



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, May 26, 2010**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Essex.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### MISS INDIAN WORLD

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to share with the House the impressive accomplishments of Miss Dakota Brant, a young woman from Six Nations in my riding of Brant.

Last month at the Gathering of Nations powwow in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Ms. Brant was crowned Miss Indian World. Chosen from among 26 constituents, Ms. Brant is the first Mohawk woman to have ever captured the title, which is awarded annually to a young native woman from North or South America. Throughout the next year, Ms. Brant will act as an ambassador to the world on behalf of native American nations.

As a member of the Mohawk Nation Turtle Clan, Ms. Brant also served as Miss Six Nations in 2005 and was recognized in 2008 as a Youth Aboriginal Woman in Leadership by the Women In Leadership Foundation.

I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Brant on her achievements and wish her continued success in the year ahead.

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### KOMAGATA MARU

**Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this month marks the anniversary of a very unfortunate chapter in Canadian history: the 1914 *Komagata Maru* injustice.

There were 376 passengers that arrived aboard the *Komagata Maru* at the port of Vancouver. Due to immigration laws at that time,

which were exclusionary and discriminatory, these individuals were kept on the ship for two months without any food and water. Two months later the ship was returned back to India where many of these individuals were shot or killed.

In 2008 we had a private member's motion that I put forward, Motion No. 469, that asked the government to apologize for this injustice. However, the apology, even though the motion was passed, was done at a cultural event.

On behalf of many Canadians and the Indo-Canadian community, I would once again request that all members of this House put partisanship politics aside to once again support another motion that I have put forward, requesting that the government apologize in a respectful and dignified manner for the *Komagata Maru* injustice and declare May 23 as a day of commemoration.

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[Translation]

### MARC GASCON

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to congratulate Marc Gascon on his election as president of the Union des municipalités du Québec. He was elected at the 89th annual conference, which was held from May 13 to 15, 2010.

A native of Saint-Jérôme, Mr. Gascon has been the mayor of that community since 1995. A man of action, he is a member of a number of development agencies and puts all of his talent and energy into improving the quality of life in Saint-Jérôme, with results to show for it. I have no doubt that he is well-suited to his new responsibilities as president of the UMQ.

A Quebec-wide survey was presented at the meeting, and it shows that a majority of citizens believe that the chief executives of their communities have integrity and listen to their citizens. These characteristics describe Marc Gascon, the mayor of Saint-Jérôme, perfectly.

On behalf of my Bloc Québécois colleagues and myself, congratulations, Marc, on your new position as president of the UMQ.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**SYNTHETIC CHEMICALS**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, new studies support previous scientific research showing the harmful effects of dozens of unlabelled synthetic chemicals used as fragrances in numerous body products, air fresheners and cleaning products.

Studies have shown that many of these chemicals, banned in the countries of the European Union, are linked to allergic reactions such as asthma, skin reaction, as well as hormone disruption.

Fragrance companies do not have to safety test these chemicals and in addition, they do not have to list them on product labels.

Products by Calvin Klein, Axe and American Eagle contain 14 to 24 unlisted chemicals used by people of all ages, every day, year after year.

Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about how it is possible that these synthetic chemicals can be banned in Europe and not in Canada.

Canadians want their government to require that these synthetic chemicals be listed on all consumer product labels.

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● (1410)

**FIREARMS REGISTRY**

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to speak out against the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry, but the Liberal leader does not want to listen. He thinks he can score political points by fighting a so-called cultural war against rural Canadians.

However, the Liberal leader's cultural war idea hit a snag last month when my fellow Manitoban, NDP Justice Minister Andrew Swan, announced his government's support for scrapping the long gun registry. Minister Swan clearly states that the Manitoba NDP government is prepared to work with our Conservative government to crack down on illegal firearms and not innocent hunters, farmers and outdoor enthusiasts.

NDP and Liberal MPs from my great province of Manitoba should listen to Minister Swan's advice: do the right thing and vote to scrap the long gun registry. The voters of Manitoba deserve to have their voices heard.

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**ACCIDENT MEMORIAL**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember a tragedy that happened 30 years ago near Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

On May 28, 1980, a bus carrying CP Rail workers was involved in an accident that saw 22 young Canadians lose their lives. Twelve of those men were from Newfoundland and Labrador.

The town of Rushoon, a rural community with a population of 300 in the riding of Random—Burin—St. George's, lost four men in that accident. These were young men who left their homes each

spring to work on the tracks, as they referred to it. These were young men who sacrificed all to earn a living for their families.

Though a small community, the people of Rushoon raised funds for a monument in memory of those men. I will be at the unveiling in Rushoon this Friday, May 28, 30 years to the day of the tragedy.

I ask all members to take a minute to remember all 22 of those men who lost their lives so tragically.

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**AFGHANISTAN**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians can be proud of the bravery shown and the sacrifices made by Canada's military personnel in Afghanistan. The recent vicious attack on the main NATO base reminds us that our men and women in uniform, in all capacities, face constant danger.

We are all sad to learn of the 146th Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan since 2002.

As chair of the foreign affairs committee and chair of the special Afghan committee, I have presided over many meetings, hearing evidence of our performance in Afghanistan.

Canadians should know that our mission has many successes. Our troops are working hard. Whether under attack or feeling the pain of war, our troops are not intimidated and they persevere in spite of difficult surroundings. Our troops will say that they have helped improve the lives of countless Afghans.

Canadians should be proud of the bravery shown, and the sacrifices made by our men and women serving in Afghanistan.

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[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, once again the Conservative government has demonstrated its contempt for culture. The Festival International des Rythmes du Monde, which attracts more than 250,000 visitors to Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, has just had its funding under the marquee tourism events program cut.

This festival, which is a showcase for hundreds of artists from dozens of countries, results in economic spinoffs of approximately \$20 million for my region.

With only two months left until the event, this news is devastating for the organizers. Year after year we have to fight for funding for cultural activities and this leaves us wondering about the future of many marquee festivals in the region.

By refusing to help fund the Festival International des Rythmes du Monde and ending the marquee tourism events program as of next year, the Conservative government has made a purely ideological decision, driving yet another nail into the coffin of culture.

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[English]

### SECURITIES

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are an investing country. Canadians own RRSPs, mutual funds and registered retirement plans. These nest eggs represent Canada's financial future and they deserve the strongest protection possible.

Today, the finance minister released a proposed Canadian securities act, an act that will reduce unnecessary compliance costs, helping give Canada a competitive advantage, and attracting new investments and creating new jobs in this country.

We are asking the Supreme Court to confirm that the act is constitutional and does not infringe upon provincial jurisdictions.

A national securities regulator is exactly what the Earl Jones victims committee, the IMF, the OECD, and dozens more have long demanded. Canada is the only industrialized country without a national regulator, a glaring gap in an otherwise world-leading financial system.

The global financial crisis has shown the dangers of uncoordinated regulations. Canadians deserve better than to have 13 separate regulators in 13 separate jurisdictions.

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● (1415)

### FISHING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Todd Russell (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the past 30 years shrimp and crab have become the mainstay of the Labrador fishery.

Labrador fishers have seen a 10% cut to crab quotas and now face a 28% reduction in shrimp. Area 6 off Labrador accounts for half of the northern shrimp industry. It supports fishers from our eastern coastal provinces, but more importantly it supports fishers from aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities in Labrador.

Everyone is concerned about sustainability. The fishers and processors in my riding have and are willing to shoulder a fair share of conservation efforts, but not an unfair share.

We ask the minister to respect adjacency: the principle that Labradorians should benefit from the resources of the Labrador Sea, those waters which have sustained us for generations.

We say to the minister to recognize the historic attachment we have to the region and these fisheries.

We demand fairness and call on the minister to fully consult with our fishers before making major decisions about one of Labrador's most important resources.

### Statements by Members

[Translation]

### BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Bloc Québécois members say they are in Ottawa to protect Quebecers' interests, but it might be a good idea to review some of the things our government has done since coming to power. Twenty years after the Bloc Québécois' arrival in the House, I still have to wonder exactly what it has accomplished for Quebec.

Since coming to power, our government has recognized that Quebecers form a distinct nation within a united Canada, signed an important agreement between Canada and Quebec about UNESCO, invested heavily in Quebec infrastructure, provided real help to agricultural producers, and more.

Bloc Québécois members have often remained seated when our government proposed initiatives for all Quebecers. When it is time to act, Quebecers can count on the Conservative government. Our government is here to serve all Quebecers.

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[English]

### GENDER EQUALITY

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, Canada no longer compares favourably in international measurements of gender equality.

Under the government's watch, Canada has fallen from 7th to 25th in the World Economic Forum gender gap ranking for gender equality. Women in Canada are not equal to men and are becoming less so.

Rather than taking actions to promote women's equality in Canada and abroad, the government has attacked women's rights in Canada by negating pay equity, abandoning the court challenges program, and cancelling funding to research and advocacy groups, thereby defunding organizations essential to women's economic and social empowerment.

The government has pushed its Conservative ideology abroad and continues its attacks on women's rights by refusing to fund a complete range of family planning services through the G8 maternal and child health strategy.

May 24 marked the 92nd anniversary of universal voting rights for Canadian women. A century later, Canadian women have the right to vote, but they are still not equal.

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### FIRERAMS REGISTRY

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, many provincial and territorial justice ministers have come out in support of scrapping the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry. Let us listen to what some of them had to say in their own words.

### Oral Questions

The Alberta justice minister supports the “repeal of a registry that unfairly targets law-abiding hunters, farmers and sports shooters”.

The Manitoba justice minister wrote that his government has “consistently and repeatedly opposed the registry”.

The Saskatchewan justice minister wrote that Saskatchewan has “consistently opposed the long gun registry, seeing it as a massive waste of taxpayers' money that has yet to solve a single crime”.

The Yukon justice minister wrote that “Yukon's position is that the registry legislation does not deliver positive results”.

Will Liberal members and specifically the member from Yukon listen to his constituents or will they bend to the will of the Liberal leader?

On this side of the House, we will continue to oppose the wasteful long gun registry.

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[Translation]

### CONTROL OF INFORMATION

**Mr. Nicolas Dufour (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, once again last week the Conservative government demonstrated just what it is capable of in terms of controlling the message and giving it a distinctly Conservative flavour.

Hundreds of young people were invited to a meeting to discuss issues related to the G8 and G20, providing what should have been an opportunity for them to ask the Prime Minister some questions. Some of those young people have said that the Prime Minister's staff changed and even discarded some of their questions in order to avoid any controversial or potentially embarrassing topics for the Conservatives.

Any questions related to abortion in their policy on maternal health in developing countries were discarded. Any questions related to the environment were discarded.

There was nothing transparent about the question and answer session, which was led by Senator Mike Duffy, a good Conservative. The Prime Minister's Office managed to turn the whole affair into a partisan exercise.

The Conservative government should be ashamed of itself for its obsession with controlling the message and for muzzling these young people in the context of what was supposed to be a democratic exercise.

\* \* \*

• (1420)

[English]

### ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA LIMITED

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's world-class Candu technology is about to become another victim of a Conservative ideology that continues to hollow out key industries.

Thousands of Canadian families, many living in Conservative ridings, are being victimized by a government intent on destroying AECL.

There are about 150 nuclear industry workers on the Hill today. They deserve to know why the government is not protecting their jobs. Instead, the Conservatives are negotiating an outright sale behind closed doors, without any transparency or accountability.

Obviously, the Reform Party's hidden agenda has morphed into a Conservative culture of deceit.

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### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the Liberal leader finally gets around to asking about the economy, all he can talk about are the taxes he wants to raise. His boast of being the first Liberal to tout a carbon tax are well known, and so is his plan to hike the GST. New on the Liberal leader's agenda is a plan to hike job-killing business taxes, a move that even the former Liberal finance minister, John Manley, has said will not provide Canada with the tax advantage it needs to compete in the global economy.

Canadians see through the Liberal leader's failed approach. Canadians know that our plan is working. Low taxes are fuelling Canada's economic growth that is set to lead the G7 this year and next year. Canadians know that the 285,000 jobs created since last July are due to the responsible economic leadership of this Conservative government. Canadians know that higher taxes to pay for reckless Liberal spending promises will stop our recovery in its tracks.

Canadians can count on our Conservative government to continue with our approach, an approach that is working.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government's economic choices are impossible to understand. The government is borrowing \$6 billion in order to give tax cuts to businesses that are already profitable. What is more, the government is borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars in order to turn around and hand out subsidies to the oil industry when those subsidies are pointless.

At the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh, the Prime Minister promised to eliminate these useless subsidies. Will he keep his promises in Toronto?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is totally false. Canada is a leader in this regard. The Leader of the Opposition is talking about the economy. Today the OECD said that Canada will have the highest growth rate of the major developed countries this year and next. The reason is that we have a government that lowers taxes, unlike the Liberals who want to increase taxes.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, he should tell that to the Canadian families who happen to be the most indebted group of families in the world. He should try that with them, because it will not work.

I asked a clear question in the House. Will he or will he not keep his promise to eliminate the useless fossil fuel subsidies that the G20 meeting at Pittsburgh promised to eliminate? Will he keep his promise in Toronto? Yes or no.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, absolutely. In fact, Canada is a leader in this regard in terms of the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies. In fact, one of the important steps taken by this government several budgets ago was the phase-out of accelerated capital cost allowances for the oil sands. Guess what. They were put there by the Liberal Party, and the Liberal Party opposed getting rid of them.

• (1425)

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the undertaking made by the government was to eliminate them in four years. I am talking about whether it will do it in three weeks, which is when it needs to do it.

The government needs to face the fact that Canadian families are among the most indebted in the world. Over 50% of their income goes to housing. That is going to increase as interest rates rise. Instead of helping those families, the government is giving another \$6 billion gift to corporations and useless subsidies to oil corporations.

When will it change course, freeze those taxes, and start helping middle-class families?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition has been off on all kinds of other tangents for the past year, this government has been focused on the economy. That is one reason the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said today the same thing the International Monetary Fund said, which is that Canada will lead growth among the major developed economies this year and next.

That is why the Canadian economy has created 300,000 net new jobs in the past six months. It is because we have a government that believes in getting taxes lower, unlike the Liberal Party, which wants to raise those taxes.

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*[Translation]***PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety knows very well that the cost of security for the Olympic Games, which lasted almost four weeks, was less than \$800 million.

How does he explain the soaring cost of security for the meetings to be held in Huntsville and Toronto in a few weeks? Why is the cost of security for these summits more than \$800 million?

*[English]*

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all the costs, in fact, have been budgeted and are on target.

As we have stated, the overall cost will be finalized during the completion of the summit. Based on a medium-level threat assessment, we have budgeted up to \$930 million.

This is an unprecedented event. We have two summits back to back, and we believe the experts when they say that this is the necessary level of security. I understand that the Liberals do not believe in securing Canadians or the visitors here. We are different.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would accept a modicum of the government's responsibility for what has taken place. The Conservatives changed their minds about the sites. They changed their minds about who would be invited. It has been improvisation with respect to the agenda. Nothing has stayed constant, and nothing has stayed true.

I wonder if the minister would accept that there is at least a degree of incompetence, a degree of a haphazard approach, to the planning for these summits. It explains why there is such a high cost and such a cost overrun.

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is honoured to host the world's most influential leaders at the G8 and G20 summits this June. They are major events. Hosting these summits requires complex security planning to ensure that we are prepared. The priority for all these events is the importance of the security and safety of Canadians, participants, and visitors. I understand that the member does not understand the issue of security, but we are committed to ensuring that these two summits are secure.

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*[Translation]***SECURITIES**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, white collar crime is a serious problem that needs to be addressed with real action. The Bloc Québécois has suggested ways of combatting this sort of crime, but the Conservative government is using the victims of Earl Jones to try to make a case for its proposed Canada-wide securities commission. Such a commission would not have made a difference to the victims of Earl Jones, though, and the government knows it.

Will the Prime Minister admit that all he is trying to do in creating this Canada-wide commission is deprive Quebec of a vital economic development tool?

*Oral Questions*

● (1430)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary. I know the Government of Quebec disagrees with this proposal, and that is why participation in this commission is voluntary. There are 10 provinces and territories that want to take part. The Bloc should respect the wishes of the other provinces. It was Joey Davis of the Earl Jones victims committee who said he supported the idea of a single national securities regulator to save financial organizations. That is his position.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that what he just said is totally false. What is more, the Minister of Finance acknowledged at a press conference that the federal government had full powers to protect investors under the Criminal Code. So what the Prime Minister is saying is pretext, and he knows it.

Will he admit that his proposed Canada-wide commission is designed to do Montreal out of what it has for Toronto's benefit and encroach on Quebec's jurisdictions, with the blessing of all his token Quebecers?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, as an Albertan, I do not have a vested interest in seeing this sector centralized in Toronto. The finance minister's proposal is meant to decentralize this sector. That is its intent. The provinces and territories that have jurisdiction over this area can take part in this commission. Like the Earl Jones victims committee, the Bloc Québécois should respect those who do not share its views.

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec and the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over securities regulation. The federal government's plan will destroy Quebec's responsibilities with respect to property, civil rights and jurisdictions.

The government's hostile takeover has been rejected by the National Assembly and by economic, financial and business circles in Quebec.

Why is the Conservative government grasping this economic lever and showing contempt for the Constitution and the people of Quebec? Why is it grasping control like that?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, in the spirit of open federalism, we respect provincial jurisdictions. That is why participation in this commission is voluntary. Provinces who wish to participate have the choice to do so. We have legal opinions about that. We are referring the matter to the Supreme Court to ensure that everything this government does is in line with the Canadian Constitution.

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, calling the new securities commission in Toronto voluntary is a trick. The former president of the Montreal stock exchange thinks that this fragmented system will lead to endless bickering. However, the Minister of Finance is telling Quebec and the other dissenting provinces to pipe down and get in line.

How can Conservative members and ministers from Quebec work with a party that preys on, plunders, destroys and steals Quebec sovereignty? How?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite simple; the Conservative federalists are true federalists who respect not only the jurisdictions of Quebec, but also

the jurisdictions of the other provinces. The 10 provinces and the territories will participate and are entitled to do so.

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**MATERNAL HEALTH**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have quadrupled G8 security costs, which are now approximately \$1 billion. We could do a lot with \$1 billion. For example, the maternal health initiative could benefit from it, but their plan is incomplete.

Why is the Prime Minister insisting on excluding abortion from any maternal health initiative despite warnings from scientists, their own civil servants and NGOs? Why?

● (1435)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's decision respects the will and the votes of this House. Our position is clear: the Canadian public does not want to debate this. We are here and our program exists to save the lives of mothers and children.

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[English]

**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for years the NDP has been calling for an end to the tax breaks to the big oil and gas companies because we know that they encourage more pollution. The Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, have left many of these tax breaks in place. We are talking about billions of dollars in tax credits that are not justified. They are really a huge gift to the oil industry, which is the biggest polluter and one of the most profitable industries on the planet.

The G20 is getting ready to move on this. Could the Prime Minister tell us the timetable for the removal of the tax subsidies to the big oil companies and the oil patch?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think I already answered that question. In fact, that question was answered several years ago when we brought in the scheduled elimination of many of those subsidies created by the previous Liberal government, but guess what? The NDP joined with the Liberals and voted against the elimination of those tax breaks.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just admitted that all of the subsidies have not been eliminated. That is precisely the point. There are subsidies still on the books.



*Oral Questions*

When are we going to eliminate the subsidies that are still on the books? Big oil continues to pollute. Those companies are getting away with leaving health consequences to first nations which they never have to pay for and climate change emissions which they never have to pay for. All of this amounts to a subsidy. What is the timetable for removing all the remaining subsidies to big oil?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is a world leader in the elimination of these subsidies. Compared to other countries, we have virtually none. I am not sure what specific subsidies the leader of the NDP is talking about, but I am sure of one thing. Whatever we propose to eliminate, the NDP will join with the Liberals and their coalition partners and oppose their elimination.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Prime Minister to stand up and tell us, in both official languages, that women are free to choose and that he will never allow a bill to pass if it restricts that right.

He refused to answer and delegated his minister of international patriarchy to provide a series of evasive responses.

On behalf of Canadian women, I would like to repeat my request of the Prime Minister. I would like him to stand up and answer my question in both official languages.

[*English*]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister indicated this week, this government has no intention or interest in opening up this debate.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is still not an answer. Will he oppose any attempt to restrict women's right to choose, yes or no?

Yesterday, we learned that, her own department's advice notwithstanding, the minister of international patriarchy was planning to interfere in African women's medical decisions. This proves that the government is guided solely by ideology, not by the scientific data on maternal health.

How can the minister sleep at night knowing that she will be forcing African women to get back-alley abortions?

[*English*]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that this government supports the wishes of Canadians. We want to reduce the 40% of deaths of newborns that occur within one month of their birth. We want to reduce the 30% of children who are most affected by malnutrition, who are born with and will grow up to have mental deficiencies, blindness and stunting. We know we can reduce the one-third of children who will die of pneumonia and diarrhea before the age of five.

That is what Canadians want our G8 initiative to be about, saving the lives of mothers and children.

● (1440)

**OFFSHORE DRILLING**

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources said that there are currently no authorizations to drill in the Beaufort Sea. Yesterday the minister gave an even worse answer saying there are no permits for drilling in the Beaufort or the Arctic.

Boundaries do not stop oil spills. Shell Oil has a lease to drill in the Beaufort. A Scottish company has a licence to drill this summer off Greenland. Ocean currents endanger Canadian waters.

For the third time in question period I ask, why does the Conservative government have no plan to deal with foreign oil spills in the Beaufort Sea and Davis Strait when they drift into Canadian waters?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that Canada has issued no permits to drill in the Beaufort Sea and that no projects will be undertaken unless and until the government is convinced that worker safety and the environment will be protected. My colleague should be happy that this government is taking the lead in negotiations on Arctic development. This will ensure that our neighbouring countries have high standards for oil drilling. That is why we are in talks with Greenland, whose regulations are similar to Canada's.

