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Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

ORAL QUESTIONS

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Justice

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):

Madam Speaker, today, another provincial justice minister added his voice to a growing long list of people who do not want the Conservatives' prison agenda. Nunavut's justice minister says Bill C-10 would undermine the Supreme Court ruling on aboriginal justice. It would drag down the corrections system and it would rob judges of the chance to use their own discretion.

The verdict is in. The Conservatives' prison agenda will not work. When will the government admit its mistake and go back to the drawing board?

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):

Madam Speaker, while we recognize that the administration of justice, including the courts, is a provincial and territorial responsibility, we continue to work in collaboration with our provincial and territorial partners. This is very important, to ensure a strong justice system.

We are committed to supporting successful justice programs, such as the aboriginal justice strategy that achieves real results in reducing and preventing crime in aboriginal communities. In 2008, we enhanced this program by investing \$40 million more, for a total commitment of \$85 million toward aboriginal community justice programs.

We are continuing to do what we have committed to do.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):

Madam Speaker, the reality is that this agenda is going to burden Canadian taxpayers. It is going to weigh down an already strained justice system. That is clear. The list of those who are complaining continues to grow: provincial leaders, lawyers' groups, justice groups and police chiefs. Canadian taxpayers are speaking out about this problem.

When is the government going to fix the bill and get the burden off Canadians?

Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):

Madam Speaker, contrary to the soft on crime approach of the NDP, we continue to stand up for victims in Canada as we always have done.

It is not correct that provinces continue to complain or to criticize what we are doing. Many of the initiatives we have taken were requested by the provinces. Justice ministers across this country, including in B.C., Manitoba and New Brunswick, have praised us for our initiatives. They are thanking us for doing exactly what they asked us to do.

We are committed to this program because it is what Canadians need and want.

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