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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, November 1, 2010**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 1, 2010

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*English*]

#### AN ACT TO PREVENT COERCION OF PREGNANT WOMEN TO ABORT (ROXANNE'S LAW)

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC)** moved that Bill C-510, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercion), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-510, known as Roxanne's Law, and I do so on behalf of Roxanne's family, including her sister, Ana Maria.

This legislation would give much needed protection to pregnant women, empowering them to press charges should someone coerce them into ending their pregnancy.

The day Roxanne Fernando arrived in Canada from the Philippines was one of the best days of her life. She had been waiting a long time to see her sister again. Roxanne's life in Canada started off so well as she easily made friends. After her friend Sandy got her a job as a server at the Radisson Hotel in Winnipeg, Roxanne quickly became everyone's favourite. Sandy recalls the time when Roxanne was out with about eight co-workers after their shift and, when no one was noticing, Roxanne paid for everyone's dinner. They all pleaded with her to take their money knowing the humble means that she had but she would not take their money. Her friends meant a lot to her.

Roxanne was also excited about her new boyfriend. She met her boyfriend at a restaurant where they both worked. What started as a normal relationship, changed quickly when Roxanne became pregnant in early 2007. Roxanne's excitement at being pregnant was not shared by her boyfriend. Her boyfriend immediately began threatening and coercing Roxanne into having an abortion. After being rejected the first time, her boyfriend returned to continue the pressure and threats but in the end Roxanne would not change her mind. Roxanne was choosing to have her baby.

Unfortunately, her boyfriend would decide to take his coercive threats a terrible step further and devised a plan to kill her. Her

boyfriend and some friends he hired beat Roxanne to the edge of death with a hockey stick and left her in a snowbank to die.

Roxanne's final moments are very disturbing. Roxanne likely cried out for help in that field and she died thinking no one could hear her. Today, however, in the House of Commons her voice is being heard.

This bill might be based on Roxanne Fernando but there are many Roxannes across this country and, sadly, many of these vulnerable women are often targeted for violence. When women find themselves in dangerous situations and without specific legal protection, they may feel that an unwanted abortion is their only option. Roxanne's law would empower pregnant women to take legal action should they be intimidated and pressured into ending their pregnancy. Had this bill been in place in 2007, it would have been much easier for Roxanne to press charges against her boyfriend when he was coercing her to end her pregnancy.

Bill C-510 would communicate to all Canadians that coercing a woman to end her pregnancy against her will is wrong and unacceptable in a nation that values compassion, justice and human rights.

Roxanne's Law would not affect women's access to abortion in any way. With this law in place, Canada will continue to have no legal restrictions on the procedure permitted in all nine months of pregnancy. However, for those women who choose to have their baby, this law would give them added protection to fulfill their hopes and dreams of having a family.

Pregnant women are not adequately protected by our current laws. Our current laws against coercion and uttering threats do not specifically address the issue of abortion coercion. Roxanne's story demonstrates that this type of coercion takes place but I am not aware of any cases where a person has been charged under our existing laws. This is proof that clarity in our law is necessary.

Roxanne's Law, Bill C-510, would clarify the law by defining what exactly constitutes coercive behaviour in the context of an unwanted abortion, making such behaviour a criminal offence and liable to imprisonment for a period ranging from 18 months to 5 years, depending on the circumstances. This would send a clear message to everyone in Canada that coercing a woman into ending her pregnancy when she has chosen to remain pregnant will not be tolerated. Knowledge is power and such clarity will empower women with the knowledge of their rights.

*Private Members' Business*

•(1105)

As a result, coercive behaviour toward pregnant women should decrease in the future and, hopefully, tragedies, similar to what happened to Roxanne, will be averted. When coercive behaviour does occur, women will be empowered to take legal action before the coercion escalates to more serious forms of violence.

