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Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

ORAL QUESTIONS

Justice

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, the government is violating the rights of Parliament by forcing the passage of its omnibus crime bill without debate. In fact, a number of aspects of this bill are very debatable. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the government's estimates of the costs have no rhyme or reason. They are not based on any specific methodology or verifiable information, and they do not take provincial costs into account.

When will this government finally be honest with the provinces? When will it finally be honest with Canadians about the real cost of its so-called law and order agenda?

[English]

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

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the cost of crime on Canadian society far exceeds the cost of fighting crime. The fact is that last spring we provided the committee with hundreds of pages of documents that go into precise detail on costing.

For the hon. member's benefit, the Minister of Justice recently tabled a summary of these documents at the justice committee. They show very clearly that the federal cost of Bill C-10 is \$78.6 million over five years.

We are working with our provincial and territorial partners on these costs. We believe that working in collaboration with them is important to ensure a strong justice system.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, it cost some \$73 million for a website. Are we to believe that is the real cost?

[Translation]

Members know that this government loves to hand out cheques written on other people's money. With respect to the provincial costs of the bill, the Parliamentary Budget Officer—a man of authority who is neutral, independent and credible, and who is never wrong, whereas the government always tries to ram false information down our throats—is accusing the government of obstruction. Quebec does not seem too worried because it said this morning that it will be asking the federal government to reimburse every dollar.

What will this government do?

(1120)

[English]

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

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that the Department of Justice study in 2008 tagged the cost of crime on society at almost \$100 billion in that year alone. That it was borne by victims by 83% is what we are concerned about mostly.

Since our government took office, support payments to the provinces have increased by 30%, or \$12.7 billion. In budget 2010-11, we announced transfer payments to the provinces and territories of \$54 billion, an increase of \$2.4 billion over last year.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have always boasted they would not download to the provinces. That is exactly what this is. No one believes them, especially not the highly credible Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is always right whenever they are trying to give false information.

Now they want Canadians to believe that their massive prison agenda will cost no more than their website. Nobody believes them. Canadians do not buy it, the PBO certainly does not and the government knows it is hiding the true cost to the provinces of the downloading of the prison expenses.

Provinces want more front-line police, not a bill for more prisons that the Conservatives dictated. When will the government come clean with the provinces on the true cost of its prison agenda?

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

Mr. Speaker, it would be refreshing if just for once the opposition members would really look at the cost of crime on the victims and on law-abiding Canadians.

We are following through on our commitment to help victims of crime, particularly those most vulnerable, the children in our society, and to protect them from those who would traffic in illegal drugs.

We would love it if the opposition would get on board with these initiatives to help those who are the most vulnerable in society.