One thing is clear: Canada has the highest standards in the world.

[*English*]

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my third time asking and the third answer with no Canadian plan for a cleanup.

Reacting to oil spills like the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, the Prime Minister said that there are relief wells, but relief wells in the gulf will not be ready until August, five months too late. Is that all the protection the Conservative government offers Canadians, five months of oil spilled into our pristine waters? Is that the best it can do?

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if my colleague is so concerned about what is going on down there, he should talk to the American authorities about the Gulf of Mexico. I am telling him what is going on here in Canada. We have the highest standards in the world. The National Energy Board requires companies to file emergency preparedness and response plans and to use the best available technology. No drilling permits have been issued for the Arctic or for the Beaufort Sea, and no projects will be undertaken unless and until the government is convinced that the environment and worker health and safety will be protected. That is a pretty clear plan.

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on the issue of torture of Afghan detainees, you ruled as Speaker that:

The Senate and House of Commons have the right...to summon and compel the attendance of all persons, within the limits of their jurisdiction, as witnesses, and to order them to bring with them such papers and records as may be required for the purpose of an inquiry.

Yet less than a month later, the government is again trying to restrict committees' power of inquiry by gagging ministers' political staff.

Is the government aware that it is once again running the risk of being found in contempt of Parliament?

[English]

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we have seen increasingly over the last number of days, weeks and months is our political staff subjected to bullying and intimidation at committees. Quite frankly, we find this completely unacceptable.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Jay Hill:** Mr. Speaker, despite the heckling from the other side, this is completely unacceptable.

It is ministers who are responsible for the actions of their staff and for the actions of their departments. It will be ministers who will be appearing at committee from now on to answer any and all questions. I would think that the opposition would support seeing our ministers more often at those committees.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the power to compel witnesses stems from the preamble and section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which give Parliament the right to require witnesses to appear.

Does the government realize that if its approach were to be adopted, it would create two classes of people: Conservative political staff, who would not be required to testify, and everyone else, who would have no choice?

[English]

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the opposition coalition does not have the right to do is to bully and intimidate hard-working

political staff appearing at those committees. We tried that route. They would not treat people respectfully. From now on the ministers themselves will appear at committee to defend the actions of this government and to defend their staff.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Official Languages is refuting the Conservatives' arguments regarding bilingual judges. He reminds us that when the Official Languages Act was passed 40 years ago, people claimed that bilingualism requirements would prevent people from western Canada from getting jobs. Yet the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is from Alberta, the most senior federal public servant is from Saskatchewan and one of the highest ranking soldiers in the armed forces is from Manitoba.

Instead of setting us back by 40 years, why does the government not insist that judges appointed to the Supreme Court understand French?

● (1445)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our position on this issue is very clear and has not changed. Our government will continue to adhere to the principles of merit and legal excellence when selecting Supreme Court justices.

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for official languages tried to justify the government's inaction by saying that the bilingualism requirement for judges will divide Canadians.

Can the minister elaborate on this? Is he telling us that he cannot enforce a bilingual requirement for Supreme Court justices because he is afraid of offending Conservative extremists?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is false. Once again, our government will continue to adhere to the principles of merit and legal excellence when selecting Supreme Court justices.

[English]

The Supreme Court has worked well for over 130 years in this country. It has been respectful of the linguistic duality of this country. This should not come under attack by the Bloc or anybody else who believes in federal institutions. The Supreme Court should be celebrated by all Canadians.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, your ruling on the supremacy of Parliament was applauded by all sides of this chamber and beyond, but just a month later the Conservatives are trying to do an end run around the power of Parliament by blocking senior staffers from appearing before committee.

*Oral Questions*

This new, out of the blue Conservative policy is yet another direct affront to the powers of Parliament; it is censorship and blocking of information.

When will the Prime Minister read the Speaker's ruling and understand that it is Parliament that is supreme, not him and not his government?

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I already said in answer to a previous question, the fact of the matter is that the coalition opposition has been calling political staffers to appear before committees and then bullying, intimidating and attacking them and demeaning them.

Quite simply, we will no longer tolerate that type of abuse of our staff. We will uphold the precedent and the principle of ministerial accountability and responsibility. Our ministers will be appearing at committee. I would think that would be applauded by the opposition.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a complete fabrication. It is that party and that government that is the bully. It is not the opposition. It is that government and that Prime Minister.

[Translation]

The policy to protect Dimitri Soudas contravenes the principles of political sovereignty. The Conservatives are choosing which minister to send, even though that minister may not be from the same department as the invited employee.

How can the Minister of Natural Resources appear before one committee instead of his assistant and yet refuse to appear before another committee?

[English]

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on this side we believe in accountability and we believe in the principle of ministerial responsibility. That is why we will stand by our staff. We will no longer allow them to be abused by the opposition coalition at committee, which wants nothing but to intimidate, attack and demean them.

Cabinet ministers will appear at committee and they will answer questions from the opposition, as is their right and their responsibility.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives white collar crime bill fails to address many financial crimes, which ruined the lives of honest Canadians. The government is doing too little, too late. We just need to ask the victims of Earl Jones.

Where is stock manipulation mentioned in the bill? Nowhere. The omission of large scale mortgage fraud from mandatory minimums in the bill means no response to the massive mortgage fraud in Alberta.

Will the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada stand up for Canadians and propose adding stock manipulation and mortgage fraud to the bill, yes or no?

• (1450)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell the House how pleased I am that the Liberal Party has discovered the justice agenda. It is only once every four or five months that we get a question from Liberal members on this subject.

It is true that we have introduced a bill on white collar crime that sends out the right message. People who are victims of white collar crime are victims as much as anybody who gets beaten up in an alley. That is why we have introduced Bill C-21.

For once, I would hope the Liberal Party would stop its equivocation, get on board and start to support victims and law-abiding Canadians for a change.

**Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** A question once every four or five months, Mr. Speaker? We barely sit once every four or five months because of prorogation.

That minister did not mention mortgage fraud in his answer. I can understand why the Conservative Party does not want to bring it up.

Will the minister recommend the necessary amendments in his white collar crime bill, or will he continue to only provide lip service to the victims of crime? When will he do his job to present responsive and effective legislation, or will we over here have to do it ourselves?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, those members seem sensitive about their record on crime. I actually agree with them. They should be sensitive on this issue.

Mortgage fraud is covered by the white collar crime bill. I would invite the member and his colleagues for once to read the legislation before they start complaining and opposing it.

\* \* \*

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the OECD released its spring 2010 economic outlook. According to the report, the Canadian economy is rebounding vigorously, helped by a recovering trade sector and policy measures.

The OECD has also pointed to and praised our government's economic action plan, with measures like the infrastructure projects under way across Canada and our proposal to make Canada a tariff-free zone for manufacturers.

Could the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities please provide the House with further details about today's positive economic report?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the OECD expects this year and next year that Canada will be the fastest growing economy in the entire G7 and also beat the OECD forecasts for economic growth by a very wide margin. Clearly our economic action plan is working.

However, members should not believe me. Let me read what the report said. Listen to what one senior OECD official said about the good work on the Canadian economy, "I think Canada looks good - it shines, actually. Canada could even be considered a safe haven". Is there any wonder why Canada has the best finance minister in the world?

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the cost of holding the G8 and G20 summits in Canada are becoming incomprehensible. In March Canadians were told that it would cost \$179 million to hold these two meetings. Now, only two months later, that price is \$930 million, five times the original amount. With the government in deficit, that means another \$1 billion will be added to our national debt.

Could the government explain to Canadians why two meetings over four days will cost taxpayers nearly \$1 billion?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that \$179 million was never the original estimate. The original estimate has been \$930 million.

This is a plan that has been put together by the security experts. These are necessary costs in order to secure the safety of visiting heads of nations. We have that responsibility and we will carry it out.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is the same minister who costed the two-for-one bill at \$90 million and 24 hours later said that it was \$2 billion.

The irony is that one of the main topics at the G20 will be how to get government spending under control. I am sure one of our lessons will be not to hold the G8 or G20.

From the two locations to the locking down of Canada's busiest city in a critical tourist season, the government's handling of this event has been sloppy and irresponsible. In the end, it is Canadians who will be left paying for Conservative errors.

Could the government explain why these meetings will end up costing more than double any previous G8, G20 summits?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have to take lessons from the Socialists on how to budget. The member for Toronto Centre knows that full well. He has indicated, on more than one occasion, that those are not people to take lessons from.

All costs have been budgeted and are on target. We have always stated that overall costs will be finalized at the end of both of these summits. Putting two of these summits together, back to back, has been unprecedented. We have relied on the experts to give us the costs. We are prepared to meet those costs in order to meet the security interests and the safety of heads of nations.

• (1455)

[Translation]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government says it does not wish to reopen the abortion debate. However, it was Conservative members who introduced bills to restrict access to abortion and it is the Conservative government that is proposing to stop funding abortion abroad. Even Msgr. Ouellet stated that he was prompted to make a public statement because the Conservative government had reopened the debate.

Will the government admit that it has reopened the debate on abortion to satisfy the religious fundamentalists of the Conservative Party?

[English]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has indicated this week and as our government has reiterated many times, this government has no intention of reopening this issue and we have no intention of introducing the supporting legislation on the issue.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has so discredited itself by taking this backward position on abortion that it could derail the G8's negotiations to improve the health of women and children in developing countries. The ONE campaign notes that there is still no concrete plan on the table one month before the summit.

Does the government realize that its ideological stubbornness regarding abortion is stifling the momentum for maternal health?

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we have said, we want our G8 initiative to save the lives of mothers and children. It has been decided in this House. We know Canadians also support this initiative. In fact, the report made by ONE yesterday said that it would be unfortunate if a major initiative on maternal and child health got sidetracked or diverted over a squabble that Canadians did not want debated. They want action. They want us to save the lives of mothers and children.

\* \* \*

**FIREARMS REGISTRY**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police says the gun registry keeps our communities safe. It saves lives. Of over 428 chiefs, only 3 disagree.

*Oral Questions*

The Canadian Police Association, elected by front-line officers across the country, says the same, joined by the RCMP, pediatricians, physicians, victims, labour and women's groups. Ontario's attorney general says that support for the gun registry is unprecedented.

Why will the government not stand with police, stand with physicians, stand with doctors and save lives and save our gun registry?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if that member were so sure of his party's position, his leader would allow a free vote on Bill C-391.

We know their members do not support the gun registry. Members of the New Democratic Party do not support the long gun registry. Certainly this party does not support the long gun registry.

Front-line officers, like Dave Shipman, said:

The long-gun registry is not working to prevent gun crime...Criminals...do not register their stolen or smuggled guns that are being used to wage war in our cities.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Quebec's public safety minister, Jacques Dupuis, will come to defend the unanimous position of the National Assembly on the importance of the registry to Quebec police. However, the Prime Minister is continuing his pro-gun and anti-women program and Quebec Conservatives are following him like sheep.

As is the case with abortion, on the one side we see Quebec, its National Assembly and Quebecers; on the other, there is the Conservative Party.

Will the Conservatives attack Jacques Dupuis as they did Steven Guilbeault, women's groups, the CBC, Rémi Beauregard, artists—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister for Status of Women.

[*English*]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is our government has actually increased funding for women's groups to the highest it has ever been in the history of our country. We are proud to be supporting projects in every province and territory.

I would ask the hon. member to work with us instead of turning women's groups against each other.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

[*Translation*]

#### FOREIGN INVESTMENT

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on April 28, the House passed an NDP motion to strengthen the Investment Canada Act regarding foreign investments, so that the process is more transparent, and so that it benefits Canadians and not just foreign companies.

Mr. Speaker, you even issued a ruling that essentially ordered the government to respect decisions made by the House of Commons.

My question is simple: will the government respect the will of this House and amend the Investment Canada Act?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Investment Canada Act, a foreign investment is only approved when the Minister of Industry is satisfied it will provide a net benefit to Canada. Among other things, considerations include ensuring economic activity in Canada and protecting the jobs of Canadians.

Because of the actions of this government, we have seen a net gain of 285,000 new jobs in Canada over the past year. The NDP voted against every one of those jobs.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tell that to the locked out workers in Sudbury.

It is bad enough the Conservative government allowed historic Canadian companies to be bought out by foreign profiteers and scavengers, but, worse, hidden in its bloated budget, it is having a fire sale of the crown corporations of Canadians.

For example, Canadians have invested \$22 billion in AECL and now the Conservatives are trying to sell it for pennies, through the back door. What does this mean for the future of Canadian science and the dedicated staff of AECL?

Could the minister explain to Canadians this outrageous giveaway?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure: everyone agrees that AECL needs to be restructured now so that we can ensure the viability of the nuclear industry in Canada and abroad, and so that we can share our expertise and create high-level jobs. We must also take fewer financial risks for taxpayers. That is why we are looking for strategic investments.

I urge the opposition to pass Bill C-9 so that we can do this right.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### FIREARMS REGISTRY

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, ministers of justice from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and now Yukon have all come out opposing the long gun registry. They have been clear in saying that the long gun registry is a massive waste of taxpayer money and unfairly targets innocent law-abiding citizens.

### Oral Questions

In fact, the minister of the environment from Yukon stated, “Our only vote in the Yukon is being jeopardized by a whipped vote by the Liberals”. I hope the member for Yukon will be voting with his constituents rather than with his leader.

Could the Minister of Public Safety update the House on this important issue?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his work. The Liberal leader continues to ignore the facts and, more important, ignore the voices of rural Canadians. Why will he not let his members consider what the ministers from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Yukon have to say? All have come out in favour of scrapping the ineffective, wasteful long gun registry.

I remind all members who in fact voted for Bill C-391 at second reading, especially the member for Yukon, that the choice is simple. Either they vote to keep the registry or they vote to scrap it. What will it be?

\* \* \*

### GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we learn more and more each day about the current government's reckless ideological cuts to Toronto's gay pride festival, cuts that were made despite leaving \$12 million the table.

The Conservative Party's opposition to the gay community is so strong that the industry minister ordered that the marquee tourism events program be restructured to specifically exclude Pride Toronto.

Did the minister make this homophobic government policy on his own, or was he acting on orders from the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, the numbers presented in the article that the member refers to are incorrect and skewed.

In fact, a significant investment was made in the Canadian Tourism Commission for a campaign leveraging Canada's hosting of world-class events like the G8, the G20 and the Olympic events. The work of the Canadian Tourism Commission has tremendous benefits, of course, in all parts of this country for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

[Translation]

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative government has said that it is cutting funding to the FrancoFolies, Rythmes du Monde and Fêtes de la Nouvelle-France for budgetary reasons, we have learned that \$12 million from the envelope for Industry Canada's marquee tourism events program has been diverted for other purposes. The government's excuse no longer holds water. The government's choices are purely arbitrary and partisan.

What is the government waiting for to restore funding to these organizations?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member voted against the funding last year and, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry said, she is using incorrect numbers. FrancoFolies received \$175,000 last year and the Bloc voted against it. This festival will receive \$175,000 this year and the Bloc voted against it. It will receive \$175,000 next year and the Bloc voted against it. The Bloc always votes against artists.

\* \* \*

[English]

### TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives dish out close to \$1 billion for the G8 and G20 summits, the people who actually live in Toronto and other Canadian cities are being ignored.

We live in the only OECD country where public transit is not funded, especially its operating costs, by the federal government. As a result, we are losing \$3 billion of productivity because of this.

One-time projects will not cut it.

Will the minister finally give municipalities stable, long-term funding by transferring an extra cent of the existing gas tax dedicated to public transit?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is this government that has done exactly that, and when we did, the NDP voted against it.

Not only did the previous minister of transport make the gas tax transfer to municipalities permanent, this year the Minister of Finance doubled it. What did the NDP do when we doubled funding to municipalities, when we made it permanent? It voted against it.

This government has made an unprecedented commitment to public transit in the city of Toronto and we need the member for Trinity—Spadina's help. The member should stop voting against Toronto public transit and start supporting this government.

\* \* \*

### DIGITAL ECONOMY

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in this rapidly evolving digital era, it is vital that individuals and businesses be able to make use of the Internet in a safe and effective manner. Canadians are nuisanced by unwanted spam, which clogs our inboxes and slows our systems. Businesses can spend millions of dollars dealing with this very issue.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry please inform the House what is being done to help Canadians ensure their safety in online transactions?

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, just yesterday, the Minister of Industry announced the tabling of two bills to strengthen Canadians' safety and privacy online.

Both the safeguarding Canadians' personal information act and the fighting internet and wireless spam act will work to fortify the ability of Canadians to work effectively online. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce welcomed the bills, saying they would help reduce "unwanted and unsolicited emails that clog up email systems, cost productivity, violate privacy, and often promote fraud".

This government continues to work to ensure that Canada is a world leader in the digital economy.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### ROYAL RECOMMENDATION—BILL C-501—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on May 11, 2010, by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader concerning the need for a royal recommendation for Bill C-501, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and other Acts (pension protection), standing in the name of the hon. member for Thunder Bay-Rainy River.

[English]

I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for having raised this matter, as well as the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River for his comments.

In his point of order, the parliamentary secretary pointed out that Bill C-501 makes provision for the appointment of adjudicators by the Minister of Labour in connection with claims against directors for the recovery of debts filed under the Canada Business Corporations Act. These provisions are found in clause 6 of the bill.

He drew the attention of the House to section 23 of the Interpretation Act, which indicates that the power to appoint public officials includes the power to pay them. In his view, the appointment of adjudicators under the Canada Business Corporations Act would constitute the naming of officials for a new and distinct function not currently authorized by any existing appropriation.

● (1510)

[Translation]

The Chair has examined Bill C-501 carefully and has taken note of the authorities cited by the parliamentary secretary. The Chair has also looked closely at the existing provisions of the Canada Business Corporations Act.

[English]

During his intervention, the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River maintained that the Minister of Labour has the power to name adjudicators under other legislation. However, what is specifically at issue here is the minister's ability to appoint such officials under the Canadian Business Corporations Act.

### Privilege

As this act in its current form does not provide for the appointment of adjudicators, it is clear to the Chair that the proposal in clause 6 of Bill C-501 proposes a new and distinct function for the Minister of Labour, which would require an expenditure of public funds.

In accordance with Standing Order 79(1), the Chair must therefore rule that the bill requires a royal recommendation, and will decline to put the question on third reading of the bill in its present form unless a royal recommendation is received.

The recorded division later today, however, is on the motion for second reading, which can proceed as scheduled.

[Translation]

The Chair would like to take this opportunity to remind all hon. members of the importance which the Speaker attaches to questions of this nature. The orderly conduct of our proceedings, particularly where it touches on matters relating to the appropriation of public funds or the imposing of charges on the people, is of great importance in permitting the House to deliberate in a calm and well-considered manner. Procedural issues which may arise from time to time are often complex and it assists both the Chair and the House as a whole when they are raised as early as possible in the proceedings.

[English]

I thank hon. members for their attention.

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### PRIVILEGE

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the question of privilege raised on Friday, May 14 by the member for Mississauga South. What he raised was not a matter of privilege, but really a matter of debate. It was a disagreement about facts and a difference of opinion regarding the application of certain Standing Orders of the House.

On page 13 of Joseph Maingot's second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, he states:

While it will be seen that the Member enjoys all the immunity necessary to perform his parliamentary work, this privilege or right, such as freedom of speech, is nevertheless subject to the practices and procedures of this House. Thus allegations of breach of privilege by a Member in the House of Commons that amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by their very nature matters of order.

Because of its nature, a true question of privilege should arise in the House only infrequently.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Mississauga South cannot be taken seriously, since he is on his feet every other day claiming that his privileges have been breached. If we examine his line of argument, it is clear that he takes issue that this is a matter of order, not privilege. He argues for the application of Standing Orders 119 and 31. He cites your letters about the use of Standing Order 31, which was giving direction on a matter of order, not a matter of privilege. The member takes issue with statements I made in the House. I said that:

Mr. Speaker, by long-standing constitutional convention, any MP may attend and participate in any committee meeting. Standing Order 119 says:

### *Privilege*

Any Member of the House who is not a member of a standing, special or legislative committee, may, unless the House or the committee concerned otherwise orders, take part in the public proceedings of the committee, but may not vote or move any motion, nor be part of any quorum.

That is a fact. The second point I made in that statement was:

Today, defying the Standing Order, the Liberal chair of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics forbade the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development from participating in its proceedings. This ruling was contrary to law and turned the committee into a kangaroo court.

That is also true. I went on to say:

Further, by denying the minister her legal right to participate, the chair was undermining the principle of ministerial responsibility and accountability, a key principle of our Constitution. It is outrageous that the chair of the ethics committee, the member for Mississauga South, would reject the principle of ministerial accountability, all in an attempt to score cheap political points. He should be ashamed and he should resign.

That, too, is true and I do believe the member should be ashamed of himself and I still think he should resign as chairman of the ethics committee. In his submissions, the member for Mississauga South talked of justice and fairness and he talked about being able to defend himself. On that we can both agree, and I think he should apply that standard not only to himself but also to others and, in particular, to those non-elected persons who appear before his committee.

I want to talk a bit about the relevance of Standing Order 31. First of all, I want to quote from O'Brien and Bosc about ministerial responsibility, as they talk about ministerial responsibility on page 32 of chapter 1. Also I would just note that the government House leader talked of this yesterday in *Hansard* on pages 2867-69.

I want to quote from page 32 of O'Brien and Bosc:

In a general sense, responsible government means that a government must be responsive to its citizens, that it must operate responsibly...and that its Ministers must be accountable or responsible to Parliament.