Opponents of this bill have said that it would criminalize those who provide counselling to pregnant women. This is entirely false. Any discussion of the various pregnancy options in a non-threatening manner is perfectly legitimate. For added clarity, there is an exemption in clause 3 of the bill for speech related to lawful pregnancy options in any speech that is protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Opponents have also indicated concern about the use of the word "child" in clause 3 as it pertains to the unborn. However, the Criminal Code's language concerning a pre-born baby currently uses only the word "child" and, in the interests of simplicity, there is no reason to add a new word.

The member for Halifax has suggested that she would prefer using the word "fetus". Although that term is currently not used in the Criminal Code, an amendment to introduce that term and use it instead of "child" could easily be made at committee. This change would not alter the intent of Roxanne's law and would likely be accepted as a friendly amendment.

What do the international and legal communities say about coerced abortion?

At the International Conference on Population and Development, the international community agreed, in paragraph 8.25 of the ICPD program of action that:

Coerced abortion is explicitly recognized as a violation of basic human rights and principles.

Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board has strongly condemned coerced abortion.

In a 2004 case, a Chinese woman, who had been involved in carrying out China's so-called family planning policies, was claiming refugee status in Canada. Thomas H. Kemsly, who wrote the decision, referred to forced or coerced abortion as "a crime against humanity", "an act of barbarous cruelty that shocks the conscience", and "contrary to human dignity". "Forced" abortion was considered "to include situations when a woman 'agrees' to an abortion after extreme, unrelenting psychological pressure and threats". Because of her involvement in forcing and coercing women in China to end their pregnancies, this woman was found to have committed crimes against humanity and her claim for refugee status in Canada was thus denied.

Not only do we deny refugee status to those who have committed forced or coerced abortions abroad, but we also protect refugee claimants who are targets of such coercive policies. The Refugee Protection Division of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board has granted protection to women who fear being victims of China's one-child policy.

For example, one claimant who had become pregnant a second time in violation of that country's one-child policy was arrested when

she was eight months' pregnant and forced to end her pregnancy. The refugee division found that she had been persecuted by being forced to have an abortion and that there was more than a mere possibility that she would suffer either another procedure, forced sterilization or both if she returned to China.

Clearly, then, we know that when justice and compassion demands this, it is given to our refugee claimants.

It is now time we act justly and compassionately when it comes to women who face coerced abortion right here in Canada. It is now time to give Canadian women legal protection against the same coercive behaviour we condemn at refugee hearings and use as a basis for granting or denying refugee status. It is now time for Roxanne's law.

Roxanne's law would help vulnerable women to safely continue a wanted pregnancy by acting as a deterrent to coercive behaviour. Roxanne's law would empower to press charges should someone attempt to coerce them into ending their pregnancy. Bill C-510 would become a new tool in the fight against domestic abuse.

We cannot continue to ignore the dangerous situations many pregnant women find themselves in when they choose to continue a pregnancy. When a pregnant woman is faced with intense and repeated pressure to have an abortion against her will, her ability to bring her wanted child safely to term is threatened. No one has a right to threaten, intimidate or badger a woman into ending her pregnancy just because that person thinks her child is an unwanted burden. No pregnant woman should ever have to choose between protecting herself and protecting her baby.

•(1110)

I repeat that no pregnant woman should ever have to choose between protecting herself and protecting her baby. A compassionate society such as Canada cannot abandon a woman who is already dealing with the many challenges of pregnancy when she is facing such intense threats and coercion. Surely we have an obligation to give a woman the best chance possible to bring her wanted child safely to term. Bill C-510 would provide explicit protection so that a mother could make it safely through the pregnancy and fulfill every parent's greatest wish to have a healthy child.

Our own Supreme Court of Canada emphasized this obligation and recognized the value of pregnancy in *Dobson v. Dobson*:

Pregnancy represents not only the hope of future generations but also the continuation of the species. It is difficult to imagine a human condition that is more important to society.

Abortion is obviously a very emotional issue that divides Canadians. There are intelligent and passionate women and men on each side and this bill does not judge either side. I hope that no matter how each of us feels about this issue, we can join together to protect women who are being threatened and intimidated into having abortions they do not want. For Roxanne's sake and for the many women who suffer from this form of abuse, I hope we can look past the rhetoric and provide them with some much needed protection.

