eve Adams
 Mark Adler
 Dan Albas
 Harold Albrecht
 Chris Alexander
 Mike Allen
 Dean Allison
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 Rob Anders
 David Anderson
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 Lois Brown
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 Colin Carrie
 Corneliu Chisu
 Michael Chong

 David Christopherson
 Rob Clarke
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 Bob Dechert
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 Wayne Easter
 Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay
 Royal Galipeau
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 Robert Goguen
 Jacques Gourde
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 Randy Hoback
 Ed Holder
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 Brian Jean
 Peter Julian
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 Greg Kerr
 Ed Komarnicki
 Daryl Kramp
 Mike Lake

 Guy Lauzon
 Ryan Leef
 Kellie Leitch
 Pierre Lemieux
 Chungsen Leung
 Wladyslaw Lizon
 Ben Lobb
 Tom Lukiwski
 James Lunney
 Dave MacKenzie
 Phil McColeman
 Cathy McLeod
 Costas Menegakis
 Rob Merrifield
 Larry Miller
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 Rick Norlock
 Deepak Obhrai
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 Joe Preston
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 Greg Rickford
 Andrew Saxton

 Gary Schellenberger
 Kyle Seeback
 Bev Shipley
 Devinder Shory
 Joy Smith
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 Kevin Sorenson
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 Mark Strahl
 David Sweet
 David Tilson
 Lawrence Toet
 Brad Trost
 Bernard Trotter
 Susan Truppe
 Merv Tweed
 Dave Van Kesteren
 Maurice Vellacott
 Mike Wallace
 Mark Warawa
 Chris Warkentin
 Jeff Watson
 John Weston
 Rodney Weston
 David Wilks
 John Williamson
 Stephen Woodworth
 Terence Young
 Wai Young
 Bob Zimmer

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Chair: Merv Tweed

Vice-Chairs: Malcolm Allen
Frank Valeriote

Alex Atamanenko
Ruth Ellen Brosseau
Randy Hoback

Pierre Lemieux
LaVar Payne

Francine Raynault
Blake Richards

Brian Storseth
Bob Zimmer

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Jim Hillyer
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Kyle Seeback
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Devinder Shory
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David Tilson
Lawrence Toet
Brad Trost
Bernard Trotter
Susan Truppe
Dave Van Kesteren
Maurice Vellacott
Mike Wallace
Mark Warawa
Chris Warkentin
Jeff Watson
John Weston
Rodney Weston
David Wilks
John Williamson
Stephen Woodworth
Terence Young
Wai Young

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Chair: Rob Moore

Vice-Chairs: Pierre Nantel
Scott Simms

Scott Armstrong
Gordon Brown
Paul Calandra

Andrew Cash
Matthew Dubé

Parm Gill
Jim Hillyer

Rathika Sitsabaiesan
Terence Young

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Jim Karygiannis
Gerald Keddy
Greg Kerr
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Daryl Kramp

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Guy Lauzon
Ryan Leef
Kellie Leitch
Pierre Lemieux
Chungsen Leung
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CONTENTS

Friday, October 5, 2012

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act

Bill C-37. Second reading	10911
Ms. Boivin	10911
Mr. Gravelle	10912
Mr. Leef	10912
Mr. Cotler	10913
Mr. Aubin	10914
Ms. Sgro	10914
Mr. Lamoureux	10915
Mr. Chisholm	10915
Mr. Lamoureux	10916
Mr. Aubin	10916
Mr. Nicholls	10916
Mr. Albrecht	10917

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Highgate Fair

Mr. Van Kesteren	10918
------------------------	-------

Gilles Roy

Mr. Caron	10918
-----------------	-------

Official Languages

Mr. Galipeau	10918
--------------------	-------

Teacher of the Year Award

Ms. Sgro	10918
----------------	-------

New Democratic Party of Canada

Mr. Anderson	10919
--------------------	-------

Quebec City Junior Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Côté	10919
----------------	-------

Patriotism

Mr. Lauzon	10919
------------------	-------

Grey Cup

Mr. Tweed	10919
-----------------	-------

Thérèse Poirier

Ms. Freeman	10920
-------------------	-------

The Economy

Mr. Adler	10920
-----------------	-------

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals

Mr. Aubin	10920
-----------------	-------

International Day of the Girl

Mrs. Truppe	10920
-------------------	-------

Al Toulin

Mr. Easter	10920
------------------	-------

Food Safety

Ms. Bergen	10921
------------------	-------

Statements by Members

Mr. Nicholls	10921
--------------------	-------

New Democratic Party of Canada

Mr. Leef	10921
----------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Food Safety

Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	10921
Mr. Ritz	10921
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	10921
Mr. Ritz	10921
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	10921
Mr. Ritz	10922
Mr. Toone	10922
Mr. Ritz	10922
Mr. Toone	10922
Mr. Ritz	10922
Mr. Rae	10922
Mr. Ritz	10922
Mr. Rae	10922
Mr. Ritz	10923
Mr. Chisholm	10923
Mr. Ritz	10923
Mr. Chisholm	10923
Mr. Ritz	10923
Ms. Freeman	10923
Mr. Ritz	10923
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	10923
Mr. Ritz	10923
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	10923
Mr. Ritz	10923
Mr. Caron	10924
Mr. Ritz	10924
Mr. Caron	10924
Mr. Ritz	10924

Correctional Service Canada

Mr. Côté	10924
Ms. Bergen	10924
Mr. Dewar	10924
Ms. Bergen	10924

Food Safety

Ms. Sgro	10924
Mr. Ritz	10925
Mr. Coderre	10925
Mr. Ritz	10925
Mr. Easter	10925
Mr. Ritz	10925

Port of Montreal

Ms. Laverdière	10925
Mr. Poilievre	10925
Ms. Laverdière	10925

Mr. Poilievre	10926
Public Safety	
Ms. Latendresse	10926
Ms. Bergen	10926
Ms. Latendresse	10926
Ms. Bergen	10926
The Economy	
Mr. Wilks	10926
Mr. Baird	10926
Employment Insurance	
Mrs. Day	10926
Ms. Finley	10926
Seniors	
Mr. Cleary	10927
Ms. Finley	10927
Aboriginal Affairs	
Ms. Ashton	10927
Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	10927
Ms. Ashton	10927
Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	10927
Correctional Service Canada	
Mr. Cotler	10927
Ms. Bergen	10927
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Lamoureux	10928
Mr. Saxton	10928
Veterans	
Mr. Chicoine	10928
Ms. Adams	10928
Mrs. Sellah	10928
Mr. MacKay	10928
The Economy	
Mr. Hayes	10928
Mr. Anderson	10928
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Cuzner	10929
Ms. Finley	10929
Homosexuality	
Mr. Genest	10929
Ms. Findlay	10929
Employment	
Mr. Norlock	10929
Mr. Paradis	10929
The Environment	
Mr. Ravignat	10929
Ms. Rempel	10929
Mr. Bellavance	10929
Ms. Rempel	10930
Natural Resources	
Mr. Hyer	10930
Mr. Anderson	10930

Points of Order	
Oral Questions	
Mr. Easter	10930
Ms. Ashton	10930
The Deputy Speaker	10930

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Commissioner of Official Languages	
The Deputy Speaker	10930
Global Centre for Pluralism	
Mr. Dykstra	10930
Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mrs. Glover	10930
Mr. Hoback	10930
Committees of the House	
International Trade	
Mr. Keddy	10931
National Local Food Day Act	
Mr. Allen (Welland)	10931
Bill C-449. Introduction and first reading	10931
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	10931
Petitions	
Rail Transportation	
Mr. Hyer	10931
Development Assistance	
Ms. Laverdière	10931
Rights of the Unborn	
Mr. Komarnicki	10931
Pensions	
Mr. Lamoureux	10931
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lukiwski	10931

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Increasing Offenders' Accountability for Victims Act	
Bill C-37. Second reading	10932
Mr. Côté	10932
Mr. Nicholls	10932
Mrs. Day	10932
Mr. Lamoureux	10933
Mr. Aubin	10934
Ms. Freeman	10934
Mr. Toone	10935
Mrs. Sellah	10935
Mr. Toone	10936
Mr. Caron	10937
Mr. Ravignat	10937
Mr. Chicoine	10937
Mrs. Day	10939
Mrs. Sellah	10939
Division on motion deferred	10939

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Criminal Code

Bill C-299, Report Stage.....	10939
Mr. Lamoureux.....	10940

Mr. Wilks.....	10940
Mr. Côté.....	10941
Division on Motion Deferred.....	10943

APPENDIX

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