In terms of ministerial responsibility, Ministers have both individual and collective responsibilities to Parliament. The individual or personal responsibility of the Minister derives from a time when in practice and not just in theory the Crown governed; Ministers merely advised the Sovereign and were responsible to the Sovereign for their advice. The principle of individual ministerial responsibility holds that the Ministers are accountable not only for their own actions as department heads, but also for the actions of their subordinates—

—and I stress, “their subordinates”—

—individual ministerial responsibility provides the basis for accountability throughout the system. Virtually all departmental activity is carried out in the name of a Minister who, in turn, is responsible to Parliament for those acts. Ministers exercise power and are constitutionally responsible for the provision and conduct of government; Parliament holds them personally responsible for it.

That is exactly what the minister was trying to do when she appeared at the ethics committee. As the member for Mississauga South was quoting Standing Order 119, as I did in my statement, I think it is important to talk about freedom of speech. Standing Order 119 says that members of Parliament when they appear before committee have the right to speak at committees.

● (1515)

On page 93 in chapter 3 of O'Brien and Bosc, it states:

Freedom of speech permits Members to speak freely in the Chamber during a sitting or in committees during meetings while enjoying complete immunity from prosecution or civil liability for any comment they might make. This freedom is essential for the effective working of the House. Under it, Members are able to make

statements or allegations about outside bodies or persons, which they may hesitate to make without the protection of privilege.

The minister definitely has the right of freedom, as I do, in the House to speak about the procedures and things that have happened at committee or in the House and raise those about the undertakings of other members. In contrast, we can compare that to the member for Mississauga South and look at what he did as chair of the ethics committee when he censored the minister from speaking.

On page 150, O'Brien and Bosc states that “the Chair of a committee does not have the power to censure disorder or decide questions of privilege”. When I was going through his testimony from May 14, he actually laid out that he was arguing with the minister when the minister was trying to speak at committee. In his testimony he says:

The terms of reference and the order of the day before the committee was with regard to a special study, a study of the allegations of deliberate interference...

He says that he had orders to not have the minister appear. I did not see any of those orders that the minister was not entitled to speak at committee. He goes on to say:

The minister argued yet again with the chair of the committee saying, “Mr. Chair, I would actually refer you...”, and then she carried on. I said “order” to get order back in the committee but she carried on yet again even after I called for order, and said, “to the experts on the subject of ministerial accountability, O'Brien and Bosc, and Marleau and Montpetit, Guide for Ministers and that...”.

Again, I will go back to chapter 3, page 150 where it states:

...the Chair of a committee does not have the power to censure disorder or decide questions of privilege. Should a Member wish to raise a question of privilege in committee, or should some event occur in committee which appears to be a breach of privilege or contempt, the Chair of the committee will recognize the Member and hear the question of privilege, or in the case of some incident, suggest that the committee deal with the matter.

The chair never asked the committee to do that. It goes on to state:

The Chair, however, has no authority to rule that a breach of privilege or contempt has occurred.

That, to me, was disturbing.

I want to touch on a couple of other things concerning what the committee's powers actually are. Mr. Speaker, as you and the member for Mississauga South know, the standing committees are creatures of the House of Commons. They were created by the House and so we are bound by the rules laid out by the House, including the standing orders.

On page 973 in chapter 20 of O'Brien and Bosc, it states:

The House delegates certain powers to the committees it creates in order that they can carry out their duties and fulfill their mandates. Committees have no powers other than those delegated to them in this way, and cannot assume other powers on their own initiative.

I will interject here to say that is why Standing Order 119 must be respected by committees. It is a standing order handed down by the House and a committee failing to recognize the right of any member, even if it is a minister, appearing before a committee is a breach of the rules laid out by the House.

It goes on to state:

The exercise of their powers is subject to three fundamental rules. First, they can be exercised only on the territory and within the areas....



*Privilege*

I will not go into that. The standing orders set out the powers held by standing committees. We have the standing orders and the chair decided to ignore them.

Finally, I will remind the member for Mississauga South what the chair's responsibilities are as laid out in chapter 20 on page 1,030 under procedural responsibilities of chairs. It states:

Chairs preside over committee meetings and oversee committee work. They recognize the Members, witnesses and other people who wish to speak at these meetings; as in the House, all remarks are addressed to the Chair.

He did not recognize people who wished to speak.

It goes on to state:

They ensure that any rules established by the committee, including those on the appropriation of speaking time, are respected. They are responsible for maintaining order and decorum in committee proceedings, and rule on any procedural matter that arises, subject to an appeal to the committee.

In this case, he was shutting it down without having that appeal by committee. He was shutting down debate and comments from the minister who appeared to speak on behalf of her staff and, as I laid out earlier, her rights and responsibilities as a minister to answer for her staff.

It goes on to state:

Committee Chairs have considerable administrative responsibilities, starting with those involving the committee's program of activities. In compliance with instructions from the committee or an order from the House....

● (1520)

I do not believe the member for Mississauga South, as chair of the ethics committee, had the order from the committee to censor the comments made by the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development when she appeared along with Mr. Sparrow. I also do not believe the member for Mississauga South had an order from the committee not to allow her to testify. He was ignoring the standing orders as laid out.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the argument he made in his question of privilege was all about order and was not a question of privilege.

Finally, I have to say that members on this side of the House are finding it increasingly difficult to work with the member for Mississauga South as chair of the ethics committee. Mr. Speaker, you may need to take a look at the way that committee has been functioning. It has resulted in the position laid out by the House leader just yesterday in saying that political staffers should not be appearing before committee because of the kangaroo court ethics that have been undertaken at certain committees, especially the ethics committee, and that we do not need that type of anarchy occurring in our parliamentary institutions.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's enthusiasm for the rules and respect his right to present his views to the House but I have a couple of points. When I rose on a question of privilege, it was a privilege in the House not a privilege in committee, as he outlined for quite a long time.

The issue he discussed, which he quoted often, had to do with Standing Order 119, the subtitle of which is "Only members may vote or move motion" in a committee. It states:

Any Member of the House who is not a Member of a standing, special or legislative committee, may, unless the House or the committee concerned otherwise orders, take part in the public proceedings of the committee, but may not vote or move any motion, nor be part of any quorum.

I agree with that. That is a member of a committee sitting at the table with the committee members, participating in the committee proceedings.

What the member may have failed to recognize is that the minister came to the committee meeting not to be a member of the committee but rather to be a witness. There are two different roles here. One is a witness called by the committee and one is a member of the committee who will question the witness.

I would refer the member, which may be helpful to him, to O'Brien and Bosc, the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition 2009. On page 976, where it refers to committees, in the second paragraph it states:

This applies, as well, to parliamentarians belonging to other Canadian legislatures, because each of these assemblies, like the House of Commons, has the parliamentary privilege of controlling the attendance of its members...

There is no specific ruling governing voluntary appearances of members of the House of Commons before parliamentary committees. They may appear before a committee if they wish and, it states, have been invited. It says that members can appear voluntarily. They cannot be summonsed and cannot be compelled to appear but they can appear if they wish and have been invited.

The Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development was not invited by the committee. Accordingly, the chair had no recourse but to not allow her to be a witness at the committee, and that was the decision that was taken. If the member wants to argue whether or not there was an invitation, that is fine, but there was not.

He referred to somehow censuring the minister and the chair deciding a matter of privilege. Mr. Speaker, as you well know, committee chairs have no authority whatsoever to censure any member for any action, nor do they have the right to determine on matters of personal privilege. Those matters come to the chamber and, if there is a problem at committee, a report must be given to the House so that it can be seen and it is the Speaker who will determine whether there is a case for censuring someone.

I appreciate the member's enthusiasm but if he had included those points, he would have found that most of the argument that he gave today was moot and not relevant to the point that I raised in terms of my personal privilege.

The final comments the member made in sort of a veiled threat about my being the chair and how I operate, I do not believe it is appropriate for an individual member to make comments on how he thinks another member is doing his or her job. It is not the member's position to judge, to make those allegations or to paint that picture of another member's work. It is unfortunate that he has done that and he may want to apologize for it but I will leave that up to him.

● (1525)

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak briefly on the comments from the member across about the workings of a chair of another committee.

*Privilege*

I have never heard those comments in this House before, and I find them totally inappropriate. They are wrong. The chair of that committee obviously has the confidence of the committee, or he would not be there. For a member to use a point of order or a question of privilege to get up in this House and attack the chair of a committee of this House is wrong, Mr. Speaker, and I urge you to rule on that. If that were the case, it would just be a free-for-all here.

While I am up on my feet, I recall that the government House leader published a booklet three or four years ago that instructed committee chairs as to how to shut down the committees by ignoring witnesses, avoiding witnesses, and doing anything—this went on for 65 pages—to obstruct the workings of the committees and hence, Parliament.

I think it would be instructive and helpful to this debate to have that document tabled in the House. I seek unanimous consent for that.

**The Speaker:** Is the hon. member seeking unanimous consent to table this document himself or to have it tabled? Of course, the government can table any document it wants whenever it wants. If the government has possession of the document, it can table whatever it likes in the House without unanimous consent or anyone's consent. I do not think we need to fret or worry about that.

I will hear first from the hon. member for Burnaby—Douglas on this point.

• (1530)

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment briefly and reserve the possibility of making further comments later.

I want to stand as a member of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I want to stand in support of the chair of that committee and let him know that he has my full confidence on this issue.

I want to speak briefly about the specific issue raised and whether there was some interference in the privileges of the Minister of Human Resources at the standing committee meeting when she appeared.

When the witness, a member of her staff, was called to appear at the committee, the minister appeared and tried to be the witness for that meeting. At an earlier meeting of the committee, as part of the same study, the minister had already been called and had appeared as a witness. The committee had already had a meeting where the minister offered her testimony and answered the questions of the committee.

When she appeared, when her staff person had been called on the same matter for the same study, there was some dialogue with the chair, needless to say. This was unannounced and was a surprise to most of us on the committee.

I have to say that I agree with the ruling of the chair at that time that the witness who was called was Mr. Sparrow, the staff person, and not the minister, in this case, and that the committee would hear from the witness who was called and put its questions to that witness.

The chair did something that I think was helpful in the circumstances, as well, when he allowed the minister to remain and allowed the witness to consult with the minister on his answers to the questions posed by the committee. I think that did two things. It allowed a very visible expression of ministerial responsibility for her political staff. It also retained the right of the committee to hear the witness it had called and who it thought was important to the study.

I think there was a very important compromise reached by the chair. I think it addressed both the question of ministerial responsibility and the rights and abilities of a committee to hear from the witnesses the committee deems necessary.

I want to compliment the chair for his swiftness on his feet in that circumstance, because chairing a committee in this place is often a very difficult thing.

That is just something I would like to add to this discussion this afternoon to indicate that my confidence in the chair of the committee, although I do not always agree with him, remains unabated.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, as you can tell from the debate, really we are talking about a point of order, not a question of privilege. As chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, I have my own ideas about the rules. I always use O'Brien and Bosc, and before that Marleau and Montpetit, as the basis for all my decisions as the chair. I am talking about *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*.

It is important that we stay rules-based and that we have that debate. That is what is happening here. We are having the debate.

However, on the issue, I do not believe that I used any unparliamentary language in my discussion, nor do I believe that I have impugned the reputation of the member for Mississauga South, but I do want to make sure that my rights and freedoms and my freedom of speech are protected.

I just want to quote Speaker Fraser, in his ruling in 1987, which is quoted in chapter 3, page 97 of O'Brien and Bosc. It says:

There are only two kinds of institutions in this land to which this awesome and far-reaching privilege of [freedom of speech] extends—Parliament and the legislatures on the one hand and courts on the other. These institutions enjoy the protection of absolute privilege because of the overriding need to ensure that the truth can be told, that any questions can be asked, and that debate can be free and uninhibited.

That is exactly what we are doing here.

To go on:

Absolute privilege ensures that those performing their legitimate functions in these vital institutions of Government shall not be exposed to the possibility of legal action. This is necessary in the national interest and has been considered necessary under our democratic system for hundreds of years. It allows our judicial system and our parliamentary system to operate free of any hindrance.

Therefore, it is important that my ability to speak in here and to raise questions about the practices and procedures of certain committees and certain committee chairs is respected and that we have a fulsome debate on those issues.

**The Speaker:** I thank all hon. members who have made submissions on this point, and I will get back to the House in due course with a decision in respect of the matter that has been raised.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### SECURITIES REGULATION

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the government indicates its intention to release the proposed Canadian securities act. This marks a step towards a long-standing commitment to establish a Canadian securities regulator. I would like to table, for information, in both official languages, the proposed Canadian securities act, here in the House, for the benefit of all members.

I further note that the proposed act is also being distributed electronically to all members, concurrent with its public release.

The proposed act will be the foundation for the creation of a national Canadian securities regulator. The proposed act reflects the input of 10 participating provinces and territories, and the government invites the remaining provinces to join the initiative.

The government has also referred the proposed act to the Supreme Court of Canada for its opinion on the following question: Is the annexed proposed Canadian securities act within the legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada? Should there be a favourable ruling received by the Supreme Court, the Government of Canada intends to introduce, for the adoption of Parliament, a securities act, which would then, of course, go through the normal parliamentary legislative process.

\* \* \*

• (1535)

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 68 petitions.

\* \* \*

### CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to present to this House, in both official languages, a document from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that indicates that at the end of fiscal 2009-10, CFIA inspection staff has increased by a net total of 538 members since this government was formed in 2006. That is an 11% increase.

### Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology regarding the main estimates for 2010-11.

### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eleventh report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[English]

In accordance with its order of reference of Wednesday, March 3, 2010, the committee has considered Vote 5—House of Commons, under Parliament, and Vote 15—Chief Electoral Officer, under Privy Council, in the main estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, less the amount voted in interim supply, and reports the same.

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present today, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on International Trade in relation to the Canada-United States agreement on government procurement.

\* \* \*

### PROTECTING VICTIMS FROM SEX OFFENDERS ACT

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (for the Minister of Public Safety):** moved that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as per the notice of motion that you have just read, which was presented to the House on April 19, I move, seconded by my colleague from Hull—Aylmer, that the first report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages be concurred in.

This short report contains a motion moved by our colleague, the member for Rivière-du-Nord. It is asking the government, specifically the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to introduce a bill regarding the application of the Official Languages Act to Air Canada, its subsidiaries and partners so that the committee may study the bill this spring. That is the essence of this report. The committee felt that this matter was urgent enough to encourage the government to introduce such a bill this spring so that it can be studied in committee.

*Routine Proceedings*

This is very timely. My colleagues all know that yesterday the official languages commissioner, an officer of Parliament, tabled his fourth report, which at times is quite critical of the government. The report refers to the laissez-faire approach by the Treasury Board Secretariat, which has a key role in the government's official languages policy. The Treasury Board Secretariat is supposed to play a leadership role for the government when it comes to language policy but seems to have completely abandoned the job. Among other things, the report also mentioned the difficulties experienced by certain official language minority community organizations.

But I want to return to last year's report, which referred in particular to Air Canada and recommended that the government take immediate action to introduce an appropriate bill.

A bit of the historical background might help people understand why the situation is so urgent.

Air Canada used to be a crown corporation, but in 1988 it was privatized. At the time, its linguistic obligations were maintained by Parliament, which even specified a little later, in 2000, that these obligations applied as well to Air Canada subsidiaries and any airlines it acquired.

In 2003, Air Canada was forced to seek protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act and underwent a restructuring process. We all know how that turned out. The restructuring resulted in a regulatory vacuum regarding Air Canada's linguistic obligations because ACE Aviation Holdings Inc. took over 75% ownership of the company. In addition, some of its former subsidiaries, specifically Air Canada Jazz and Aeroplan, became limited partnerships, responsible henceforth to ACE and not Air Canada. As a result, Air Canada Jazz, for example, could say it was not subject to the Official Languages Act.

Three times Canadian governments tried to make legislative changes spelling out the linguistic obligations of Air Canada and other subsidiaries of ACE, but every time the bills died on the order paper.

• (1540)

The first bill was introduced in 2005 by then minister Jean Lapierre. It died on the order paper. In 2006, another bill was introduced under the new government by the minister who is now the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Then another bill was tabled in 2007, so far as I remember. Three attempts were made, therefore, to clarify the situation. None were successful, though, all of them dying on the order paper.

In 2007, the situation became even more complicated because ACE, the umbrella company, liquidated Air Canada Jazz and Aeroplan shares. As I mentioned, the two former subsidiaries are now held independently by two separate income trusts. Air Canada Jazz and Aeroplan are therefore no longer either Air Canada subsidiaries or even companies whose shares are held by the majority shareholder in Air Canada. The situation has therefore become even more complicated and the regulatory vacuum has worsened. That is why it is so urgent to take quick action.

As I mentioned, the Commissioner of Official Languages commented on this last year in his report—I think an entire chapter was devoted to it—and specifically recommended that the govern-

ment bring forward new legislation to clarify this situation and ensure that Air Canada, its subsidiaries and partners—that is, any companies and individuals with whom it may contract to provide services—must meet all linguistic obligations that would normally apply.

People have often wondered if Air Canada should continue to be subject to these obligations.

• (1545)

[*English*]

On April 13 when representatives of Air Canada came before committee they hinted at that matter. One of the representatives had been with Air Canada since 1989 and therefore had a very complete history of the corporation. She was asked if back then Air Canada had in any way, shape or form expressed any reservations that the linguistic obligations of serving the Canadian travelling public in both English and French would apply to it at the moment it became a privatized corporation. She clearly responded that was not the case.

At the time of privatization it was quite clear that Air Canada would continue to have the responsibility of offering service in both English and French to the Canadian travelling public and travellers coming to Canada from abroad. Air Canada accepted that because it goes willy-nilly with a corporation that would carry the name Air Canada.

My colleague from Rivière-du-Nord presented this motion which was supported by all parties. I would hope that all parties would support the adoption of this report, because it is important that Parliament send a clear signal of its will to see the government introduce legislation. It is also important to send a clear signal to Air Canada that we are serious about its obligations that flow from as far back as 1988, the time of privatization, and before.

[*Translation*]

I would like to quickly address another subject. The Commissioner of Official Languages promised to help the committee improve the bill if necessary. I also asked the minister responsible if he could argue in favour of sending it to committee before second reading. This would give the committee some latitude and capacity for action that it would not otherwise have.

The Commissioner of Official Languages and the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, when he appeared before the committee, recognized that overall, the committee works very well and is responsible. I therefore urge the government to seriously think about sending us this bill before second reading, so that we may examine it critically and constructively.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier for introducing this motion in the House. That motion had previously been proposed by the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord. The House has been debating this issue for a long time, in fact since 2005, as the hon. member pointed out.

Does the member find that the Conservative government is sitting on this bill and is not doing anything because bilingualism is not important to it? Is that the problem, or is it because this bill could divide Canadians?

*Routine Proceedings*

● (1550)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, two years ago, I would have answered that the Conservative government seemed as quick as the previous Liberal government to act, considering that something needs to be done. However, for the past two years we have been hoping for a bill that is not coming. Therefore, it is important that the committee make a decision. And I hope that the House will also do so. If that is the will of this House, then it should ask the government to introduce a bill. We hope that the government will quickly comply with that wish, so that we can deal with this issue, because it is long overdue.

I want to thank my colleagues from all the parties, particularly the member for Rivière-du-Nord and the member for Acadie—Bathurst, who both sit on the committee, and also other members for their critical but constructive support regarding this issue. It is a very important matter, because every year Air Canada is the target of the largest number of complaints to the Commissioner of Official Languages.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier for improving my motion, since it made it to the House of Commons.

Does my colleague believe that the lack of legislation governing bilingualism at Air Canada poses a risk? For example, passengers on an aircraft could face some danger and have to react quickly. If the staff does not speak both official languages, this could result in a chaotic situation.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, any airline in Canada is required to provide safety instructions in both languages, whether it is Air Canada, Porter or any other company. All are required to do that. That said, I agree with the hon. member that any business that uses the word “Canada” in its name, and particularly Air Canada, should meet its linguistic obligations. That was the case when Air Canada was privatized. This requirement reflects the Canadian linguistic duality.

Therefore, it is perfectly normal that the legal vacuum that has existed since Air Canada's internal restructuring be corrected. We must pass legislation to monitor ACE Inc. and its subsidiaries, and also the partners of these subsidiaries that provide services to the travelling public, and we must also ensure that the latter are well aware of their legal obligation to provide their services in English and in French.

**Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand that, in an emergency situation, the personnel must be bilingual. For example, VIA Rail experienced an emergency situation while there was a lack of French language personnel. It is French-speaking passengers who took charge during that emergency. It is the same thing with air transportation. If an emergency occurs during a flight and the staff only speaks English, then the passengers who only speak French will have a problem.

When an emergency occurs, it is really critical that the personnel on board be bilingual. I wonder if the hon. member could elaborate on this.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that Air Canada—just like VIA Rail, which has the same obligation—must ensure, first and foremost, that its passengers are taken to

destination safely. This implies the ability to communicate with passengers, with its clients, not only through videos, as is sometimes the case, but in person if an unforeseen situation occurs. This means that there must be staff members on board who speak English and French.

● (1555)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues and am pleased to have this opportunity to discuss the Standing Committee on Official Languages' first report on the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

First of all, we should understand how important Air Canada is. Including Jazz, it is a major economic catalyst that facilitates Canada's economic growth and its trade objectives. Air Canada has 28,000 employees and more than 23,000 retirees and is the largest airline in Canada. It has more than a 50% share of the domestic market and provides about a third of our international flight capacity. Its economic impact was estimated in 2009 at more than \$6 billion in direct contributions and more than \$20 billion in indirect spin-offs.