A few weeks ago I spoke at a banquet at the Radisson Hotel in Winnipeg. As I often do these days, I told the story of Roxanne Fernando. All of the staff in the room were welling up with emotion. After I sat back down in my seat, a few of them came over and told me that Roxanne had been serving in that very room just a few years ago. They were her co-workers and friends. It was a stark reminder of how connected this person was to my home community and how important it is to remember Roxanne for her bravery.

I ask my fellow members of Parliament to honour the memory of Roxanne Fernando, to stand up for pregnant women and to vote in favour of Bill C-510 at second reading. Roxanne Fernando is a Canadian hero.

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to my colleague for his courage in bringing this bill forward. It is a necessary bill.

I was surprised to hear how strong the international community feels about coerced abortion in terms of intimidation and threats, and pressure that can be applied by the state. I am wondering if he would talk more about whether there should be a distinction made between state coercion and personal coercion in this issue.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Mr. Speaker, the focus of the bill is primarily on domestic abuse and personal coercion. There are, though, other countries in the world including three in Europe that have laws such as what is being proposed. France, Italy and Germany have passed laws that make it an offence to coerce a woman into ending her pregnancy.

● (1115)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to debate this bill today because we are once again debating abortion. Regardless of what the member for Winnipeg South would have us believe, this bill reopens the abortion debate. In fact, his leader was so angry the day he introduced this bill that he even said he would not support it. The Prime Minister's spokesperson, Dimitri Soudas, also stated that the government leader would not vote for this bill.

I cannot understand why the member for Winnipeg South still wants to debate this bill. I also cannot understand why he is still receiving so much support from his party despite the fact that his leader is refusing to support this bill.

They can try to dress this bill up and manipulate people in all kinds of ways, but the fact is that it would restrict access to freedom of choice. That debate is over. We do not need to talk about it again. It was clear last year when we debated maternal and child health. Once again, the member for Winnipeg South was very clear. He told

people that some progress had been made and that more would be made in the coming year.

That is what he is trying to do with this bill, and he said so right here on Parliament Hill. The women of Quebec and Canada—the people of Quebec and Canada—are not fools. We understand perfectly well what he said and what he meant. He thinks that he made progress this year by convincing his government not to give women in developing countries access to a full range of family planning services. Yet we are well aware that thousands of women die every day because they do not have access to safe, sterile abortion services.

He said that he had made progress, and that more would be made in the coming year, with the introduction of this bill and with this attempt to manipulate public opinion. That is completely unacceptable. He hoped that by naming one person in his bill he would again appeal to people's emotions. I was touched by Roxanne's story, but the reason that the member gave for her death was not true. Roxanne's murderer, his defence lawyer and the crown prosecutor all said the same thing.

Will they stop lying? Will they stop manipulating the public and trying to make them believe things that are not true? It makes no sense.

● (1120)

I have been here for six and a half years now, and every year, for six and a half years, one, two or three members introduce bills to try to interfere with women's right to choose in this country. They will not succeed. They will not succeed because we will not give up. We will not give up our rights. To those who will say that the women of this country do not have the right to get angry, I will say that there are times when it is appropriate to get angry. This time, like many other times, I have a right to be angry. Men are trying to decide what is good for us, and I will tell them that I have a right to be angry because no one has the right to decide what is good for me. Once again, this government is trying to force us to adopt this kind of bill.

I was very angry this past weekend. Pro-life groups have been set up in various cities in Quebec and Canada. They are supposedly there to help women in distress, to help women who do not know what to do. These groups are supposedly there to help women who have a difficult decision to make and, supposedly, to be objective. But these groups spout all sorts of nonsense to these women. They tell the women who come to see them that the aborted fetuses are used by pharmaceutical companies to make lipstick. They say that the fetuses will be used for things that are not true.

Quite often, these groups are financed by people that we know. Quite often, they are supported by pro-life members of the government. I am ashamed to say that I am involved in a Parliament where a group of pro-life members supports organizations that lie shamelessly to women in need of help. It is not right to lie to women who need help. This bill will isolate young women even more, when what they need is to talk, be supported and be surrounded by people who understand them and by their families, friends and partners. They need advice.

