



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Official Record of Debate
(Hansard)

BORDER SECURITY

May 16, 2006

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): This afternoon we will be debating an opposition day motion on tourism. During the course of that debate, our party will address the US-led passport issue, which is of serious concern to all of us. In response, I hope we can expect something better from the McGuinty Liberals than their line of late, which is to assign blame to Stephen Harper for this problem.

How can this government claim that they want to work with other governments across Canada and on an international stage when they bash and blame their own national government for the problem they claim they want to solve?

Let's accept their premise for just a moment. If it is all the federal government's fault that the passport issue is looming on the horizon, then where was the federal Liberal government on September 23, 2004, when the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act was introduced in the US Senate? Where were the Paul Martin Liberals when this bill was being debated and when it was passed by the Senate on October 6, 2004? Where were the federal Liberals when it was being debated in the House of Representatives and passed that same month? Where were they when the Senate and the House were discussing the bill in conference? Where were they on December 17, 2004, when the bill, having been passed by Congress, was signed by the President?

Why didn't Prime Minister Martin forcefully defend Canada's tourism interests when he met with the US President on November 30 and December 1, 2004, before the American security bill was law? And why didn't he push for a Canadian exemption when he met with the President on two subsequent occasions?

In the course of this afternoon's debate, let us hear the Minister of Tourism address these issues and answer these questions, and if he won't, he should stop pointing fingers to deflect attention away from his own government's lack of support for tourism.