When Air Canada was a crown corporation, it was subject to the Official Languages Act. In particular, it had to serve the public in both official languages and ensure the right of employees to work in the official language of their choice. When Air Canada was privatized in 1988-89, its official language obligations were renewed under the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Other carriers also provide bilingual service on the basis of customer demand and market considerations. So far though, Air Canada is the only carrier subject to the Official Languages Act. All airlines, of course, must provide safety and security information in both official languages, as my Liberal colleague mentioned.

In 2000, the Air Canada Public Participation Act was amended to ensure that Jazz, as an Air Canada subsidiary at the time, served the public in both official languages. Air Canada sought protection under the Bankruptcy Act in 2003-04 and was subsequently restructured, but the Air Canada Public Participation Act continues to apply, including the obligation to provide bilingual service.

Similarly, any future subsidiary of Air Canada providing airline services will be bound by its official language obligations under the Air Canada Public Participation Act, as it currently stands. However, as a result of organizational restructuring, Air Canada's official language obligations do not apply to entities that are no longer part of it, such as the former Air Canada Technical Services, now known as Aveos Fleet Performance Incorporated. In addition, the Air Canada Public Participation Act does not apply to ACE Aviation Holdings Inc., which has been Air Canada's parent corporation since restructuring.

*Routine Proceedings*

Although the number of complaints is quite low in comparison with total passenger numbers, the Commissioner of Official Languages noted that Air Canada still has some challenges to meet in fulfilling its official language obligations.

As the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities said when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages in April, we must consider introducing a new bill. Although many years have passed since Air Canada became a crown corporation, and a lot of things have happened since then, Canadians still feel that Air Canada's official language obligations are important. However, before moving forward, we must ensure that we take appropriate measures and carefully examine the situation.

Even though Canada's economy has been showing solid signs of recovery, our industries are still struggling. The air industry has to deal with events that are out of its control, such as the ongoing closures of airspace over the European Union as a result of volcanic activity.

• (1600)

I think that we need to better understand the challenges the company faces in meeting its official language obligations.

After Air Canada representatives testified before the committee, we learned that Air Canada has improved its official language performance by offering comprehensive training sessions and by advertising to attract other bilingual candidates. Air Canada's testimony showed that it is committed to meeting its official language obligations under the Official Languages Act, in light of the challenges and pressures that I have mentioned.

I was also happy to learn that the Commissioner of Official Languages will conduct a detailed audit of Air Canada and its obligation to provide bilingual services to the public. I look forward to seeing the recommendations, which will no doubt be very instructive, for how Air Canada can limit the number of complaints in the future.

The member for Acadie—Bathurst shared some stories about the quality of services offered in French by Jazz.

Because Jazz is a private company under contract with Air Canada, Air Canada, under section 25 of the Official Languages Act, has the duty to ensure that services made available to the public by another organization on its behalf are provided in both official languages. However, since Jazz is not a federal institution under the Official Languages Act, the Official Languages Commissioner cannot intervene directly with Jazz but can with Air Canada, which is responsible for meeting official language requirements. In this context, the commissioner has been asked to obtain more information about the types of complaints received about Jazz.

It is important that Air Canada continue to fulfill its obligations under the Air Canada Public Participation Act and the Official Languages Act. That said, the best way to maintain and ensure progress on official language rights in the airline industry is to have a healthy, viable industry.

I would like to reaffirm our government's firm commitment to promoting and protecting official language rights in Canada. As was said in the throne speech, Canada's two official languages are an

integral part of our history and position us uniquely in the world. Using examples from the road map to Canada's linguistic duality, the throne speech indicated that our government will continue to take measures that will further strengthen Canada's francophone identity. These statements are a strong testimony to our government's commitment to official languages in Canada.

**Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by the hon. member for Saint Boniface. Her speech was very black and white. I am not sure how well she understands the issue, even though she is on the committee.

It always amazes me. The throne speech talked about bilingualism, but we still need a bill to ensure we have bilingual Supreme Court justices. This does not seem consistent with what the hon. member was saying.

The complaints have been rather weak, but even one complaint is one too many. As she said earlier, all safety instructions must be given in both English and French. However, in the event of an emergency, there is no time to play the recording that gives the safety instructions. The personnel on board must be bilingual in order to deal with an emergency.

Bills requiring that employees on all Air Canada flights be bilingual were introduced in 2005, 2006 and 2007. I think such a measure must be implemented immediately. Those people must be bilingual. We should not need a bill for this. The member said that all safety instructions should be bilingual. In that case, the staff should be bilingual too.

• (1605)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my Bloc colleague for his question.

I want to begin with a sincere response to the matter of our government's commitment and my own commitment to the Committee on Official Languages. I can assure my colleagues that our government has a firm commitment. That is why we invested \$1.1 billion in the roadmap to support official language minority communities and our country's linguistic duality. That amount is unmatched by any government in Canada's history.

Our commitment is firm. My commitment is firm. I understand this issue well. Perhaps my colleague did not hear our Liberal colleague, who answered the other question about safety instructions twice. That is already in the Act. This is the third time I have answered the question. It is already in the Act. All airlines must give safety instructions in both official languages.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Saint Boniface says that her government's commitment is firm. I happen to think that the government is firm in its resolve to shut down bilingualism because it said that the subject of bilingual Supreme Court justices was dividing Canadians.

But that is not the issue here. We are talking about Air Canada. Air Canada is responsible for providing service in both official languages. Service does not mean a tape recording. Do they plan to play a tape if a plane falls out of the sky?

*Routine Proceedings*

Jazz is not subject to the Official Languages Act. In 2006, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was the transport, infrastructure and communities minister at the time, introduced Bill C-29. Then in 2007, the same minister introduced another bill, Bill C-36. It is now 2010.

When will the government be firm and pass a bill to make Air Canada respect the Official Languages Act?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague. No matter how he shouts his question, my answer is the same.

Our government is looking at and preparing a bill, as we said in committee. We hope that bill will be introduced in the House of Commons in the fall.

I want to reiterate not only our government's firm commitment, but also that of all the Conservative government members. We all do our best to always promote both official languages in this House. It is very important to promote both English and French, and we are very proud to do so.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it was an honour for me to move this motion at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. I thank my colleague from Ottawa—Vanier for improving my motion by wanting to bring it here to the House for debate.

The problem has existed for a very long time. My colleague, Benoît Sauvageau, who is no longer a sitting member of the House, was talking about it a decade ago. People were filing complaint after complaint back then, because Air Canada did not provide service in both official languages. Now it is 2010. I have been an MP for 16 years, and we have been talking about this for 10 years. For 10 years, we have been talking about a law that would ensure that Air Canada provides service in both official languages. It is not rocket science. A bill was introduced by the then minister of transport, Jean Lapierre, on May 2, 2005, but an election was called and the bill died on the order paper. The Conservatives introduced two bills, one on October 18, 2006 and the other on December 10, 2007, but there has been nothing since then. We do not hear about this anymore. The biggest danger is that the government will do nothing.

I think it is outrageous that Air Canada does not realize that on an Air Canada Jazz flight, a recording is played to provide in flight safety instructions in French. Imagine if something bad happens. They will need a DJ to figure out what recording needs to be played next. It makes no sense. People need to be able to provide service in both official languages.

My colleague from Acadie—Bathurst can tell a few stories. He asked for something to eat on a plane and even pointed to a picture on the menu. The flight attendant kept saying, "I don't speak French", even though there was a picture right in front of her eyes. There is ill will. In my opinion, there truly is an unwillingness to enforce the legislation.

This government is also displaying bad faith since it has been doing absolutely nothing to change the situation since 2007, which is going on four years now. Does the government want us to draft the bill? We have three versions. The opposition would only need a few days to draft a bill. We could introduce it in committee. I even asked the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities about it

when he appeared before the committee. I asked him whether it would help if I moved a motion that he could present to cabinet to put pressure on the ministers and on the Prime Minister to ensure that legislation is introduced in committee as soon as possible. He answered yes on two occasions. And that is what we did. The committee has done its work and the vote was unanimous. All parties were in favour. There were no abstentions. I do not understand why nothing is happening.

I have read Air Canada's regulations, and what worries me is that Air Canada is increasingly relying on subcontractors. The subcontractors are not subject to any bilingualism laws. This means that people will not be able to receive services in French. That is worrisome. There are more and more small companies. I have nothing against subcontractors or new companies popping up in order to serve different regions. There is now an airline that can get you to Rivière-du-Loup, but you may not even be served in French. That makes absolutely no sense. In Baie-Comeau, Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec City and Montreal, services need to be in French. The same goes for Acadie—Bathurst and Moncton.

● (1610)

A Liberal member told us that it took three years to get a sign taken off the washroom door in Moncton that incorrectly said "Ne fumez pas les toilettes"—Don't smoke the toilets—in French. That is unbelievable. He saw it every weekend when he returned home. He complained every weekend to get them to change that sign, and his complaints were ignored.

I get the impression that Air Canada could not care less about what the government does here, because it is doing absolutely nothing. We are the only ones who can put pressure on Air Canada. Even Air Canada said that parliamentarians are the only ones who can change the legislation to require them to take action. Air Canada itself told us that. I have it right here in front of me.

It is not the Commissioner of Official Languages who can do so. He only has the power to conduct consultations and make recommendations. As parliamentarians, we can do something. What have we been waiting for since 2007? It would only take a small bill, three, four or five pages in length. I am convinced that the opposition parties can sit down together to draft a bill, discuss it in committee and pass it as quickly as possible, to ensure that Air Canada does its job. It is beyond comprehension that we cannot be served in our own language, especially by Air Canada, a company that the government has helped over the years and continues to help on occasion. It is a company that people are proud of. However, we are no longer served in our language.

I am infuriated every time I see that blasted little cassette with French safety instructions. Can we not find bilingual people or force Air Canada to provide their unilingual employees with real training, not just teach them to say, I don't speak French? They must learn the basic French they need to do their job well. That is what we need. We must force Air Canada to provide this training.

*Routine Proceedings*

It is not very complicated. However, the government does not have the will to do it. It does not care or is not interested. It is not a priority and never has been for the government. We see it in the issue of the bilingualism of judges, a battle that has been waged for a long time. We see it in the interest of the committee chair. We see it in many things. The government must look at this question very carefully because things will only get worse and that concerns me. Air Canada flight attendants will be increasingly unilingual Anglophones and it will be disappointing for us. This company is important here. It does manage to generate a great deal of money, but it must absolutely provide bilingual services.

I do not want the experience of VIA Rail to be repeated, even though it has since changed course. People were unable to speak their language in a crisis situation. Passengers were not told in their own language what to do. That must never happen again. The opposition is not afraid to take action and hopes that the government will do so also. That is why we presented a motion in this House. Let us take action and prepare a bill as quickly as possible.

• (1615)

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord for the motion she presented to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. I really wonder how serious the government is when it comes to bills like this.

We just heard the parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for St. Boniface. She talked about the legal notice from the court and the history of the bankruptcy in 2003. She talked about all of Air Canada's problems. When people start talking about someone's problems, it is because they are looking for excuses.

Then she said the government is firm and complies with the Official Languages Act and she was busy seeing how to introduce a bill in the House. We already had Bill C-47 in 2005, Bill C-29 from her colleague at foreign affairs, and another one, Bill C-36.

Does the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord think the government has no computers? We can all copy and paste nowadays.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. This must be taken seriously. As my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst said, when they start looking for underlying problems, it is because they do not want to act, they are on the defensive. There is no need to be on the defensive; there is a need to act quickly.

They should also stop telling the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities what a good job he is doing, how much they love him and how handsome he is. He should introduce some bills. He should move quickly on an Air Canada bill. The copy and paste method might not be the best choice, because three years have passed since the last bill. We need a solid bill forcing Air Canada, its subsidiaries and subcontractors to comply with the Official Languages Act. It is very important. We will then have full services that comply with what is said about this so-called bilingual country. At least we will have service in French in Quebec, and that is very important.

• (1620)

**Mr. Nicolas Dufour (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question relates to what my colleague said at the end of her remarks.

I cannot help but feel surprised when the Conservatives, the member for Saint Boniface in particular, tell us that the government is proactive with respect to official languages and francophone-anglophone duality.

They have one argument for Air Canada and another for Supreme Court justices. Not that I intend to get into this debate, but on the subject of Supreme Court justices, the Conservatives argue that we need competent people, as though there were no such thing as competent people who speak both languages. I wonder if the same line of reasoning will apply to flight attendants. Perhaps they will argue that there are no flight attendants in Canada who can provide bilingual service. The Conservatives are going to give us the same argument because they lack imagination. Their line of reasoning is pathetic.

I would like my colleague to comment on the member for Saint Boniface's position that the government is extremely proactive when we know that has not been the case with issues like the Olympic Games and Supreme Court justices.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Mr. Speaker, I will give a quick response. Some flight attendants are also frustrated because they are perfectly bilingual. They are doing an excellent job, but they have to work with other flight attendants who absolutely do not want to learn French and who say, flat out, "I don't speak French". It is frustrating.

It is also frustrating to see everything that is going on with bilingualism in other areas. The future is not looking very bright. As far as judges are concerned, I find it hard to believe that we cannot find a certain number of judges who speak both languages. That is almost impossible. I think we absolutely must roll up our sleeves in this House and put such important and urgent matters back on the table in order to resolve them as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the motion moved in the House by the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier. This motion was moved in the Standing Committee on Official Languages by the hon. member from Rivière-du-Renard.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** I knew she would react if I said "du-Renard" instead of "du-Nord". I did that on purpose.

This motion is important. In 1988, a private company decided to buy Air Canada, knowing that it was subject to the Official Languages Act. It knew what it was getting into when it bought Air Canada. It knew that Air Canada was subject to the Official Languages Act. Air Canada belonged to Canadian taxpayers. That was the rule then and that is the rule now.

Knowing that it was subject to the Official Languages Act, Air Canada decided to create small subsidiaries that were not subject to the Act, even though it states the contrary.



*Routine Proceedings*

What does the committee want? It wants the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to introduce a bill that would require Air Canada, its subsidiaries and its partners to comply with the Official Languages Act. It is not asking for much. We have been calling for such legislation since 2005. The previous Liberal government, in the person of the hon. Jean Lapierre, introduced the first bill, Bill C-47.

In 2006, the Minister of Foreign Affairs introduced Bill C-29. In 2007, the same minister introduced Bill C-36. Today, the government is claiming that it is considering how to draft a bill. It is wondering how to draft a bill when the Standing Committee on Official Languages has been talking about this for months.

The Commissioner of Official Languages said he was disappointed at how long it was taking to pass new legislation, and he is concerned about the ongoing legal vacuum. He says that the new bill must clearly and adequately protect the language rights of travellers who do business with Air Canada, but also the rights of the company's employees.

In 2006, the commissioner appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages to talk about Bill C-29. He was worried about what would become of the language rights of travellers and the rights of Air Canada employees to work in their own language in a new entity of the Air Canada group.

He talked about a new bill that would protect those rights, and he said the bill should clearly and specifically name the entities that would be subject to the Official Languages Act. The bill should give the government the power to require by law or order that any other entity that might be created in future as a result of restructuring also be subject to the act. It should also provide for imposing language obligations on any entity that replaces a named entity, such as Air Canada or Jazz, and provides air and related services. The new bill should specify that Jazz and Aveos are subject to the Official Languages Act.

The year is 2010. On March 11 this year I was on Air Canada Jazz flight AC8742. Air Canada masquerades as Jazz to cover its tracks. It leaves Montreal for Bathurst. No one should tell me that Montreal is not French. And Bathurst, counting the Acadian peninsula, is 80% French. A local man was arriving home from Fort McMurray, Alberta. He asked for a glass of water and the flight attendant replied, "I don't understand you." Is that normal? I complained to Air Canada about this incident.

On March 29, I was on flight AC8739 leaving Bathurst, New Brunswick, for Montreal, Quebec. The same flight attendant was on duty. I asked her for a glass of orange juice and I got a glass of water.

●(1625)

It seems to me that "verre de jus d'orange" and "orange juice" sound similar.

I filed another complaint with Air Canada and with the Commissioner of Official Languages. I learned that Jazz does not fall directly under the Official Languages Act, but Air Canada does. Air Canada's response came from Jazz, which told me that the attendant had taken tests and that, according to their information, she had passed. My goodness, when someone does not know the

difference between a glass of orange juice and a glass of water, there is a big problem.

This becomes serious when there is an emergency on board. Which cassette will they put in the player? Which cassette will they put on when the plane is going down? We have talked about this for years and years. It is time for the government to take action. The government told us today that it has a firm position on the Official Languages Act but the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages told us earlier this week that passing bills on bilingualism divides Canadians. This is not a government that respects our country's Official Languages Act. It is shameful.

Earlier, the member for Rivière-du-Nord said that when one is aboard an airplane and goes to the trouble of showing a picture of the meal one wants, only to be met with "I don't speak French" from the attendant, that is a big problem. There is a lack of will on the part of Air Canada because the government lets it do whatever it wants. The company is subject to the Official Languages Act, and there should be a law enabling authorities to ticket the company for violating the Act. The police do not tell people who break the speed limit that they are subject to the highways act and must therefore drive at 100 km/h. They issue tickets and \$140 fines. The same goes for Air Canada. There should be ticketing provisions to enforce those laws.

Earlier, the member for Saint Boniface said that the member for Acadie—Bathurst was shouting. I want to say that we have no choice but to shout because the people on the other side of the House do not hear or understand us. That is the problem. We have to raise our voices to make them realize that what is going on is not right.

That became clear again on Tuesday, when the Commissioner of Official Languages said in his report that the government has a laissez-faire attitude toward official languages. The government has the nerve to stand up in the House of Commons and say that its position on official languages is firm. Instead, it should have said that it is firmly opposed to the Official Languages Act and to other laws passed in this House over the last 41 years. The government could not care less about those laws and does not respect them.

They talk about how they are spending \$1.5 billion here and \$2 billion there, but they are breaking every one of this country's laws and could not care less. That is what I call laissez-faire. We are not asking for much. All we want is for the government to enforce the law. How can anyone stand up in the House and fail to ensure compliance with a law passed in Parliament by a majority of the members of the House of Commons? That is all we want to know. Air Canada is subject to the Official Languages Act. Air Canada belonged to taxpayers. People bought it, and then things got out of control. They have to respect the Official Languages Act.

●(1630)

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to give the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst a chance to catch his breath, as I really enjoy listening to his unique accent, I wonder if he checked to make sure his glass of water was perhaps not vodka, since it is clear and has no odour or taste, to mix with his orange juice.

*Routine Proceedings*

All joking aside, does he not think that one possible solution, especially in Quebec and in his region, would be for Bill 101 to apply to all federal agencies, at least until Quebec becomes a sovereign country?

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows my opinion on the matter. We are talking about official languages. All airline passengers, whether anglophone or francophone, should be able to be served in both official languages.

Regarding the legislation for Supreme Court justices, the Conservatives just said that bilingualism divides people. It divides people when division is promoted, but it is not division that we are after. We want service in our language.

Canada has two founding peoples and they both deserve respect. That is all we are asking for. When we board a plane, we do not want to hear a pre-recorded message. We want to see a human being who can speak to us in both of Canada's official languages.

As a member of Parliament, the only thing I am asking for is respect. We have a big problem when both of Canada's official languages cannot be respected, and this has been the case for quite some time now.

**Mr. Robert Vincent (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech. I think that you enjoyed his speech as well, Mr. Speaker. He spoke about French and how important it is that both official languages be respected here in Canada. I know that French is important to you, Mr. Speaker.

And along those same lines, I believe that any company that flies over Canadian territory must have flight attendants that speak both languages. If they are in a supposedly bilingual country, they should be subject to the same law as Air Canada. Any subsidiary or any agency that transports people should also be subject to it and should be bilingual in a bilingual country.

What does my colleague think about requiring that every carrier on Canadian territory be bilingual? And when I talk about carrier, it could just as easily be trains, planes or any other means of transportation.

• (1635)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I like the member's question. For example, Canadian National imposed bilingualism in the rail system. That did not divide Canadians. Canadian National leaves Halifax and arrives in Vancouver, and that unites, not divides, people. Those who are saying that we cannot do this or that are the ones dividing the country. And then they wonder why Quebec wants to separate. It is this type of thing that pushes people to separate, that makes them want to leave. Instead of fighting amongst ourselves, we need to respect one another and accept that there were two founding peoples in our country and we need to respect them. The day we do that, I can guarantee that things will be better in our beautiful country, one of the most beautiful countries in the world.

I do not tip my hat to the Conservatives for the way they are running the show. I can guarantee that.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague. He is very persuasive. I would like him to talk to us about safety on airplanes. Imagine, for example, that a francophone is travelling on Air Canada, or one of its subsidiaries,

and, God forbid, there is an accident. If there is an accident and the flight attendants do not speak French, will they save the anglophones? Will the francophones be left in the cabin? I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about that.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I have been on the Standing Committee on Official Languages for a long time. There was a time when instructions were not even offered in French on airplanes. We had to fight at the Standing Committee on Official Languages, to be able to read the instructions, because they said that it was not necessary. They are now available on airplanes. We had to fight in committee to get those instructions.

How does it work now? All of a sudden, the plane drops, they find the tape and play the recording. Or all of a sudden, the plane hits some turbulence, and the flight attendant looks for a different tape. Yes, they have to play a tape. That is ridiculous. You have to hope nothing bad ever happens on the airplane.

But it goes beyond that. There is legislation, and it must be complied with. Whether or not an accident occurs, there is legislation, and they are subject to the Official Languages Act. All we are asking is that the law be respected. Why create laws if—

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to the order made on Friday, May 14 the question is deemed put and a recorded division is deemed requested.

Call in the members.

*And the bells having rung:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** This vote will be deferred until the end of government orders today.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Don Valley West, Veterans Affairs; the hon. member for Halifax, Maternal and Child Health.

The House will now resume with the remaining business under routine proceedings and we are under the rubric motions. Presenting petitions. The hon. member for Kitchener—Waterloo.