*Private Members' Business*

At the age of 15, 16 or 17, we need to be surrounded by those who are closest to us. If the people advising these young women had the misfortune to be imprisoned because they told them that an abortion was their best option, imagine what these young women would have to live with for the rest of their lives? It would be frightening.

I cannot believe that members of the House will stand up and vote for this bill. I cannot believe it. I hope that all members will stand up and vote against it.

[*English*]

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-510 is no more than a thinly veiled attempt to criminalize abortion providers and promote an anti-choice agenda. This is the fourth time in four years that a Conservative backbench member of Parliament has introduced an anti-choice private member's bill that masquerades as legislation that will protect women. In this case the member belongs to the secretive parliamentary anti-choice caucus.

Coercion is already illegal under the Criminal Code, section 264.1, and abortion counsellors are already screened for possible coercion in women seeking an abortion.

I must also point out that though the member for Winnipeg South claims that Roxanne Fernando was murdered because she refused to have an abortion, the murderer himself, his lawyer and the crown prosecutor all agreed that this was not the motive. The judge who presided over the criminal trial wrote this in his decision. Please read it:

The murder was apparently motivated by...[the defendant's] irritation and panic that Ms. Fernando, who was carrying his baby, was insistent on having a relationship with him.

I am extremely disappointed that the member would use the tragic murder of a young woman to push an anti-abortion agenda because what is quite clear is that this law would most likely be used against abortion providers and would have a chilling effect on women's access to abortion services.

Women in Canada already face challenges when trying to access abortion services. Canadians for Choice released a report in 2007, which noted that abortion services are only available in one out of six hospitals in Canada and that these services are poorly dispersed across the country, being concentrated mostly in urban areas. Some provinces refuse to fund abortion services, leaving many women with no choice.

If the bill is passed, it may restrict women's access to abortion even more, by criminalizing abortion providers.

The member for Winnipeg South is right on one point. Women do suffer abuse at the hands of their partners. Last week Statistics Canada reported that women continue to be about three times more likely to victims of spousal homicide than men. If the member for Winnipeg South were actually concerned about violence against women, he would urge his caucus and the Prime Minister to stop dismantling frameworks that address the systemic discrimination that women face.

Since 2006 the Conservative government has denied women access to justice by cancelling the Court Challenges Program, shut down 12 of 16 regional offices of Status of Women Canada, cut 40% of Status of Women Canada's operating budget, removed question

number 33 from the census, the question that dealt with unpaid labour, denied funding for research and advocacy on women's equality issues, removed the term "gender equality" from policy language at DFAIT, removed abortion from maternal health policies abroad and excluded federally regulated workers from chapter 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, the pay equity provision.

It has been four long years of nothing but contempt for women by the government. Little by little the Harper Conservatives are dismantling frameworks set up to advance women's equality—

• (1125)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. I would remind the member that she is not to use the name of other members of the House in her speech. She should refer to them either by their title or by their constituency.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** There are names.

In 1991, a committee report entitled "The War against Women" thoroughly studied the measures the federal government should take to reduce the violence faced by women. If the member for Winnipeg South really does care about reducing violence against women, I would urge him to read this report and work towards implementing the recommendations. The report explains that the vulnerability of women to violence is integrally linked to the social, economic and political inequities women experience as part of their daily lives, inequities exacerbated by the government of which the author of Bill C-510 is a member.

Tragically, violence against women has not been substantially reduced since that 1991 report. Women are far more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner. In 2009, 43% of female deaths were women killed by a male intimate or ex-intimate partner, whereas 4% of male deaths were at the hands of a female intimate or ex-intimate partner.

While all deaths are tragic, we must be determined to advance women's equality because that is the only way to reduce violence against women. Canada does not have a comprehensive long-term plan to address women's equality. The Conservative government offers only band-aid solutions to systemic problems. In truth, the government is part of the systemic problem.

Aboriginal women in Canada are five times more likely to die from violence than other women in the country. Nearly 600 aboriginal women have gone missing or have been murdered in the last 30 years, yet the Government of Canada is only now indicating it will dispense the \$10 million of funding to address this violence. Even at that, the plan is inadequate. There is no mention of important healing programs for families and individuals. Most of the funding is for policing. That is not what first nations requested. They wish a comprehensive plan that includes support for the aboriginal victims of violence and their families.

*Private Members' Business*

When it comes to the women of this nation, we have the statistics, the studies and the reports from expert panels, but what we do not have is the political will to implement the long-term solutions that will reduce the inequity between men and women. The government could introduce a national child care program, make needed changes to maternity and paternal leave, provide adequate funding for legal aid, restore the court challenges program, help women with disabilities, implement real proactive pay equity, create a national housing program and invest in programs that would address violence against women. It could do all of these things, but that would require a real commitment to women, children and families.

Bill C-510 will do nothing to reduce violence against women. Like the other anti-choice private members' bills introduced by government backbenchers, it is a Trojan Horse. When we examine Bill C-510 carefully, we see it defines abortion as causing the death of a child. Currently under the law a fetus does not become a person until born.

This bill recognizes the fetus as a child and therefore a person with legal status. Such an initiative could have significant ramifications in a number of different areas of law and opens a Pandora's box in the abortion debate.

In Canada women have been guaranteed rights and equality under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Persons do not gain legal status and rights in our society until after a live birth, as per the Criminal Code. Also, the supreme court has ruled that a woman and her fetus are considered physically one under the law, *Dobson v. Dobson*.

If we give legal rights to a fetus, we must automatically remove some rights from women, because it is impossible for two beings occupying the same body to enjoy full rights. If we try to balance rights, it means rights of one or both parties must be compromised, resulting in loss of rights. Legally speaking, it would be very difficult to justify compromising women's established rights in favour of the theoretical rights of a fetus.

It is also of concern that Bill C-510 essentially contradicts the election promises of the Conservative Party. During the past elections, their platform stated, "A Conservative Government will not...support any legislation to regulate abortion".

Bill C-510 does just that. It initiates legislation that will effectively regulate abortion in Canada by changing the definition of the legal status of a fetus. It opens the door to making abortion illegal. Canadian women fought long and hard for the right to safe, legal abortions in Canada. Women have been forced to put their private lives under scrutiny in the courts in the fight for the right to choose.

• (1130)

I would like to take a moment to thank all the brave women, organizations and abortion providers who fought for our right to choose.

I urge all members of the House to recognize this bill for what it is, an underhanded attack on women's choice. I urge all members to vote against it.

If we are to sincerely, sincerely, honour Roxanne's memory, we will end violence against women. We will not tolerate the sham that has been perpetrated against the women of this country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate at second reading on Bill C-510, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercion), also known as Roxanne's law. This bill was introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg South in response to an incident that occurred in his riding in 2007.

Bill C-510 would amend the Criminal Code and create two new criminal offences. The first would be to coerce a pregnant woman to have an abortion and would carry a punishment of five years' imprisonment on indictment and 18 months' imprisonment on summary conviction. The second offence would be to attempt to coerce a pregnant woman to have an abortion and would carry a maximum punishment of two years' imprisonment on indictment and six months' imprisonment on summary conviction.

The bill defines several terms for the purpose of enforcement of this legislation, including the word "coercion", which can include the following behaviour: committing or threatening to commit physical harm to the female person, the child or another person; committing or threatening to commit any act prohibited by any provincial or federal law; denying or removing, or making a threat to deny or remove, financial support from a person who is financially dependent on the person engaging in the conduct; and attempting to compel by pressure or intimidation including argumentative and rancorous badgering or importunity. However, it does not include speech that is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Conversely, the bill does not define other expressions, such as "compel by pressure" and "rancorous badgering". These are new terms that appear in this bill. The bill provides an exemption for a physician who recommends that a woman end her pregnancy for physical health reasons.