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

**Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by residents of my riding of Kitchener—Waterloo and others across Waterloo region. The petitioners express concerns about genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, and call on the Government of Canada to develop a national strategy in this regard.

CAFFEINATED BEVERAGES

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is signed by dozens of Manitobans. It is a call against Health Canada's authorization of caffeine in all soft drinks. Health Canada made an announcement on March 19 that beverage companies would now be allowed to add up to 75% of the caffeine allowed in the most highly caffeinated colas to all soft drinks. The soft drinks have been designed and marketed toward children for generations. Canadians already have concerns over children drinking coffee and colas as they acknowledge caffeine is an addictive stimulant. It is difficult enough for parents to control the amount of sugar, artificial sweeteners and other additives that their children consume, including caffeine from colas.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to reverse Health Canada's new rule allowing caffeine in all soft drinks and not follow the deregulation policies of the United States and other countries at the sacrifice of the health of Canadian children and pregnant women.

• (1640)

#### AIR PASSENGERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition, also signed by dozens of Canadians, calls upon the Parliament of Canada to adopt Canada's first air passengers' bill of rights.

In only six months Barack Obama and his transportation secretary, Ray LaHood, have rocketed ahead of Canada by penalizing airlines \$27,500 per passenger for tarmac delays over three hours and Mr. LaHood recently charged Southwest Airlines \$120,000 for over-booked flights. The Canadian bill of rights would take care of the concerns of passengers.

Once again, the petitioners call upon the government to introduce Canada's first air passengers' bill of rights.

[Translation]

#### HAITI

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition signed by dozens of Canadian citizens who live on both sides of the river in the National Capital Region, that is, in the Outaouais and in Ontario. They are calling on the government to create a special immigration measure allowing Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor family members who were personally and directly affected by the earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010. They are also asking the government to show more flexibility in its definition of the people who can be included in the family class, particularly concerning age.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 184 and 189.

[Text]

Question No. 184—**Ms. Chris Charlton:**

With respect to the new review mechanism for the RCMP outlined in Budget 2010: (a) what will the mandate of the new organization be; (b) how will the organization be structured; (c) how will the \$8 million allocated to the new

#### Routine Proceedings

organization be spent over the next two years, broken down by year and type of expenditure; (d) will the new organization have the ability to subpoena documents and witnesses; (e) will the new organization have the ability to investigate other law-enforcement agencies; (f) will the new organization have the ability to share information with other oversight agencies, and if so, which ones; (g) will the new organization have the ability to independently launch investigations into any aspect of the RCMP's activities; (h) will the new organization have the ability to oversee RCMP intelligence activities; (i) what internal and external consultations have taken place on the structure and powers of the new organization; and (j) how will the new organization relate to the existing RCMP complaints commission?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP, is a strong, accountable organization which can continue to serve and protect Canadians for generations to come.

Although the funding of \$8 million over two years for a new civilian review and complaints commission for the RCMP was announced in Budget 2010, the Government of Canada continues its work on the proposal for establishing the new body, including consulting with provinces/territories and key stakeholders. Once the government finalizes the proposal, information on its mandate, organizational structure and responsibilities will be available.

Question No. 189—**Hon. Jack Layton:**

With respect to the Air Passenger Assessment and Security Program: (a) what is the proposed description of the Program; (b) what is the lead department; (c) who is the lead Minister; (d) at what stage is the development of the Program; (e) what is the timeline for the public release of the Program; (f) who has been consulted in the development of the Program; and (g) what relationship does the Program have to the existing "no-fly" list?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while funding was provided in budget 2009 for the development of the air passenger assessment program, no decision has been made on moving forward with a new program at this time.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 176, 177, 182, 183, 185, 186, 188, 192 and 195 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 176—**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:**

With respect to the advertising to promote the government's Economic Action Plan, following the introduction of the 2009-2010 Budget, how much was spent in 2009-2010 on advertisements carried by: (a) radio stations belonging to the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada; (b) community television channels; and (c) media belonging to the Association de la presse francophone?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*

**Question No. 177—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to nanotechnology: (a) what are the total federal funds spent and committed for expenditure, for each of the fiscal years from 2005-2006 through 2008-2009 inclusive, broken down by department and criterion; (b) who are the recipients of these funds; (c) to what purpose was funding for nanotechnology used by institutions and departments, including the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, Natural Resources Canada, Industry Canada, and the National Research Council of Canada; (d) what were the amounts allocated to test health, safety, and environmental impacts of nanoproducts and nanomaterials; (e) what is the list of nanomaterials currently in the market; (f) which of these have been extensively tested to determine possible effects on human and environmental health and safety and, of those tested, which, if any, raised concern or required mitigation or prevention; (g) how many assessments on nanomaterial notification packages have been submitted to the New Substances Notification Program to date and (i) of these notification packages, have there been any nanomaterials rejected for entry into Canada, (ii) have there been any conditions of use placed based on assessment results and, if so, how many; (h) did the government ever request notifiers (companies or individuals) providing nanomaterial notification packages to submit additional toxicity data above and beyond what is requested in the schedules of the New Substances Notification Regulations and, if so, did this result in refusal of entry into the Canadian market or justify use of material with conditions; and (i) what information, notifications or advisories have been issued to ensure the safe discovery, production, manufacturing, use and disposal of nanomaterials and nano-enabled products, (i) when, (ii) by which departments?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 182—Ms. Chris Charlton:**

With respect to mental health support in prisons and other detention facilities operated by Correctional Services Canada (CSC): (a) what progress has been made since 2004 in the implementation of the CSC Mental Health Strategy; (b) what plans are in place for the operation of the Community Mental Health and Institutional Mental Health initiatives over the next five years; (c) what plans are in place to act on the recommendations in the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator; (d) what is the total amount of funds allocated to all types of mental health support by CSC for the upcoming fiscal year, broken down by program type; (e) what percentage of overall CSC funds are allocated to mental health support for the upcoming fiscal year; (f) what percentage of overall CSC funds are allocated to security, risk management and control for the upcoming fiscal year; (g) how many offenders have access to intermediate mental healthcare units in the region in which they are incarcerated; (h) what processes are in place to review the effectiveness of existing mental health programs and identify gaps in services; (i) what recommendations have arisen from such reviews in the last two years; (j) what progress has been made in conducting an independent review of long-term segregation cases; (k) what progress has been made in the creation of a measurable set of performance indicators to evaluate CSC's response to offender mental health concerns; (l) what guidelines does CSC provide to operational staff on the use of segregation placements with offenders who have mental health concerns; (m) what progress has the National Population Management Committee made in reviewing specific cases of the use of lengthy periods in segregation and treatment alternatives for offenders with mental health concerns; (n) what progress has been made on the creation of a national strategy for managing chronic self-harming behaviours; (o) what percentage of offenders who chronically self-harm have clinical management plans in place; (p) what is the definition of a clinical management and intervention plan for offenders with mental health concerns used by CSC; (q) which section of CSC is responsible for the coordination and oversight of clinical management plans; (r) how many regions have specialized, dedicated units to manage chronically self-harming offenders; (s) how many self-harm incidents appear in CSC's internal situation reporting system for the past five years, broken down by year, gender, and region; (t) what are CSC's estimates of prison population over the next ten years; (u) what percentage of offenders does CSC estimate deal with diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health issues; (v) in 2009, how many hours did CSC staff psychologists spend conducting risk assessments (including security reclassifications, conditional release reviews, and segregation reviews) and what did this work cost; (w) in 2009, how many hours did CSC staff psychologists spend in clinical intervention, evaluation and treatment of offender's mental health needs, and what did this work cost; (x) over the past five years, what was the average length of stay for offenders at Regional Treatment Centres; and (y) over the past five years, how many offenders were discharged from a Regional Treatment Centre and subsequently placed in segregation within the same year?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 183—Ms. Chris Charlton:**

With respect to Correctional Service Canada's drug interdiction activities: (a) what does CSC estimate is the success rate of drug interdiction over the past ten years; (b) what is the capital expenditure on equipment related to drug interdiction over the past five years, broken down by year; (c) what is the total expenditure on drug treatment programs for offenders over the past five years, broken down by year; (d) what is the expected spending on drug interdiction for the fiscal year 2010-2011; (e) what internal assessments, if any, exist regarding the efficacy of CSC's drug interdiction activities; (f) what internal assessments, if any, exist regarding the efficacy of CSC's drug interdiction equipment; and (g) what are the conclusions or recommendations of these assessments?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 185—Ms. Chris Charlton:**

With respect to tasers and other conducted energy weapons used by the RCMP, over the past five years: (a) what is the number and nature of incidents in which a conducted energy weapon was used, broken down by year; (b) what was the type of use (i.e., push stun, probe, threat of use, de-holster, etc.); (c) what was the number of instances medical care was required after use; (d) what was the nature of medical concerns or conditions after use; (e) what was the number of RCMP members and instructors trained in the use of conducted energy weapons; (f) what was the number of RCMP members and instructors that successfully passed training and number that were unsuccessful at training; and (g) what was the number of RCMP members and instructors that successfully re-certified and number that were unsuccessful at re-certification?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 186—Hon. Jack Layton:**

With regard to communications policies for scientists for each department, agency and crown corporation: (a) what is, in full, the current communications policy for scientists, (i) when did that policy come into effect, (ii) who is the lead communications contact person, (iii) at what point does that person need to contact a central agency; (b) what was, in full, the previous communications policy; and (c) what government wide policies exist, (i) when did those policies come into effect, (ii) who is the lead for the implementation and monitoring of these policies?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 188—Hon. Jack Layton:**

With respect to the prison farms program currently operated by Correctional Services Canada (CSC): (a) what plans exist for the use and/or sale of the land currently used by CSC for prison farms over the next five years; (b) what is the estimated value of the land currently used by the prison farms program; (c) what, if any, internal or external consultations have taken place about the sale of the land currently used by the program; (d) how many jobs will be directly and indirectly affected by the closure of the program; (e) how many food banks will be affected by the closure of the program; (f) what internal CSC and external third-party evaluations exist on the efficacy of the program; and (g) how were these evaluations considered in the decision to terminate the program

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 192—Ms. Olivia Chow:**

With respect to the 2010 G20 summit: (a) what is the expected cost of the summit to the federal government; (b) what financial analyses or studies have been done on the impact the summit will have on small businesses; (c) what compensation will be provided to small businesses and tourism event organizers for costs directly related to the summit; (d) what compensation will be provided to the City of Toronto for costs directly related to the summit; (e) what were the costs incurred in the past by Canadian host cities of similar summits; (f) what compensation has been provided by the federal government in the past to host cities of similar summits; and (g) will the federal government post bonds upfront to cover costs incurred as a direct result of the summit to (i) the City of Toronto, (ii) small businesses, (iii) tourism event organizers?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 195—Mr. Glenn Thibeault:**

With respect to full body scanners: (a) what is the approximate cost of each unit; (b) what is the total cost for all scanners purchased or slated to be purchased between 2009 and 2013; (c) what is the average cost of installing a full body scanner in an airport; (d) what proportion of passengers screened in Canadian airports is expected to be scanned by full body scanners; (e) how many passengers does this amount to in a year; (f) what is the average time needed to scan a single passenger using a full body scanner; (g) what is the average time needed to scan a passenger using conventional security measures; (h) how many Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) screening officers have been trained to operate the scanners since 2009; (i) how many CATSA screening officers will be trained to operate the scanners once they are fully implemented; (j) what kind of training do CATSA screening officers receive before operating the scanners; (k) what was the number of CATSA screening officers and instructors that successfully received certification and the number that were unsuccessful since 2009; (l) what internal assessments, if any, exist regarding the efficacy of full body scanners; (m) what are the conclusions or recommendations of these assessments; and (n) what is the number and nature of complaints to CATSA pertaining to the use of full body scanners since 2009?

(Return tabled)

[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.

\* \* \*

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE****PRISON FARM PROGRAM**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Ajax—Pickering.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant Standing Order 52 I am requesting an emergency debate on the closure of the prison farm program. Several irreplaceable components of the farm operation are set to be sold and dispersed by June 2010. These include a heritage dairy herd, with prize-winning genetics, at Frontenac Institution, and a prized dairy herd at Westmorland Institution. The auction date for a gold standard herd at Rockwood Institution is also imminent. Once these herds have been dispersed, they can never be re-established.

In short, if these herds are allowed to be sold, it would mean the end of the prison farm program, one of the most successful programs we have had in the country in rehabilitating inmates. I have had the occasion to visit all the nation's prisons farms to meet with correctional officers who have told their stories about how these programs transform these men. The opportunity to work with animals and animal husbandry is something that is extremely effective and the leading edge of rehabilitation, yet the current

government is closing the program, a program that it says costs \$4 million and yet will provide no costing for it.

At a time when prison costs are soaring and the government is spending literally billions on prisons, it seems backward, in the extreme, to be cutting or axing a program that is desperately needed to help rehabilitate those who are about to re-enter. Given the fact that over 90% of inmates will leave prison and will re-enter, how they rehabilitate is essential.

When I talk to correctional officials, they tell me that working over 30 years in the program they have never seen a single instance of violent recidivism. I have looked into the eyes of men who talk to me about how this program has transformed their lives. I think it is extremely important that the House has a debate before the Conservatives shut down a program that has been this effective for more than 100 years.

• (1645)

**SPEAKER'S RULING**

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his remarks and for the letter he sent to the Speaker earlier today. I regret to inform him that I do not believe his request meets the requirements of the provisions for an emergency debate, so I will decline the request at this time.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT****SPEAKER'S RULING**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-9, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are 62 motions in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-9. The motions will be grouped as follows.

[Translation]

Group No. 1 is Motions 1, 2 and 16 to 62; Group No. 2 is Motions 3 to 15.

The voting patterns for the motions within each group are available at the table and the Chair will remind the House of each pattern at the time of voting.

[English]

I shall now propose Motions Nos. 1, 2 and 16 to 62 in Group No. 1 to the House.

• (1655)

**MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT**

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 96.

Motion No. 2

*Government Orders*

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 97.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 16

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2149.

Motion No. 17

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2150.

Motion No. 18

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2151.

Motion No. 19

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2152.

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2153.

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2154.

Motion No. 22

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2155.

Motion No. 23

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2156.

Motion No. 24

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2157.

Motion No. 25

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2158.

Motion No. 26

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2159.

Motion No. 27

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2160.

Motion No. 28

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2161.

Motion No. 29

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2162.

Motion No. 30

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2163.

Motion No. 31

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2164.

Motion No. 32

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2165.

Motion No. 33

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2166.

Motion No. 34

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2167.

Motion No. 35

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2168.

Motion No. 36

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2169.

Motion No. 37

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2170.

Motion No. 38

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2171.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 39

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2185.

Motion No. 40

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2186.

Motion No. 41

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2187.

Motion No. 42

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2188.

Motion No. 43

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2189.

Motion No. 44

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2190.

Motion No. 45

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2191.

Motion No. 46

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2192.

Motion No. 47

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2193.

Motion No. 48

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2194.

Motion No. 49

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2195.

Motion No. 50

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2196.

Motion No. 51

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2197.

Motion No. 52

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2198.

Motion No. 53

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2199.

Motion No. 54

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2200.

Motion No. 55

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2201.

Motion No. 56

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2202.

Motion No. 57

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2203.

Motion No. 58

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2204.

Motion No. 59

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2205.

Motion No. 60

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2206.

Motion No. 61

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2207.

Motion No. 62

That Bill C-9 be amended by deleting Clause 2208.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on the motions before us today. Mr. Speaker, as you just read out, there are 62 motions and now I find myself in the position where 49 of them are grouped into one slot of debate. I only have 10 minutes to speak this afternoon, so I will restrict my speech to two clauses in particular, clauses 96 and 97 of the bill, and I will let my colleagues speak to some of the others.

Clauses 96 and 97 of Bill C-9 before us today must be deleted because they pave the way for a massive increase in the air travellers security charge, the ATSC. Together they form just one of six pieces of business that have absolutely no place in this bill.

The omnibus budget bill is almost 900 pages long. It includes 24 parts with more than 2,200 sections. It is subject to one debate at second reading, another at third reading in each house, plus scrutiny by only one committee in each house. Those limitations mean that members of this House cannot possibly do justice to the varied, far-reaching and fundamental changes proposed in this legislation.

*Government Orders*

The inescapable conclusion is that the government is trying to bury deep in its budget legislation all manner of nefarious, unwise and unpopular pet projects. In bundling these unrelated measures into just one bill, the government's propensity to stifle debate and silence its critics reaches a new low. The huge and indefensible increases to the air travellers security charge included in this omnibus bill is another example of bad public policy being rushed through the House with as little scrutiny as possible.

Canada's security charge was extraordinarily high even before this proposed increase. In 2008 the Air Transport Association of Canada conducted a survey to rank the security fees charged by 175 governments at airports worldwide and found that Canada's security charge was the second highest, second only to that in the Netherlands. It is widely believed that with these increases we will have the dubious distinction of having the highest costs in the world and yet there is absolutely no evidence that we will be any safer.

The international fee alone is set to increase a whopping 52%, from \$17 to \$25.91. In the United States, the international security charge is \$5. It is a simple question. On what basis can the government justify imposing the highest costs in the world on Canadian air travellers? What can possibly justify a 50% increase in the air travellers security charge when the existing tax is already yielding a surplus?

Let me add that while it seems clear the existing security charge yields a surplus, we cannot know for certain what is happening to those tax dollars because the audited information that Canadians are entitled to is simply not available. The last report by the Auditor General on the security charge dates back to 2004-05. The lack of accountability for taxpayer dollars is unacceptable.

However, the Air Transport Association of Canada has conducted its own study in the absence of audited information. Let me quote from ATAC president and CEO John McKenna's recent testimony before the Standing Committee on Finance:

We looked at the numbers supplied by CATSA [the Canadian Air Transportation Security Agency] and Statistics Canada.

Our estimates are based on the 48 million passengers screened by CATSA in 89 Canadian airports during fiscal year 2008-09. The numbers put forth by CATSA concur with Statistics Canada reports of 108 million passengers emplaned or deplaned during calendar year 2008, with some 54 million departing passengers, CATSA's clientele. Statistics Canada indicates that 62.9% of these passengers were on domestic flights, 19.5% were on transborder flights, and 17.6% were on international flights.

Based on these numbers, it becomes a simple exercise to estimate the revenues generated by the ATSC [the air travellers security charge]. The spreadsheet that we handed out suggests that revenues generated by the ATSC well exceed CATSA appropriation, even before the increase [in the ATSC]. Based on these calculations, [what the ATSC collected in 2008-09] more than \$70 million was retained as general revenue by the Government of Canada and not used to fund CATSA.

Once the increases in the ATSC have been factored in, and considering the budget allocation for CATSA of \$1.5 billion over the next five years, the revenues generated by the ATSC will produce an annual surplus of over \$330 million.

That is 330 million taxpayers' dollars every year for five years quite unaccounted for.

• (1700)

Where is the surplus? Is the surplus being quietly moved to general revenue? Why is the government imposing a massive tax hike on the travelling public when the fund is already in surplus?

How does the government intend to spend the burgeoning surplus it is now asking Canadians to finance? Is the government seriously trying to tell Canadians that it has delivered a no new taxes budget when it in fact includes a massive and unnecessary tax increase for the travelling public?

CATSA is responsible for implementing new security measures but does not do any threat assessment whatsoever. That is the purview of either the RCMP or CSIS. How much of the security charge generated revenues go to Transport Canada? How much goes to the RCMP or CSIS? Canadians have a right to know. As the Air Transport Association of Canada pointed out to the Standing Committee on Finance, Canadians do not need more layers of security; they need more effective security, better security.

Is the government simply going to increase the security charge every time a security loophole is discovered, or is it going to make air travel safer for Canadians by taking a comprehensive look at security procedures? Will security measures simply accumulate, or will the government look to developing and implementing a more efficient single step screening process aimed at improving security, reducing the number of screening stages and the time and personnel required to process passengers?

Anyone who has travelled by air knows that the inefficiency of current security practices is a serious problem, but the government continues to take a piecemeal approach to security, adding ad hoc security measures in response to isolated incidents. New Democrats believe that Canadian aviation security planning should include a comprehensive security assessment that is informed by past incidents but also looks forward. We must identify sensitive areas that could be subject to attack and implement proper security measures and response procedures to address these threats.

We must review our response systems and airport architectural design to allow security to efficiently and effectively deal with security threats with a lesser impact on airport operations.

We must develop better coordination and information sharing between intelligence agencies and airport security that would allow security personnel to actively search for potential threats and prepare response scenarios while at the same time protecting privacy rights.

Canadians want the government to develop a security system that truly protects travellers, that is designed specifically for the Canadian context, and that reflects our own needs in light of the security threat in this country.

*Government Orders*

As well, CATSA's performance must be measured against agencies that perform the same work in other jurisdictions. How does CATSA's performance stack up from an economic perspective? Are we getting value for our money? If we are, how does the government know that? What evidence has been gathered to evaluate CATSA's performance and where can the public get that information? Where is the public review of CATSA and its finances that the government promised last year?

Rather than visit massive tax increases on Canadian travellers for little or no discernible benefit, the government would have been well advised to support the private member's bill introduced by my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona. The act to provide certain rights to air passengers included a passengers' bill of rights and introduced measures on compensation for over-booked flights, unreasonable tarmac delays, cancelled flights, the concern for late and misplaced luggage, and addressed all-inclusive pricing by airline companies in their advertising.

The legislation was inspired by a European Union law where overbookings have dropped significantly. Air Canada is already operating under the European laws for its flights in Europe. Why should an Air Canada customer receive better treatment in Europe than in Canada?

The bill of rights would have ensured that passengers were kept informed of flight changes, whether they were delays or cancellations. The new rules would have been posted in the airports, and airlines would have had to inform passengers of their rights and the process to file for compensation.

These are the types of changes Canadian consumers want from their government. Instead, we have a tax hike with no commensurate increase in safety, security or convenience.

The government is asking us to approve a massive tax increase when it promised there would be none. The government offers no rationale for that increase, no explanation of why we should move from the second highest cost security charge jurisdiction on the planet to the first. There appears to be a huge surplus in the security charge fund, but we cannot be sure exactly how much, where it goes, or how it is spent.

Canadians have no idea whether the agency responsible for their safety operates efficiently or effectively. Canadians are being asked to pay more with no indication of better service. All this is buried in a budget bill that, because of the government's almost paranoid fear of scrutiny, will not see the oversight and review that Canadians need and want.

It is for all of those reasons that I was proud, on behalf of the entire NDP caucus, to move the deletion of all sections in Bill C-9 that deal with the air travellers security charge.

• (1705)

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for trying to deal with a whole grouping of report stage motions.

The point here and I am sure we are going to hear a lot about it, is that the budget implementation bill, Bill C-9, includes a large number of items which were not in the budget speech nor in the

budget document itself. There were some concerns expressed at the presentation the finance officials gave on Bill C-9. The air travellers security charge was one as was the elimination of the need for environmental assessments. The one that caught my eye, and I know the finance committee looked at it, deals with the possibility of privatizing some of AECL's assets.

In addition to the concerns regarding the air travellers security charge which the member has very legitimately raised, I wonder whether she could inform the House of approximately how many items in Bill C-9 are add-ons or have been slipped in outside of what was presented to the House in the budget. Were these items given due consideration at the finance committee when Bill C-9 was being considered?

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, it is a fabulous question. We just moved 62 motions to deal with parts of the bill that must be deleted. The member is quite right in that there is no way that due diligence has been done on any of the six of them. There may even be more and I would be interested to know whether the Liberal Party moved amendments as well.

There are six parts that are of particular concern to us. I have spoken to one of them this afternoon and that is the air travellers security charge. Other ones that are profoundly troubling for us are the start down the road to deregulation of Canada Post, the National Energy Board, environmental assessments, and employment insurance.

My goodness, the employment insurance fund had a surplus of \$57 billion before successive Liberal and Conservative governments started taking that money out of a fund that was there to protect the most vulnerable workers in our country who had just lost their jobs, to keep them above the poverty line. The government took their money, put it into the consolidated revenue fund and now is putting the final nail in the coffin by depleting the EI account to its bare bones.

Those are all things that merit much further attention, which is why we are moving these report stage motions so that we can do in the House what the committee was not able to do.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member for Hamilton Mountain and the other good members of the NDP for taking a look at and analyzing such a comprehensive document. There are a lot of things we are concerned about in the bill, but there are things that are not in the bill that we were hoping would be there.

Being the critic for seniors and pensions and knowing the member for Hamilton Mountain's very strong interest in that area, there was no increase for seniors living in poverty. Over 260,000 seniors are living below the poverty line. One would have thought that the government would have put something in for seniors.



*Government Orders*

There is nothing to follow up on the statement in the throne speech in regard to the government making changes to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act to protect pensions when a company goes under.

Could the member comment on why she thinks those items might have been left out?

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, I hope people at home are watching and they can see the size of this document. The member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is quite right in that there is nothing in this budget for seniors. What is in the budget of course is \$6 billion in continued corporate tax cuts for the wealthiest corporations in our country, \$6 billion, when every member in the House knows that by comparison with a measly \$700 million, we could have lifted every single Canadian senior out of poverty. That should have been the priority in this budget.

Pension reform is crucially important. Here we have a budget bill which is almost 900 pages with nothing on bankruptcy protection. I hope all members of the House will be joining us at the corner of Wellington and Metcalfe streets this afternoon to talk to workers who are losing their jobs, whose plants are closing down. There will be steelworkers from all over the country. Members should come and talk to them. They should ask them whether they are pleased that there has been absolutely no progress on pension reform in this country. I can tell everyone the answer at that corner tonight will be a resounding “no”.

• (1710)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to ask for the deletion of part 19 and part 20 of Bill C-9. Those make up our Motions Nos. 16 to 18 and 19 to 38.

I bring forward this motion for the deletion of those parts of the bill for twofold reasons, which I have spoken to previously in the House. The twofold reasons are both for process of the making of law in this nation and on the substantive measures.

We have heard from Canadians from community to community and ocean to ocean opposing this measure. We have heard it from farm communities, environmental organizations and a long list of first nations organizations. They are absolutely appalled that for the second time the government has chosen, through a budget bill, to make substantive changes to the long-treasured Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

There was absolutely no consultation in advance, despite the fact that for almost three decades the government has had in place a regulatory advisory committee on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. This group has not even been convened for a year and a half, so the government chose to completely ignore a long-established committee, actually established by the Conservatives, and chose to do it through a budget bill to make it a non-confidence vote. It then referred the matter to the wrong committee, not that many members of the finance committee are not fully capable of reviewing any statute. However, as the House is well advised, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act already requires by law that it be reviewed at a set date, and that matter is already scheduled before the parliamentary committee on environment and sustainable development.

The government made a decision to completely short-circuit public consultation, violate its own legal provisions and show complete disrespect for the committee that had already made itself apprised of the matter and was trying to move forward as expeditiously as possible. Why is that? It is because this act has been before the parliamentary committee on environment and sustainable development before. Therefore, to ensure a consistent review, it made sense, since the committee looked at the act at its inception, to give it the opportunity to continuously do the review and to accord the opportunity to any stakeholder from industry, the public or the first nations to come forward and give their opinions on the proposed amendments.

First and foremost, Canadians have come out strongly in the same way they did in last year's budget bill, where the government emasculated the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Last time, it took a knife to federal environmental law. This time, it took an axe. It swung an axe on an act that all Canadians, from industry, provincial governments, territorial governments, first nations governments, environmental organizations, community-based organizations, farm organizations and fishery organizations, have had a say for many years in developing what they consider to be a strong act, which governments after governments have lauded around the world.

In one fell swoop, the government decided to go against due process, against the democratic process, which the government is bound by and committed to under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, to provide advance notice and an opportunity to comment by any person in North America to any new environmental law policy. It completely ignored a document it is bound by.

The government talks all the time about how it is working in common with North America and how we should look at things in North America and yet it has completely violated the very agreement it has signed and decided just to throw it into a budget bill.

I have had submissions from a number of people. The finance committee heard submissions from a number of people across the country castigating the government for doing this and asking that the finance committee move these measures over to the environment committee.

As far as substance, what is done in this bill is absolutely reprehensible. Contrary to what the minister has firmly asserted in the House, equal rights are not provided to the public who may have concerns and want to intervene in the review of major projects.

In part 19, the National Energy Board and the Nuclear Safety and Control Act are given the discretion to think about whether they might provide participant funding if somebody asks. That completely goes against what is provided for in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act where, if they are going ahead with a comprehensive review, they must provide intervenor funding. That is not equal treatment under the law. It is giving lesser rights to those who are dealing with major nuclear facilities and major oil and gas activity.

*Government Orders*

● (1715)

On the substantive measures, the government has taken the Supreme Court of Canada ruling and completely undermined it by giving the Minister of the Environment total discretion to decide to narrow the scope of the review of a project. This goes against the understanding around the world of why we do environmental assessments and, if we are doing a comprehensive review, why we need to look at the whole scope of a project. It unilaterally gives complete discretion to the minister to decide to narrow the scope, overturning the Supreme Court of Canada decision.

What this part of Bill C-9 would also do is exempt a vast number of projects that would be funded by Infrastructure Canada before the government even undertakes the process of deciding whether there will be any significant environmental impacts. It gives a little option to the minister after the fact to say that maybe the minister will unexempt the exemption if he or she find there are significant environmental impacts, but how would the minister to do that if he or she has already exempted them all.

Huge concerns have been raised about this project. I want to share with the House some of the testimony by the people who have come before the finance committee to object to this matter being reviewed by the finance committee and being put through in the budget bill.

Mrs. Arlene Kwasniak, who is a respected environmental law scholar at the University of Calgary law school, said:

I would like to suggest that there has been a recent demise in consultations having to do with the CEAA and an avoidance of the legislative requirement for consultations for substantive changes.

...this provision opens the door for uneven and unfair application of the CEAA. There are no statutory conditions governing the exercise of the minister's discretion....

In the Speech from the Throne and the budget bill this year, the government said that the very reason it was going to streamline environmental regulation and environmental assessments was to provide legal certainty and we have these legal scholars saying that the last thing the bill would do is provide legal certainty.

Mr. Richard Lindgren, counsel for the Canadian Environmental Law Association, said:

Based on our experience and our public interest perspective, we have very serious and fundamental concerns about the Bill C-9 proposals to amend CEAA. [...] CELA objects to the process that's being used to enact these amendments. In our opinion, proposed changes to CEAA should not be buried in a budget bill. Instead, any proposed amendments to the act should be brought forward and proceeded with as stand-alone legislation that's subject to full parliamentary debate and meaningful public consultation, neither of which has occurred in this case to this point.

The second objection was the timing of the proposed amendments. He goes on to describe it and said:

As the committee is aware, these amendments have been introduced just as the mandatory seven-year review of CEAA is about to commence.

I could also quote from the letter from Mr. Ron Plain, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation and about 20 other first nations from across the country. They are requesting that the government withdraw part 20 of Bill C-9 which deals with CEAA until they have engaged in a meaningful consultation process to address first nations interests in maintaining a rigorous environmental assessment

process federally that will ensure proper consultation and accommodation of their constitutionally protected interests.

They wish to stress that the lack of consultation on Bill C-9 to date is inconsistent with article 19 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which requires:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples...to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

They state that many industrial and infrastructure projects impact aboriginal interests and, given that the federal government has a fiduciary relationship with first nations people, it is questionable that the government would seek power to scope industrial projects narrowly and to entirely exempt infrastructure projects without first consulting aboriginal peoples. The honour of the Crown's duty needs to be fulfilled through a meaningful consultation process on this critical portion of Bill C-9 before it is enacted.

All of those people have said that they want to have these provisions removed from the budget bill.

● (1720)

Even the Senate committee, which reviewed this bill, recommended that the government not do this kind of process a second time, that budget bills should deal with financial matters and that they should not be the mechanism for dealing with substantive major amendments to federal laws. That was also endorsed by a majority recommendation of the parliamentary finance committee on reviewing the last bill.

It is critical that the House support my motion to separate out and delete parts 19 and 20 so we can have a proper review in consultation with all affected groups.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the presentation by the officials on Bill C-9, the question was raised about whether there was a move that would place economic objectives ahead of environmental objectives. That point was raised in the context that the provisions in Bill C-9 would permit the currently required environmental assessments to be waived or not be done simply because of the timing of other economic activity going on that the government would like to have proceed. That is what spawned the question about whether this was an issue where economic priorities trumped environmental priorities, and it is very troubling to me.

I am not sure what it says about government accountability, transparency, openness, public consultation, due process and matters like due diligence that we are required to have, but it would appear to me that the member's arguments are quite valid. I would be interested to know whether she feels there has been due diligence in the finance committee by members of Parliament.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I particularly appreciate the first part of the member's question but I do not have time to answer both.

*Government Orders*

I do not see it as a case of the government putting economic interests before environmental interests. I see it as the government completely missing the boat on the interaction between economic and environmental interests. It is taking a very short-sighted perspective on costs that may be incurred by a project.

We must remember that the whole purpose for an environmental impact assessment is to identify in advance what the major impacts might be so they can be mitigated or avoided and the proponent will pay those costs. That is what the polluter pays principle is all about.

The government is simply telling people that a major project will be going on in their community but that it will not assess it and tough luck if down the line they incur major costs. It is telling people that they will be saddled with the costs because it will not make the proponent do that. In other words, it has completely undermined the whole essence of what environmental assessment is. It has signed on to agreements around the world that it will undertake to do effective environmental assessment, including under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation.

I hope I have answered the member's question.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my two colleagues who talked about Bill C-9. It is clear that this is an omnibus bill in which we find a million completely different elements lumped together that should each be presented individually. When my colleague talked about security taxes, she pointed out—quite well in fact—the unbelievable number of unanswered questions in this bill.

My colleague who just spoke raised some extremely controversial things in this bill that need to be thoroughly examined. However, they are tucked into a bill that has to do with the budget, which automatically requires a confidence vote. For that reason, many people will hesitate to vote against it. In short, the bill might not be good, but it will be hard to vote against. That is not so for us, but it may be for others.

Is this not completely anti-democratic? Should the elected members not have enough room to manoeuvre and the necessary information to determine the value of the bill? Could my colleague say a few words about that?

• (1725)

[*English*]

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, if I could sum it up I would agree that it is extremely undemocratic. The entire process of putting parts 19 and 20 through the budget bill is nothing less than undemocratic. The government ran on a platform of accountability and transparency, and yet the very act of what it has done, including these measures in the budget bill, completely runs against that kind of a presence.

As I mentioned, the government is accountable already under international law and agreements, including with the United States of America and Mexico, whose leader will be speaking to us tomorrow, to fully provide Canadians the opportunity to participate in decision-making. The government has completely violated those very measures to ensure—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley will have about four minutes before the end of government orders.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wish I could say it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-9, but unfortunately we are looking at nearly 900 pages that represent a travesty of justice, and a basic and fundamental attack on the democratic principles on which this place is built.

We find within these pages what some have called a Trojan Horse of a bill. We find everything in the way of a laundry list that the Conservatives want to move through but cannot, in part because they keep shutting down the House and killing their own legislation, and partly because the measures rammed into this bill are unpopular. The Conservatives have threatened an election and have told Canadians to just stick it. They have not provided the option of a democratic and open debate about some of the most fundamental things in front of us.

We know that in this cloak of secrecy the government is going to be raising taxes for the travelling public at airports. It is seeking to gut environmental legislation, which my hon. colleague from Edmonton so eloquently spoke of just recently.

The government is seeking in an omnibus format to cobble together whatever it has at hand to give the Minister of the Environment discretionary, almost divine powers, to decide what deserves an environmental assessment and what does not. Somehow he will know in advance what is going to cause environmental damage and what will not, ignoring the fact that the idea behind an environmental assessment is the understanding of what the damage may or may not be. That is why we put the criteria in there in the first place.

We are paying for industrial projects that went wrong years ago: old mines, abandoned oil shafts. We said that we would learn from all of these things, that we would take account of all of these things before we built, so we would know what the effects would actually be on the environment.

What is in the budget affects real lives and has real consequences for our country. It is a shame and a sham that the government pretends to be accountable, pretends to care about the principles of democracy, while on the other hand does this.

Just recently, more than 130 workers from AECL came to this place to be recognized, to ask government members if they would be allowed a free and democratic debate and vote on the sale of AECL, Canada's largest crown corporation, and into which the Canadian public has put more than \$22 billion over the years. Instead, where do we find the sale of AECL? We find it buried in the pages of this Trojan Horse, buried in this omnibus bill. We are allowed no debate, no discussion. There is no democracy from the government.

*Routine Proceedings*

I sat with those 130 workers after question period. I talked to them and listened to their questions. They are worried, concerned, fearful, and most of all, they disbelieve that a government that ran on such principles as transparency and accountability and the fundamentals of democracy could be so opposed to them in practise. Words do not match the actual actions of the government.

It is often said that the best disinfectant is sun light. We need to bring this out in to the light. That is why New Democrats are proposing today to split this bill, expose it, have the debate, have the parliamentary discussion, and bring democracy back to the House of Commons.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:30 p.m. the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the first report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

Call in the members.

● (1755)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*(Division No. 49)*

#### YEAS

##### Members

Abbott	Ablonczy
Aglukkaq	Allen (Welland)
Allison	Ambrose
André	Angus
Armstrong	Arthur
Ashfield	Ashton
Asselin	Atamanenko
Bachand	Bagnell
Bains	Baird
Beaudin	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Bernier
Bevilacqua	Bezan
Bigras	Blackburn
Blaney	Block
Bonsant	Bouchard
Boucher	Boughen
Braid	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Brunelle
Cadman	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
Cannis	Cardin
Carrie	Carrier
Casson	Charlton
Chong	Chow
Christopherson	Clarke
Coady	Comartin
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
DeBellefeuille	Dechert

Del Mastro	Demers
Deschamps	Desnoyers
Devolin	Dewar
Dhalla	Dion
Dorion	Dosanjh
Dreeshen	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Faillie
Fast	Finley
Fletcher	Folco
Foote	Fry
Gagnon	Galipeau
Gaudet	Généreux
Glover	Godin
Goldring	Goodale
Goodyear	Gourde
Gravelle	Grewal
Guarnieri	Guay
Guergis	Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques)
Basques)	
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Harris (St. John's East)	
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hiebert	Hill
Holder	Holland
Hughes	Jean
Jennings	Julian
Kania	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kennedy	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Laforest
Laframboise	Lake
Lalonde	Lauzon
Lavallée	Layton
Lebel	Lee
Lemay	Lemieux
Leslie	Lessard
Lévesque	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Malhi
Malo	Maloway
Marston	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Masse	Mathysen
Mayes	McColeman
McGuinity	McLeod
Ménard	Mendes
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Mourani
Murphy (Charlottetown)	Murray
Nadeau	Neville
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Oda
Oliphant	Ouellet
Pacetti	Paillé (Hochelaga)
Paillé (Louis-Hébert)	Paquette
Paradis	Patry
Payne	Pearson
Petit	Plamondon
Poilievre	Pomerleau
Preston	Proulx
Rae	Rafferty
Raitt	Rajotte
Ratansi	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Rodriguez	Rota
Russell	Savage
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Siksay
Silva	Simms
Simson	Smith
Sorenson	St-Cyr
Stanton	Stoffer
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Szabo
Thi Lac	Thibeault
Thompson	Toews

Tonks  
Tweed  
Valeriotte  
Vellacott  
Vincent  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)  
Wilfert  
Wong  
Wrzesnewskyj  
Young

Trost  
Uppal  
Van Kesteren  
Verner  
Volpe  
Warawa  
Watson  
  
Woodworth  
Yelich  
Zarac — 252

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I declare the motion carried.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

The House resumed from May 11 consideration of the motion that Bill C-501, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and other Acts (pension protection), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-501 under private members' business.

• (1805)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(*Division No. 50*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)  
André  
Ashton  
Atamanenko  
Bagnell  
Beaudin  
Bellavance  
Bevilacqua  
Bigras  
Bouchard  
Brunelle  
Cardin  
Charlton  
Chow  
Coady  
Crowder  
Cuzner  
Davidson  
Davies (Vancouver East)  
Demers  
Desnoyers  
Dhalla  
Dorion  
Duceppe

Allison  
Angus  
Asselin  
Bachand  
Bains  
Bélanger  
Bennett  
Bezan  
Bonsant  
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
Cannis  
Carrier  
Chong  
Christopherson  
Comartin  
Cullen  
D'Amours  
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
DeBellefeuille  
Deschamps  
Dewar  
Dion  
Dosanjh  
Dufour

Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Easter  
Faille  
Foote  
Gagnon  
Godin  
Gravelle  
Guay  
Basques)  
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)  
Harris (St. John's East)  
Holder  
Hughes  
Julian  
Kennedy  
Laforest  
Lalonde  
Layton  
Lemay  
Lessard  
MacAulay  
Malo  
Marston  
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)  
Masse  
McGuinty  
Mendes  
Mourani  
Murray  
Neville  
Ouellet  
Paillé (Hochelaga)  
Paquette  
Pearson  
Pomerleau  
Rae  
Ratansi  
Rodriguez  
Russell  
Scarpaleggia  
Sgro  
Siksay  
Simms  
St-Cyr  
Szabo  
Thibeault  
Tonks  
Vincent  
Watson  
Wrzesnewskyj

Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
Eyking  
Folco  
Fry  
Gaudet  
Goodale  
Guarnieri  
Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les  
  
Holland  
Jennings  
Kania  
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
Laframboise  
Lavallée  
Lee  
Leslie  
Lévesque  
Malhi  
Maloway  
Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)  
Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)  
Mathysen  
Ménard  
Miller  
Murphy (Charlottetown)  
Nadeau  
Oliphant  
Pacetti  
Paillé (Louis-Hébert)  
Patry  
Plamondon  
Proulx  
Rafferty  
Regan  
Rota  
Savage  
Scheer  
Shory  
Silva  
Simson  
Stoffer  
Thi Lac  
Tilson  
Valeriotte  
Volpe  
Wilfert  
Zarac — 144

### Private Members' Business

NAYS

Members

Abbott  
Aglukkaq  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Ashfield  
Benoit  
Blackburn  
Block  
Boughen  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Calandra  
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)  
Casson  
Day  
Del Mastro  
Dreeshen  
Dykstra  
Finley  
Galipeau  
Glover  
Goodyear  
Grewal  
Hawn  
Hill  
Jean  
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
Komarnicki  
Lauzon

Ablonczy  
Albrecht  
Anders  
Armstrong  
Baird  
Bernier  
Blaney  
Boucher  
Braid  
Brown (Barrie)  
Cadman  
Calkins  
Carrie  
Clarke  
Dechert  
Devolin  
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
Fast  
Fletcher  
Généreux  
Goldring  
Gourde  
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)  
Hiebert  
Hoepfner  
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
Kerr  
Lake  
Lebel

*Private Members' Business*

Lemieux	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunn
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	McColeman
McLeod	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Oda	Paradis
Payne	Petit
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Shea	Shiple
Smith	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Thompson
Toews	Trost
Tweed	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Vellacott
Verner	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Wong	Yelich
Woodworth	
Young— 111	

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Order, please. Would all those who wish to continue private conversations, please use the lobbies.