Lastly, the bill includes a very unusual provision related to severability, whereby any provision of the bill that is deemed invalid or unenforceable must be construed so as to give it the maximum effect permitted by law or, if that is impossible, it must be severed from the bill. This is an unusual provision.

*Private Members' Business*

Bill C-510 proposes making an offence out of certain conduct that is already prohibited under the Criminal Code and other acts—again, already prohibited under the Criminal Code and other acts—by way of offences such as assault (section 265 of the Criminal Code), uttering threats (section 264.1 of the Criminal Code) and intimidation (section 423 of the Criminal Code). It also proposes prohibiting interpersonal conduct, which is generally outside the traditional domain of criminal law—again, outside criminal law—such as non-violent disputes between spouses or between parents and their children where one of the parties is opposed to the continuation of the pregnancy and favours abortion. I am talking about non-violent conduct and discussions between various parties.

The proposed offences are likely to be difficult to interpret and subject to charter challenges because of the use of vague and undefined expressions such as, “compel by pressure”, which is quite new, and “rancorous badgering”, which is extremely new, because of the attempt to make the offence consistent with the charter by excluding from the definition of “coercion” speech that is protected by the charter, and because of the unusual provision, as I was saying earlier, with regard to severability, which hinders the discretionary power of the courts to order suitable restitution under the charter.

● (1135)

There are major legal difficulties with this bill and that is why I cannot support it.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I am pleased to be taking part in this debate on abortion, as I thought it was already over.

I have received some letters from Canadians about this bill. Rather than gave a speech, I will just read the letter that I sent in reply to inquiries which, for the most part, opposed this bill, although a few were in favour of it.

● (1140)

[*English*]

It states:

Dear [Sir or Madam]:

Thank you for your recent letter on the topic of Bill C-510, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercion), also known as “Roxanne’s Law”.

This Private Member’s Bill is a clear attempt to reintroduce an unwanted debate on abortion in the House of Commons. As such, I will not be supporting it at second reading.

I will not be recommending to my caucus members to support it at second reading. In fact, I will be strongly urging them not to support this bill at second reading.

It goes on to say:

The Prime Minister’s office has also indicated, after some delay, that it does not support this legislation.

It is important to note that the remedies proposed by [the member of Parliament for Winnipeg South] are wholly redundant, as existing sections of the Criminal Code already apply to cases of “coerced abortion”.

[*Translation*]

I am referring to the provisions on uttering threats, assault and extortion.

Subsection 264.1(1) of the Criminal Code—Uttering threats—states:

Every one commits an offence who, in any manner, knowingly utters, conveys or causes any person to receive a threat

(a) to cause death or bodily harm to any person;

(b) to burn, destroy or damage real or personal property; or

(c) to kill, poison or injure an animal or bird that is the property of any person.

Subsection 265(1) on assault states:

A person commits an assault when

(a) without the consent of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly;

(b) he attempts or threatens, by an act or a gesture, to apply force to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or

(c) while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or an imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs.

It is obviously already covered under paragraph (b).

As for subsection 346(1), it states:

Every one commits extortion who, without reasonable justification or excuse and with intent to obtain anything, by threats, accusations, menaces or violence induces or attempts to induce any person, whether or not he is the person threatened, accused or menaced or to whom violence is shown, to do anything or cause anything to be done.

I will conclude my reading of the letter that I sent out in response:

It should also be noted that the sentences provided for in C-510, a maximum of five years for an indictable offence, are equal to or LESS than what is provided for in the provisions mentioned above. For example, the punishment for aggravated assault can go up to 14 years for an indictable offence.

Sincerely,

The Honourable...

And I signed my name.

The provisions of the Criminal Code on uttering threats, assault and extortion cover very well what Bill C-510 is trying to target. We do not need this bill to protect pregnant women who suffer pressure, threats, assault or extortion from a partner, the child’s father or anyone else who wants them to have an abortion against their will or who wants to prevent them from having an abortion.

The Supreme Court of Canada already issued a ruling in a case that was famous in Quebec. A woman wanted to have an abortion, and her spouse at the time tried to prevent it by taking her to court. The Supreme Court ruled that he, or anyone else, did not have the right to force a woman to have an abortion or to stop her from having one, through threats, assault or extortion.