[*Translation*]

It being 6:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## CITIZENSHIP ACT

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-467, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (children born abroad), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am honoured to introduce this bill to deal with some exceptions that were in the legislation when it was unanimously passed. The bill would—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1810)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I regret to interrupt the hon. member.

Order, please. Out of respect for the hon. member who is speaking, thank you.

The hon. member for Vancouver South.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Madam Speaker, this bill would amend the Citizenship Act to provide that a child born abroad to, or adopted

abroad by, a citizen employed outside Canada in or with the Canadian armed forces, the federal public administration or the public service of a province be considered like a child born in Canada.

Currently, children born abroad to Canadian government workers are considered under the Citizenship Act as first-generation Canadians born abroad. This, in turn, impacts their children, in that they are considered a second generation born abroad and are not eligible for Canadian citizenship if born outside Canada.

This bill would ensure that children born to or adopted by Canadians working for the federal or provincial governments of Canada would be treated as if they had been born in Canada, which is the fair thing to do.

I have an example that I want to provide. It is the example of Howard Cummer, a Canadian citizen who was serving as a trade commissioner to Singapore in 1979, when his son was born. His son now lives in Tokyo and is married to a Japanese national, but if Mr. Cummer's son and daughter-in-law have a child in Tokyo where they live, that child will not be entitled to Canadian citizenship under the current system. I believe that would be unfair. Citizenship would be denied despite Mr. Cummer's record as a civil servant and the fact he was working for the Canadian government at that time.

I am actually going to read the letter that he sent me. He is not my constituent, but he simply contacted me. I decided that it was the right thing to do to introduce this bill. I am using excerpts from his original letter to me. He stated:

"I am writing to you to seek your help in amending Bill C37, An Act to Amend the Citizenship Act, which became law on April 17, 2009, to eliminate the unintended consequences of the Bill on the children of Canadians born abroad.

"I know that the Bill was unanimously passed by Parliament to eliminate the transfer of citizenship to the children of 'sojourning' Canadians—who have no long-term or historical ties to Canada and who consider a Canadian passport only to be one of convenience.

"But the Bill cuts far too wide a swath!

"Take my family situation as an example. I was working in Singapore in 1979 as a Canadian Trade Commissioner when my son was born. We had to agree in writing that we would not claim Singapore citizenship for him in order for my wife to have a hospital bed.

"He is now 30 years old, married to a Japanese citizen and starting an internet bank in Tokyo. If he and his wife have a child in Tokyo then under the present rules of C37 that child will not be eligible for Canadian citizenship.

"My family came to Toronto from Pennsylvania in 1797 in the second wave of United Empire loyalists. Their presence is recorded in the place names of Cummer Avenue, Old Cummer Station and Cummer Park and my ancestors are buried in the family graveyard on Yonge Street now tended by the North York Historical Society. The family has fought for Canada in every war since the War of 1812 and was part of the Upper Canada Rebellion with William Lyon Mackenzie in 1837.

*Private Members' Business*

"But my family history is short compared to my wife's family—the Dawes claim to have been in Newfoundland since 1508 and can be confirmed as having been there by land titles since 1595.

"Between the two sides of the family there is over 600 years of Canadian history and yet my grandchildren will not be Canadian if born outside of Canada to my children who were born abroad while I was serving Canada.

"This is flat out wrong!

"The bill needs to be amended so that grandchildren of Canadian diplomats, Canadian Armed Forces personnel, the employees of Ministries of finance, Agriculture, Justice, CSIS,—all branches of government within interests abroad—will not be penalized for their citizenship—if their grandparents were working abroad for Canada.

"I am contacting you now to see what can be done to limit the unforeseen impact of this bill and to make the amendments necessary to preserve citizenship where and when it should be preserved.

—Howard Cummer".

• (1815)

That actually makes the case for this bill more eloquently than I could have in this particular situation.

This is not a partisan issue. It is the right thing to do. Obviously, if and when it does go to committee, we can make the amendments so that there are no unintended consequences.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I certainly support this bill. However, it only covers public servants. I am wondering whether the hon. member would be willing, once it is at committee, to allow for amendments on the following issue.

Right now, 2.8 million Canadians live abroad, and there are many who will end up having children outside Canada. These are true Canadians. Some own big companies that are doing trade outside Canada. Some are diplomats. Others are journalists. For their grandchildren to be denied the right to be Canadian is totally unfair.

Would the member consider those kinds of amendments?

Also, if children are adopted and become citizens in Canada rather than come into Canada as landed immigrants, and they have kids outside Canada, their grandchildren also will not be Canadian. It is also a problem for adopted children, which is downright discrimination.

Would the member consider an amendment so that adopted kids would also be treated equally?

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Madam Speaker, with respect to the adopted children, taking the last question first, that would be an easy thing to do. If there are any other unintended consequences, we should deal with them. I would be very open to that. Obviously, one would have to persuade the whole committee to support that.

With respect to private business people who choose to do business abroad, they are in a different category altogether. They are not in the category of diplomats or Canadian armed personnel or others who are sent for government service by either the provinces or the federal government. It is not that they are not doing work, and it is not that it

is not good for Canada. They are in an absolutely separate category. I would have to be convinced to support that. At this moment, I would say no. I do not think we should extend this privilege to people who choose to do business abroad. However, I have an open mind, and I would be happy to be persuaded.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I just want to get some clarification on the end part of the mover's statement.

For us, the intent of this private member's bill is important. Going to committee obviously means that there will be some amendments made to the bill to move it back to the House for third reading. I really would like him to clarify that the intent of Bill C-37, which was enacted a couple of years ago, is something he supports and that this private member's bill actually gets at an area that we need to pay attention to and obviously make an addition to. That is the scope of his bill, and that is what he would like to have come to committee. It is based on nothing outside of that.

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh:** Madam Speaker, I do not understand the parliamentary secretary's point.

I obviously support the amendment I have brought forward. I believe that the amendment is appropriate. I am open to looking at other things. I understand that the government may be moving some amendments to avoid some unintended consequences of this amendment. I would be very open to those.

The member preceding asked whether I would be open to adopted children getting the same rights as children born in Canada. We should be able to take a look at that. An adopted child legally has the same connection to an individual as a naturally born child in all Canadian laws. We should take a look at whether adopted children should be treated the same way naturally born children are in this particular situation. Obviously, it would depend on the committee as to where the committee goes. The amendment I have proposed is the most important amendment, for me, in the first place.

• (1820)

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address Bill C-467, brought forward by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

This private member's bill stems from the passage, in the 39th Parliament, of Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act. Bill C-467 calls on the government to treat children born to or adopted overseas by Crown servants, including Canadian Forces personnel and federal and provincial public servants, as children born in Canada such that they would be able to pass citizenship on to any children they may have or adopt outside Canada.

First of all, I would like to commend the member for Vancouver South for his commitment to this issue, and I would like all hon. members to know that the government supports the intention of Bill C-467. However, we have some technical concerns with the bill in its current form, as it does not achieve its intended objective and would have, as the member points out, some unintended consequences.

*Private Members' Business*

Nevertheless, I am confident that we can address these concerns together, with the co-operation of our parliamentary colleagues. The bill will have a positive impact on the children of Crown servants and our military serving abroad.

I would like to share with my hon. colleagues a very brief overview of Bill C-37 and the reasons that led us, as a government, to restore citizenship to lost Canadians and to include a clear limit on citizenship by descent.

Members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration will recall many witnesses who testified three years ago this spring as they shared their love for this country as proud citizens. They shared their dismay and their frustration when they described how it felt to discover that their citizenship was not, in fact, recognized by the law.

The public outcry was enormous, and that is why the government corrected the legislation. When Bill C-37 came into effect a year ago, it restored or gave citizenship to most people who were known as lost Canadians. Changes to the law restored or granted citizenship to the vast majority of those who lost or did not have it due to outdated provisions in previous legislation.

The changes meant that people who became citizens when the first Citizenship Act came into force in 1947, and people born or naturalized in Canada after 1947 and subsequently lost their citizenship, would reacquire their citizenship unless they formally renounced it or had it revoked because of fraud. Foreign-born persons adopted by Canadians between January 1, 1947 and February 15, 1977 would also be eligible to apply for citizenship. Complex rules that required some citizens by descent to take steps to apply to keep their citizenship were simply eliminated.

The new law also set a limit on citizenship by descent to the first generation born abroad. That was done to uphold the value of Canadian citizenship by requiring a real and concrete connection to Canada.

Hon. members will also recall debate of Bill C-14 in 2007 and the steps Canadians adopting foreign-born children had to take before their children could become Canadian citizens.

International adoption is a complex process, as we all know, involving many layers of approval by both provincial and territorial governments in Canada and by the federal government of the country where the child lives. In many cases, adoptions must meet the requirements of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

With the passage of Bill C-14, parents of foreign-born adopted children were able to apply directly for citizenship for those children without first having to go through the steps of applying for permanent resident status. It was a clear and bold reaffirmation of the values and principles that define our identity, our country, and the notion of the Canadian family.

The goal of fixing imperfect legislation with the passage of Bill C-37 and Bill C-14 was essentially to simplify the complex rules on Canadian citizenship.

The private member's bill before us today is certainly well intentioned, and we once again praise the member for Vancouver

South for his constructive efforts. In the coming weeks, we look forward to addressing the technical issues that would otherwise prevent this bill from achieving its rightful objective.

• (1825)

The government recognizes the commitment and sacrifices that Crown servants and their families posted abroad make to this country.

I am sure that hon. members would also agree that any children born to Crown servants working abroad should not be penalized by not being able to pass on citizenship to any children they may have or they may adopt abroad as a direct result of their parents' service to this country.

Furthermore, there is absolutely no question that Crown servants abroad, including our military, have a connection to this country and we are confident that the changes proposed by Bill C-467 are consistent with the intent of Bill C-37.

There are a few issues with this bill that need to be examined. For example, the bill attempts to extend access to citizenship to the grandchildren of Crown servants by adding a new provision for children born abroad or adopted by Crown servants.

At the same time, it proposes to repeal a section of the act that currently allows all children born to a Crown servant outside Canada to be Canadians, regardless of the generation in which they were born outside Canada.

Similarly, right now, anyone born abroad or adopted by a Canadian parent who was born in Canada, whether or not that parent is a Crown servant, may apply for a grant of citizenship. The criteria for such a grant respect international obligations that are there to protect the best interests of the child and that respect the provincial jurisdiction on adoptions. Under Bill C-467 as it stands now, children adopted by Crown servants would no longer have to apply for a grant of citizenship, which could indeed be problematic.

Nevertheless, I am sure that all members would agree that the bill has a worthwhile objective and that, as Canadians, we should support our Crown servants posted abroad, especially and including military families, and recognize their sacrifice, their commitment and their strong connection to Canada.

That is why I am confident the intent of Bill C-467 can be achieved by expanding the current exception that exists under the law to ensure that the children of Crown servants, including Canadian Forces personnel, like children born in Canada, would be able to pass citizenship on to any children they have or adopt outside our country.

To ensure that the good intentions of Bill C-467 are achieved, I look forward to working co-operatively in the coming weeks with the member for Vancouver South, and all members, toward some constructive amendments.



We have a committee that is currently working on Bill C-11, the balanced refugee reform act. We are working our way through it. As members know, it is never easy at committee to come to a consensus on absolutely everything. I believe that bill is going to come back to this House, is going to be supported and is going to be passed. For the first time in decades we will have strong and positive change to our refugee act.

At the same time, I think the committee, with all four parties represented there, can come to some common agreement on the bill. The member has a critic who certainly has an open ear and a colleague who has an open ear to ensuring that we do what is right at committee.

I anticipate that we can do the same with this bill. I look forward to the day the member has the opportunity to present at committee and work with us on what I think will be amendments, necessary amendments nonetheless, that would ensure there are no unintended consequences with respect to this bill and the impact it would have on Canadians born abroad.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Ève-Mary Thāi Thi Lac (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am speaking today about Bill C-467 because I believe that it will correct a legislative error.

When the Citizenship Act was amended in 2008 through Bill C-37, the principle of restricting the transmission of citizenship by descent was included to ensure that Canadian citizenship was not passed on in perpetuity.

But in wanting to create an exception to restricting the transmission of citizenship for our military and officials who are overseas on a mission, we complicated matters. We created an exception to the citizenship exception that had just been passed. The goal was to maintain privileges for our citizens who have children overseas. However, as is often the case when a law is created or amended, unanticipated problems or gaps surfaced in the legislation.

Bill C-467 would remove the exception to the exception that was created and propose a new category of citizens in order to make the Citizenship Act fairer.

The law, in its present form allows our military and officials, who were themselves born abroad, to transmit their citizenship to any children they have when they are on a mission. However, rather than being considered citizens in good standing as though they were born here, these children have the status of Canadians born abroad, which does not allow them, in turn, to transmit their citizenship.

Bill C-467 would make these children full-fledged citizens with the same rights and privileges as the children of the military and officials born here and posted here.

When the government amended the Citizenship Act to restrict the transmission of citizenship, it maintained that the provision would ensure that Canadian citizenship is not transmitted indefinitely to individuals who have no ties to Canada. Although I believe that there should be nuances in this rule, I agree with the general principle.

Given the employee-employer relationship of these two parties, it is obvious to me that, for this category of citizens, their right to citizenship does not have to be proven because it is explicit.

### *Private Members' Business*

Consequently, their children should be considered as though they were born here—even if they were born abroad—just like children adopted from abroad, who now have this recognition.

That is exactly what the member for Vancouver South wants to achieve with this bill.

Here is a simple example to illustrate what I am talking about. I was born in Vietnam and adopted in 1974. I now have a Quebec birth certificate, which is my legal identification in Quebec. However, when I renew my passport, I have to send my Canadian citizenship card, not my Quebec birth certificate, as do all people born in Quebec.

I was adopted in 1974, long before the law was changed to allow children adopted from other countries to obtain citizenship upon arriving in Canada. If I were a member of the armed forces, any grandchildren of mine born abroad would be stateless. That situation is unacceptable.

In this case, my Bloc Québécois colleague, the member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, has five children, including one born abroad when he was Quebec's delegate general in Japan. That child will not have the same status as his four children born here.

● (1830)

This is an example that illustrates the need for this bill. The current citizenship criteria, which are essentially based on birthplace, seem to me to be outdated in these cases, just like the discrimination against parents who adopted children abroad in my time. The flaws in the system should be corrected by the bill my colleague has introduced.

With globalization and international labour mobility, more and more government employees, members of the military and other people will be going abroad to work.

Moreover, the Bloc Québécois has long been calling on the government to introduce exit controls for non-citizens, but the Conservatives have consistently refused. They recognize the problem, but refuse to take action.

Clearly, Bill C-467 does not correct the whole problem, because it only focuses on government employees. I feel we are going to have to take a much broader approach and review the principle of restricting transmission of citizenship by descent.

We support this amendment, but I want to say that this bill will not completely fix the flaw in the current Citizenship Act.

However, it does give vital recognition to people working for the government abroad.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1835)

[English]

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in about a month Canada will host the G20 and we will welcome many countries to Canada. We are a trading nation. We want to encourage our children and all our professionals and businesses to trade with other countries, to visit them, to study or work abroad. Yet we have a citizenship law that discourages them to do so because their grandchildren may not become citizens.

Bill C-467, which I and the New Democratic Party of Canada support, would amend the Citizenship Act to remove the second generation citizenship cut-off for children born abroad or adopted abroad by a Canadian citizen who has been employed outside of Canada in the Canadian armed forces, the federal public administration and the public service of a province.

The second generation citizenship cut-off applies to children whose parents are Canadian citizens and were also born outside of Canada. If these children are also born outside Canada, they do not automatically receive Canadian citizenship. We know already of two Canadian children born to Canadians who have become stateless.

Even though I will support the bill, it simply does not go far enough. The bill only applies to the public servants and armed forces personnel.

According to the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, in 2009 approximately 2.8 million Canadians lived abroad. The Canadian public servants and armed forces members only represent a very small fraction of those numbers of Canadians living and working overseas.

These are Canadians. They have chosen to live and work abroad perhaps as journalists, aid workers or students. We just cannot and should not deny them the right to pass on citizenship to their children or their grandchildren just because they spent some time overseas.

For example, Senator Munson was at a press conference that I attended. Because he was a journalist for many years, his son was born abroad. His son is also a journalist and lives outside of Canada. If he happens to have a baby, Senator Munson's grandchild would be stateless. Is that fair? Absolutely not.

We need to end the second generation citizenship cut-off for all children born abroad to Canadian parents. That is exactly what one of my private member's bills, Bill C-397, would do.

I hope my colleague, the member for Vancouver South, would be willing to work with me to amend this bill at committee to include all children born abroad.

There seems to be an assumption that because some Canadians chose to live and work outside of Canada, they somehow do not have strong ties to Canada. In fact, some people even call them citizens of convenience. What an insult.

I have heard from many of them. They are proud Canadians. They have strong ties to this country. Sometimes they represent us. Sometimes they represent their companies. Many of these are Canadian companies, multinational companies. However, it seems the government's general policy is to encourage them to cut off their

ties by denying them the right to pass on full citizenship rights to their children or their grandchildren.

We are now living in an interconnected world and governments need to consider this and adjust some of their policies so our citizens can feel free to travel and not be punished. The simple fact is we need to completely rethink the way we treat Canadians working or living abroad. Instead of pushing them further away, we need to recognize them as proud Canadians and do what we can to help strengthen their ties with their country, our country, Canada.

• (1840)

I want to give an example of a woman I met, Helen Chatburn, a Canadian citizen who was born in England and is expecting a child. Helen works in Nigeria for an organization funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. Remember that Helen grew up in Canada. She is a Canadian, but if Helen were to give birth in Nigeria, her child would not have Canadian citizenship. Helen has been left with no choice but to fly to Canada, seven months pregnant, to give birth here. What absurdity. This woman is risking her health in order to grant her child Canadian citizenship because of this flaw in the Citizenship Act.

The second generation cutoff ought to be revoked entirely because it does nothing to protect the value of citizenship. In British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, due to the shortages in neonatal care units, pregnant women have been sent to the U.S. to give birth, but they may not know that if their kids have a child overseas, their grandchild could be stateless.

As Valerie Bolduc, director of community development at the Canadian Expat Association states:

Technically, you can be fourth-, fifth-generation born-abroad and have lived in Canada practically your whole life.

Why not give them the same rights as children born here if they all have Canadian parents?

[Translation]

The Citizenship Act affects children and their families. Not only does it fail to protect the values of citizenship, but it also undermines them because it deprives the children of Canadian citizens of their full rights of citizenship.

[English]

Also, this bill does nothing to address the two-tiered citizenship for adopted children. If an adopted child is made a Canadian citizen before moving to Canada, which we would want to do, the second generation cutoff would apply to these children. However, if the adopted child is brought to Canada first as a landed immigrant and the parents apply for citizenship while the child is in Canada, and that child would have to wait for a year or so, the rule would not apply.

This bill only addresses children adopted abroad by citizens employed outside Canada. That also is not fair.

*Private Members' Business*

Remember, our most valuable resource is our human capital. That is the most important element. Let us not squander it by allowing the Conservatives' retrograde policies to stand.

We will look to amend this bill at committee for it to apply to all children born abroad to Canadian citizens, not just those who are in the army or who are diplomats. In a country with an aging population, we must value our children, every one of them, whether they are born outside Canada or in Canada, whether they are adopted by Canadians, coming to Canada as citizens or landed immigrants. We need more Canadian children, not fewer.

No child should be left stateless because his or her father or mother chose to become an aid worker to do good work outside Canada. No child should be left stateless because his or her parents or grandparents decided to become a journalist overseas. No mom should have to be forced to travel to Canada just to have her baby, thus interrupting her career and her good work in a developing country. No executive should have to worry about not representing her own company in order to come back to Canada to have her baby.

Let us adopt this bill and fully amend it so that all children will be treated equally.

• (1845)

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to have seconded this bill because it goes some way toward solving some problems that were created as a result of the adoption of Bill C-37 which came into effect in April 2009. Law making is sometimes extremely complicated and there are unintended consequences and we are seeing some here at different levels.

The first level which Bill C-467 presented by my colleague from Vancouver South addresses is the most urgent and most obvious one. It is the fact that people who have had children while serving their country abroad and whose children are now having children of their own, those children cannot be Canadian citizens. That is nonsense. The riding which I have the honour of representing is in Ottawa. One would expect there would be a number of people living in my riding and throughout the city who have served our country abroad in the Department of Foreign Affairs, for instance, and who are now in this situation.

I know two ambassadors who have had children while serving abroad. In the first case, one of his sons is now working in the private sector in a bank in Paris. He and his wife are going to have their third child. The first two children, from the same father and mother, are Canadian citizens, but the third one, if the child is born in Paris, will not be a Canadian citizen if born there. The third grandchild of the man who served his country abroad, born from the same parents, cannot be a Canadian citizen. It is nonsense. Another well-known ambassador who served this country with great distinction has a daughter in Great Britain who cannot have children who will be Canadian citizens.

That is the first obvious unintended consequence of Bill C-37 that has to be fixed. I applaud my colleague's initiative. I hope that even if the government seems to have some hesitation about some technicalities it is concerned with, that we can see our way to at least adopting that.

The second level of complication was brought up by the member for Trinity—Spadina and I concur with her. Canada as a trading nation has to consider going beyond this bill. I have legislation on the books, Bill C-443, which addresses that. It deals with the fact that there are a number of Canadian citizens working abroad, for the United Nations or its agencies and for NGOs, and heaven knows, we fund them through CIDA. These are honourable, respected NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières. A number of them are associated with religious groups. A number of Canadians are serving the interests of their country through these organizations and they are going to get caught in the same situation.

That is the second level of complication that I hope we will address some day. I hope the government is paying attention to this. Whether we can do it through amendments to this piece of legislation or not remains to be seen.