● (1145)

The member for Winnipeg South might have had good intentions, but he probably did not read the Criminal Code properly. If he is complaining that it is not being used, then we need to be talking to police forces to ensure that they enforce the provisions they already have. Furthermore, we must educate and inform women to ensure that they are fully aware of their rights when they have a decision to make about a pregnancy and that they know that the Criminal Code protects them against threats, extortion and threats of assault.

I will end there. I have no doubt that the member for Winnipeg South means well, but his bill is redundant, in light of the provisions in the Criminal Code that already deal with the situation addressed in his bill.



*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak to Bill C-510, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (coercion). It is with some distress that I am rising to speak on this particular bill.

Many women who have fought long and hard for a woman's right to choose believe that this is a backdoor way of reopening the debate on abortion. This is a debate that over the years people have agreed not to reopen in Parliament. Part of the reason that women are so distressed and angry about this private member's bill is that they see it as undermining women's equality.

I want to acknowledge the member for London—Fanshawe, who argued that over the last five years we have seen an erosion of supports for women. Any number of programs are simply not available to women, including the court challenges program and access to universal child care.

I want to talk briefly about a definition of equality that the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada has put forward. This definition speaks to why women are feeling as if their right to equality is being undermined. The definition of “equality” is as follows: “To achieve equality, all women must have the right to decide for themselves whether and when they will bear children, and how many. Without control of their fertility, women cannot have autonomy over their lives and cannot play a full and equal role in society”.

The right to autonomy includes both a woman's right to choose to have children and a woman's right to choose not to have children. In both circumstances, we would look to the state to provide the tools and resources to support women in their decisions.

With respect to a woman's right to choose to have an abortion, health care needs to be provided along with the necessary tools, resources, and supports. At the same time, when a woman chooses to bear a child, supports should also be in place. Some of this is health care, but a lot of it is pay equity.

The member for London—Fanshawe talked about pay equity. A woman should have a right to earn as much as a man. Women need a right to child care, not \$100 a month, so they can raise their children to become contributing members of society. There are rights and responsibilities on both sides of this argument.

The opening of this painful debate arises from an event that was absolutely tragic. But coercion is not what we should be debating in the House. Other members have ably argued that the Criminal Code already prohibits coercive behaviour. One of the members opposite stated that he has grave concerns about whether this bill, as it stands, would be subject to court challenges.

I want to put this in a historical context. The Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada has outlined Canada's legal situation. It states:

Canada first liberalized its criminal abortion law in 1969, allowing it to be performed in hospitals with the approval of a “therapeutic abortion committee.” But the law resulted in unequal access for women so the Canadian Supreme Court threw out the entire law in 1988. Although the Canadian legislature soon tried to re-criminalize abortion, the bill failed to pass. Governments have said repeatedly over the years that they do not intend to re-legislate against abortion. This leaves Canada as the only democratic, industrialized nation in the world with no laws restricting abortion. (Only two other countries have no laws: China and North Korea). Yet

Canada has a relatively low rate of abortion compared to other industrialized countries and one of the lowest rates of abortion-related complications and maternal mortality in the world. Over 90% of abortions are performed before 12 weeks gestation, and 98% before 16 weeks gestation. These statistics prove that no laws are needed to regulate or reduce abortions, and that women and doctors can be trusted to exercise the right responsibly.

• (1150)

It is important to understand, in this context, that women and doctors can be trusted to exercise their rights responsibly. This underpins a woman's right to safe abortion.

The Supreme Court grounded the right to abortion in Canada's Constitution, where the primary protection cited was women's right to “security of the person.”

The Supreme Court has stated that women's equality rights are enshrined in Canada's Constitution. This is something to be kept in mind whenever we raise the issue of a woman's right to choose. It is clear that equality rights are enshrined in our Constitution, that these rights guarantee women the right to choose to abort, and that this right has been upheld in Canadian courts.

I want to turn to the bill before us, Bill C-510. It has been argued that it protects women and their rights. But this does not pan out when we start examining the bill.