The third one is the very dramatic situation where we will be creating stateless children. That can be an incredibly complicated situation for anyone.

These are some of the unintended consequences of the legislation that came into effect last year which I believe have to be addressed. The first one is being addressed through the legislation proposed by my colleague from Vancouver South and I hope we will see fit to pass it quickly.

• (1850)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to add my voice to the debate on Bill C-467, which calls on the government to treat children born or adopted overseas by Crown servants, including Canadian Forces personnel, as children born in Canada. That would mean making it possible to pass citizenship on to any children they may have or adopt outside Canada.

As my hon. colleague has said, the government supports the intention of Bill C-467, although we do have some concerns that the bill as drafted would not achieve its intended objective and would have unintended consequences.

Members who studied the issue of lost citizenship in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration know full well that citizenship is not something to take lightly or for granted. Studies and witness testimony over the issue led to us to the conclusion that legislation governing citizenship is by no means perfect and that we should truly appreciate the value of our Canadian citizenship.

Members will recall that in order to protect the value of citizenship and ensure that it could not be passed on to endless generations, Bill C-37 in the 39th Parliament introduced a first generation limit to citizenship. The limit is there to ensure that Canadians would have a connection to Canada. Bill C-37 also created an exception to this new first generation limit. The exception means that children born outside Canada to Crown servants are also citizens.

Without this exception to the first generation limit, children of Crown servants would not be able to pass on citizenship to any children they may have or adopt abroad. This means that as long as a Canadian citizen is a Crown servant working abroad, any children the Canadian citizen has or adopts abroad are Canadian.

*Private Members' Business*

Generation after generation of parents working abroad as Crown servants are able to pass Canadian citizenship on to their children, but let us say Anna has a child while working as a Crown servant in England. Her child, Nicholas, is Canadian. When Nicholas grows up, if he decides to work as a Crown servant in India, any child he has or adopts while working as a Crown servant there would be Canadian, but if Nicholas decides he does not want to work as a Crown servant, his child, in other words Anna's grandchild, would not be Canadian. We aim to change that.

Since early 2009 the government has heard from Crown servants and organizations representing them that it is unfair to penalize these children as a direct result of their parents' service to Canada. I absolutely sympathize with the need to recognize that Canadian families serving Canada abroad have a strong connection to Canada and should not be penalized for their service.

I agree with my colleagues that the private member's bill before us today is certainly well intentioned. After all, it proposes to treat children born or adopted abroad by Crown servants the same as children born in Canada so that they could pass on citizenship to any children they may have or adopt overseas.

As I have said, the bill does have some problems. For example, under this bill, children of Crown servants could not pass on citizenship to any children they may have or adopt abroad. Children of the original Crown servant working abroad who were born abroad to a Canadian parent would no longer have access to citizenship.

Children adopted by Crown servants who were born or naturalized in Canada would become citizens automatically without regard to the international obligations and requirements that aim to protect the best interests of the child, for example, to prevent child trafficking. Bill C-467 would propose to confer citizenship automatically to children adopted abroad by Crown servants who were born or naturalized in Canada.

• (1855)

The current act already allows anyone who is born abroad and adopted by a Canadian parent who was born in Canada, whether or not that parent is a Crown servant, to apply for a grant of citizenship. The criteria for such a grant respects international obligations that are there to protect the best interests of the child and that respect the provincial jurisdictions on adoptions.

Nevertheless, I am confident that we can achieve the intent of this private member's bill if we expanded the current exception that exists in the current act, so that children of Crown servants, including Canadian Forces personnel, like children born in Canada, would be able to pass citizenship on to any children they have or adopt outside Canada.

I recommend that, by addressing these concerns together, this bill could have a positive impact on the children of Crown servants, including our military serving abroad.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is rather unexpected that I rise today to speak to Bill C-467.

At the outset, I want to say that I listened with great care to the speech from the mover of the bill, as well as the member for Trinity

—Spadina. Clearly, we are in favour of this bill and certainly willing to get the bill to committee, but as the member for Trinity—Spadina pointed out, there are some improvements that we would like in the bill.

Bill C-37 came into effect in April of 2009 and out of that whole process there are still gaps in the legislation. The fact of the matter is that this bill would not deal with all of the gaps that the member for Trinity—Spadina outlined so eloquently in her speech.

Having said that, this is certainly a positive move by the member for Vancouver South. I missed the initial period for questions but wanted to ask him whether this bill would apply to members of the reserve forces in Canada.

When we look at the summary of the bill, it refers to the enactment providing that children born abroad to, or adopted abroad by, a citizen employed outside Canada in or with the Canadian armed forces, the federal public administration or the public service of a province be considered like a child born in Canada. The bill mentions the Canadian armed forces.

In some cases, reserve members are not covered by measures covering the armed forces in general. I was unable to ask the mover that question.

This issue has dogged us for quite a number of years. Having been a provincial member for 23 years now, issues have come up where people have found, perhaps accidentally, that they did not have Canadian citizenship. It came to a head, as we know, around 9/11 when the Americans started to tighten up on their rules of access to the United States, and people had to produce passports and prove citizenship. A number of people could not do that. There were some very well publicized cases, as members know.

Another question I wanted to ask the member was whether he had an idea as to how many people would be affected by this particular bill. The member for Trinity—Spadina pointed out that there are perhaps 2.8 million people, I believe she said, living abroad. There are people working in our missions, working for NGOs, and many working for multinational corporations.

As a matter of fact, it becomes almost a lifetime occupation for some people to spend all of their working lives being transferred around the world and spending very little time in Canada until perhaps their retirement years. During that time, it is quite conceivable that children will be born outside of Canada and at a certain point will be found to be stateless.

The member for Trinity—Spadina talked about Senator Munson, with whom I had the pleasure of travelling to Washington recently, indicating that in his case he could potentially be in a situation where a grandchild of his would be a stateless person. Clearly, we have to look at this whole area and err on the side of inclusiveness, including all people who could potentially be affected by this type of legislation.

• (1900)

One only has to look back three years ago when we debated Bill C-37 in the House. I read through some of the speeches of the day and some of the background.

We are not talking about a really simple issue here. This is a very complicated issue. The average person is not going to while away the hours and days becoming an expert in immigration law. I would think that in some cases one would have to be a lawyer to sort through some of this stuff and to really understand it.

One of the previous members talked earlier about Bill C-37, the bill to amend the Immigration Act, which was introduced in the House and received first reading on December 10, 2007, the whole purpose of which was to address the issue of the so-called lost Canadians, the people who lost their citizenship through no fault of their own when they were mere babies.

These people thought of themselves as Canadians. They wished to participate in Canadian society, but either ceased to be citizens or never were Canadian citizens in the first place for various legal reasons. There were different reasons by and large in each one of the cases and each case presented a very compelling reason. Even the Prime Minister was involved in one of the cases to try to resolve the issue. In many cases these individuals were not even aware that they were not Canadian citizens until they applied for a certificate of Canadian citizenship or other documentation.

It might surprise some to know, and I was informed of this a few years ago, that even today a very small percentage of the population actually flies on an airplane. I forget what the actual number was but only 13% or 15% of people have actually flown but that number must be much higher now. A very large number of people in our society have not had occasion to board an airplane and fly to other countries. If an individual has no reason to travel, he or she would have no reason to consider asking for documentation. Only when a life event happens are people forced to get citizenship documentation and sometimes find out they are not able to get it.

It would be interesting for people watching today to know that there are at least four distinct legal groups of lost Canadians. The first group is made up of naturalized Canadians, those who subsequently lived outside the country for more than 10 years prior to 1967. The second group is made up of people born abroad to a Canadian parent before the current Citizenship Act came into effect on February 15, 1977. How is someone supposed to remember all of these facts, particularly if that individual happened to be born abroad?

The third group is made up of people who lost their citizenship between January 1, 1947 and February 14, 1977 because they or a parent acquired the citizenship of another country. The fourth group is made up of the second and subsequent generation of Canadians born abroad since the current Citizenship Act came into effect on February 15, 1977. As the member for Trinity—Spadina pointed out, we are talking about 2.8 million people living abroad.

I understand that my time is almost nigh. Suffice it to say that we support the bill and are prepared to send it on to committee.

• (1905)

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to address Bill C-467 which was brought forward by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

As all members of the House are aware, this private member's bill stems from the passage in the 39th Parliament of Bill C-37, An Act

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

to amend the Citizenship Act. Bill C-467 calls upon the government to treat children born or adopted overseas by Crown servants, including Canadian Forces personnel, as children born in Canada, such that they would be able to pass citizenship on to any children they may have or adopt outside of Canada.

The government supports the intention of Bill C-467, although we are concerned about some unintended consequences. Our success as a country is no accident but a result of an abiding belief in values such as liberty, human dignity and freedom of conscience and where harmony is the rule rather than the exception. We are an open and tolerant society, renowned for our respects for democracy and for the freedoms that come with that. We celebrate our different cultural traditions but not at the expense of sharing common Canadian ones.

That is fundamental. We need to preserve the value of Canadian citizenship along with an abiding connection to our past and to one another, where citizenship means more than access to a convenient passport.

Within the past three years, the government has passed significant laws that would correct flaws in citizenship legislation. Bill C-14 and Bill C-37 reflect clear and bold reaffirmations of our values and the principles that define us as a country.

Under the old rules, it was possible for Canadians to pass on their citizenship to endless generations born outside of Canada. To protect the value of Canadian citizenship for the future, the new law under Bill C-37 put a limit on citizenship by descent to one generation born outside of Canada, similar to the rules in other countries like the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

• (1910)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. member will have about seven and a half minutes when this debate comes back.

The time provided for consideration of private member's business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to further question my colleague on the opposite side of the House on a question that I asked the minister on March 29.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

On March 29, I asked a very simple and direct question regarding new veterans and the care and commitment that the current government had to the huge and new challenges they face. They want to play a part in building tomorrow's Canada but the Conservatives are failing them. When will the government commit to the care and benefits these soldiers deserve and are calling for themselves? It is a very clear and simple question about looking at modern veterans and their particular needs as expressed in the 21st century.

I did a preamble about that because it was the week before we honoured veterans from World War I, the last living veteran from that war having just died.

The minister gave no answer and actually avoided my question completely. He did not say one word that related to new veterans. Instead, he reflected upon the Great War that ended in 1918 and talked about a book of remembrance and about the commemorative services to be held on April 9.

I am trying to move the government forward from 1918 to 2010. It is almost 100 years since that war ended. The question I want answered very clearly is: What is the government's plan to deal with the veterans who have not been what we have called "traditional" veterans, those veterans who are not from World War II or the Korean War, but all the veterans since then, so-called "modern" veterans, who are now actually falling into two different categories, which are those from the cold war, from failed state operations, peacekeepers and the war in Iraq, to those new veterans, post the New Veterans Charter, who are mostly from Afghanistan?

The reality is that since 2006, we have a new class of veterans who have been under a new regime, under a new charter, a charter that was conceived and passed unanimously by all parties in the House, as a new way forward for veterans of the modern age.

However, over the last several months, if not the last couple of years, we have been hearing from veteran after veteran, veterans organization after veterans organization, that the programs, the financial compensation, the disability awards and the lump sum payments are simply not enough. They are not working to keep veterans engaged in the activities in which we want them engaged to help them do successful rehabilitation and reintegrate into family and community.

We are seeing more and more instances of post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, suicide, financial problems and family strife and the government has not presented one change since 2006.

In the New Veterans Charter, which was meant to be a living charter, the minister was given the power to make changes to programs and to update them as needs changed. The number of soldiers who have come home with these profound problems increases day after day. I am hoping the parliamentary secretary can give a clear answer on this very pressing problem.

**Mr. Greg Kerr (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I cannot imagine that the minister would ever ignore his most important question. I am sure that was not the intention.

We are all aware, and he and I are on the same committee, that there are some real challenges out there for modern veterans. It,

therefore, is important to point out that progress is being made. It is never enough and not fast enough for many but many changes have continued to take place.

As a matter of fact, we had a witness at our committee yesterday, a mother of a modern vet, who indicated that her son, who is an injured vet back from overseas serving our country very well, is still in the military. One of the changes we are seeing take place is that DND is trying to retain, wherever possible, those who have been injured and are now handicapped, and put them in meaningful roles in the military so that they stay gainfully employed.

At the same time, as pointed out at the committee meeting yesterday, these important people who have been injured while serving overseas on our behalf are receiving a number of services and programs from Veterans Affairs.

I would like to emphasize that a lot of work going on between Veterans Affairs and the Department of National Defence to co-operate and integrate where possible. Thanks to the new charter, we are trying to do more for our veterans all the time. We have a wide ranging number of packages and programs for the veterans. There is a continuing need for upgrade and change but the focus is on making them as comfortable and serve their needs as much as possible, whether it is physical or psychological injuries that take place.

It is also important to remind people that we have 40 offices across the country. Veterans Affairs is established at armed forces bases so young military folks coming back from overseas and the war can start integrating before they leave the service and get the kind of attention and treatment they need, which is where both departments need to co-operate. There is an extensive network of health care providers, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists, who are there to help where they can.

We have specialized mental health clinics, including one that we visited at Ste. Anne's Hospital, where veterans can stay up to eight weeks to concentrate on their full-time treatment and recovery. We would like to see them reintegrated into society and in a working environment but where they cannot into work they obviously need all the support mechanisms they can get.

Under operational stress injuries, OSIs, they get treated in an understanding and supportive environment, and that continues as that need continues. As has been pointed out, that is a growing problem.

One of the great programs is the operational stress injury social support program, which we have heard a lot about. It is a partnership between Veterans Affairs and DND where those who have gone through the problem or families who have gone through the problem are there to deal directly with veterans coming home. They can talk to them and communicate in a way that helps them understand the problem and what services are available.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Those initiatives are recognized, not only in Canada but around the world, as being very much in a leadership role. We have to do more so that young vets, while they are still in the military, are learning what is available, how it can be long-term for them and how it can be adjusted and fine-tuned. We know there is a lot of work ahead. Everyone who is eligible, including the families because they are a very important part of it, know that early intervention and action leads to the best long-term results for the veterans.

We must continue to listen to the suggestions that are being made, including what we are getting now in our committee review, and remember that we are there to serve the military and the veterans and to provide the best possible services we can. We all know that we owe our veterans the very best of care.

• (1915)

**Mr. Robert Oliphant:** Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his response. I do note that he is encouraged by the changes and, in attempting to make my role as a critic to be a constructive role, I want to encourage him to go a little further.

Most of the programs he mentioned have actually not changed. They have very slightly evolved over the last number of years. As he acknowledges, DND does employ some returning soldiers, but Veterans Affairs Canada still does not have a significant program to employ veterans. That would be one constructive suggestion I would make, similar to other jurisdictions.

He mentions post-traumatic stress disorder and operational stress injuries. Yes, there are some clinics but I would suggest that the government needs to establish at least two Centres of Excellence to do thorough research into the Canadian context and this set of problems called post-traumatic stress disorder, perhaps one out west, perhaps one in Quebec.

Case management is absolutely critical and I hope a new model is developed for that. I encourage him to continue his work.

• (1920)

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** Madam Speaker, I certainly thank my colleague again, as I think he is showing that the will is there to keep cooperating in looking for improvements. There is a need to continue improving and looking at how we can do better.

I think the fact that we are in a review process now is very healthy. We will be reporting back as a parliamentary committee with a number of positive recommendations that we heard. They all must be focused on the fact that all members of the House, regardless of party, want to do the best we can for our veterans. Therefore, cooperation at the end of the day is necessary.

I thank the member for raising the issue again this evening.

## MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Madam Speaker, on March 26 I asked the government about its plans to include contraceptive health in its G8 child and maternal health initiative. Since then the government has conceded that access to contraceptives should be included. I am very pleased that it has realized that access to contraception can reduce maternal mortality by 70%.

However, the government has continued to refuse access to abortion under the plan, despite knowing that more than half a

million women die every year in developing countries because of unwanted pregnancies, including 55,000 women from botched abortions. We should note that these figures are based on reporting rates that are traditionally very poor.

This is completely unacceptable, but of even more concern, according to the Canadian International Development Agency, is that 2.5 million teenagers worldwide have unsafe abortions, and those young women face, to a very significant degree, serious complications that are often life threatening.

No one is fooled about the underlying reasons for this. It is clearly ideologically based. Because of this, lives are at risk and the cycle of links between poverty and child and maternal health issues continues.

The government ignored advice from domestic and international experts when it excluded abortion funding from its G8 maternal and child health initiative, including CIDA, UNICEF and World Vision.

The risk of a woman dying as a result of pregnancy or childbirth is one in seven in the poorest parts of the world, but it is more than 80% preventable, and this is what the Royal Society of Canada is saying. To go back to contraception, this week it said:

Provision of effective contraception for approximately 200 million who have none will prevent 23 million unplanned births, 22 million induced abortions and 14,000 pregnancy-related maternal deaths each year.

This evidence is so irrefutable, it is there in black and white, but when I originally asked the government a question about contraception and maternal health, it said it would not even fund contraception. Now it says yes; but do we trust it to keep its promises?

Further, the government does not have the support of Canadians on this issue. The Canadian Press-Harris/Decima poll found this month that only 30% of respondents would support the government's decision excluding abortion funding from the G8 initiative.

Thus the government is rejecting the advice of Canadians, it is rejecting the advice of experts, and it is rejecting the advice of other G8 countries and G8 governments, like the U.S. and the U.K. who have come out against our government's decision.

Further addressing child and maternal health, we have to get serious about poverty. We need to come together on this issue as we approach the deadline for the millennium development goals that aim to reduce extreme poverty around the world by 2015. We need to increase funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, all of which have links to child and maternal health. The Canadian share would be about \$700 million over the next three years.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

While Canada has followed through on its 2005 commitments to increase aid to Africa, we continue to be at risk of falling back to previous levels of inaction, because the government is freezing its current contributions at 2010 levels for five years.

All of these issues are linked. Therefore, my question to the government is, will it stop with its ideologically driven agenda and take a comprehensive approach to child and maternal health in the global south?

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to be heard in the House on this important issue again.

Our government's track record on foreign aid is impeccable. As she noted, we have doubled our aid to Africa, we have doubled our total aid to a record \$5 billion, and we are making our aid more effective, focused and accountable. The goal of foreign aid is obvious: to reduce poverty in developing countries. Improving the lives of mothers and children is the foundation to achieving sustainable poverty reduction.

This year the international community will review the progress made in achieving the millennium development goals before the 2015 deadline. Of all the MDGs put forward a decade ago, improving maternal health is the one that lags farthest behind. Our Prime Minister took this fact into consideration and made this issue his. Canada will be the country that leads the world forward to help mothers and children.

According to the World Health Organization, every year more than 500,000 women die during pregnancy and childbirth from largely preventable causes, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. These women are giving birth in conditions that are entirely unsanitary. Our initiative is working to change that. I urge the opposition to get onside with the government and with the NGOs.

With respect to reducing child mortality, MDG 4, the situation is equally concerning. Although mortality for children under the age of five has declined steadily worldwide, we have not yet managed to get to the point required to meet the MDG goal by 2015.

Every year three million babies die within the first week of life. Almost nine million children in the developing world die before their fifth birthday from largely preventable diseases, such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, severe acute malnutrition, measles and HIV. The tragic fact is there are simple solutions to address all of these problems. That is why the Prime Minister chose to focus on maternal and under-five child health at the G8 summit in June.

A few weeks ago in Halifax, all G8 development ministers unanimously agreed that improving the health of mothers and children was a top priority for the G8. There was a strong consensus that our scope of action would require a comprehensive approach that would include the full continuum of care from pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, delivery and early childhood.

This means integrating high-impact interventions at the community level, such as antenatal care, postpartum care, family planning, treatment and prevention of diseases, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, immunization and nutrition.

Ministers really stressed the importance of improving and integrating nutrition into the development goals. Most important, and in keeping with the Prime Minister's focus on accountability that he set out as a key theme for our G8 presidency, we agreed to a set of principles on which to guide the work ahead.

As the Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon said:

We know how to save mothers' lives. Some simple blood tests, a doctor's consultation and someone qualified to help with the birth can make a huge difference. Add some basic antibiotics, blood transfusions and a safe operating room, and the risk of death can almost be eliminated.

Before the member opposite gets up to respond to the question, she should consider the words of those development ministers from the G8 countries. We want to get the most bang for our buck. I have just finished outlining all of the things that we will be able to do not only in a cost effective way but in the most efficient way possible to be able to positively impact this situation.

● (1925)

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Madam Speaker, our foreign aid is nowhere near the 0.7% of GDP in the millennium development goals and we renege on our promises to get there the minute the G8 photo op is over, each and every time. The message that we are sending is that women do not count unless they are mothers.

Do members know what a real plan looks like? This is what a real plan should look like. First, Canada should use its position as host of the G8 and G20 to take a leadership role, a global leadership role towards improving maternal and child health in the developing world by: one, committing significant new funds, separate from existing commitments, to build on successful international health interventions; two, by moving toward doubling our contribution to the global fund to fight HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria; and three, by ensuring that Canadian support for maternal health in the developing world includes a commitment to strengthening sexual and reproductive health care services, including family planning and safe abortion where it is legal.

This is a real plan. Will the government act on it?

● (1930)

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Madam Speaker, over the past few months the Minister of International Cooperation met with representatives of our Canadian non-governmental partners, such as CARE, UNICEF, World Vision and Save the Children, who shared their collective experience and knowledge with her and helped plan our initiative for mothers and maternal health.

Canada is also working closely with its multilateral partners, such as the UN; the World Health Organization; UNICEF; the World Food Programme; the OECD; and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

Our objective with this initiative is to eliminate, as much as we possibly can, unnecessary deaths of mothers and children. We are on track to achieve that objective.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. (The House adjourned at 7:31 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to order made on Thursday, May 6, 2010.

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