On April 19, the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada put out a press release that said it was wrong to pressure women into an abortion. I think we would all acknowledge that. None of us would say it is right to pressure women into abortion. The release also says that such pressuring does not occur on the grand scale often claimed by anti-choice propagandists, that it mostly stems from situations of domestic abuse.

As was referred to previously, a recent U.S. study examined reproductive control of women by abusive male partners. Some were pressured to have an abortion, but women also reported that their partners prevented them from obtaining or using birth control, threatened them with pregnancy, or forced unprotected sex on them. If they became pregnant and wanted an abortion, some partners threatened or pressured them to carry to term.

If we really want to protect women, we should make sure that women have access to transition houses and income equality. These things would give them a way out of abusive relationships. We should look for new ways to protect women from domestic violence. Women should not be forced to stay in relationships just because they do not see any way out, or because their communities do not have safe houses for them to go to.

*Private Members' Business*

The member for London—Fanshawe mentioned the murdered and missing aboriginal women. We saw an announcement on Friday that is heavy on enforcement and light on protecting women before they go missing or are murdered. Yes, we acknowledge that it is important to have the database and some other resources in place once women go missing, but what are we doing to protect them before they go missing? Where are the resources for them in their communities so that they have someplace to go when they are unsafe?

In their press release, the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada gave several reasons that Bill C-510 is not needed or is suspect:

First, the bill is mostly redundant, because threats and illegal acts are already illegal under the Criminal Code.

A number of people have already touched on this. Under the Criminal Code, people can already be charged for uttering threats.

Second, counsellors already screen for possible coercion in women seeking abortion. Clinics do not perform abortions on women who are conflicted or being coerced. That protection is already in place.

Third, the bill patronizes women by implying they are frequently coerced into abortion, but the vast majority of women make their own decision to have an abortion and take responsibility for it.

Fourth, if the intent is to really protect women from abusive partners, we need better solutions than this bill. Women's safety and security is best assured by helping them win equality and autonomy.

I already talked about pay equity, affordable child care, legal aid, and other programs.

I would urge all members in the House to vote against Bill C-510 and work toward adopting other measures that actually protect women's equality.

• (1155)

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to reflect for a moment. I remember when I became pregnant for the first time. My husband and I were thrilled that our hopes and dreams of raising a family together would soon become a reality. I was so thankful that I had a loving and supportive husband to accompany me on this journey to motherhood.

As any woman anticipating the birth of her child will tell you, the unique experience of pregnancy is exciting, scary, exhilarating, and emotional. It is filled with many ups and downs. With all the changes and challenges, hopes and fears that pregnancy and expectant parenthood can bring, pregnant women need much support. I cannot imagine the loneliness and rejection a vulnerable young woman must feel when those closest to her, like a boyfriend, husband, mother, or father, would not be there to support her decision to have a baby and who would, even worse, actually threaten, intimidate, and pressure her into terminating the pregnancy she wants to bring to term.

As soon as I realized I was pregnant, I began bonding with my baby. I cannot describe what that feels like. Only the pregnant woman who is carrying that baby, fetus, child, whatever you want to call it, inside her womb can know exactly what it means, what it feels like to be the sole source of sustenance for this tiny human who is totally dependent on her for survival.

Whether or not the pregnancy is planned, who has the right to tell that woman that what she is carrying inside her is a burden and must be disposed of? Who has the right to coerce her into ending her pregnancy, thereby ending her chance to give birth to her baby? No one has that right. That is why we need Roxanne's law. We need to protect pregnant women, especially when they are at their most vulnerable, from being coerced into having abortions they do not want.

It is well documented that women can suffer tremendously after having a miscarriage. When a woman loses a wanted pregnancy, she can experience intense feelings of sadness, anger, and guilt for not having been able to keep her unborn child safe. Many people cannot fully comprehend the extent of the grief a woman suffers after a miscarriage, because they do not understand the bond that has already begun to develop between her and her unborn child.

I can imagine that a woman who has been forced to have an abortion would suffer at least as much and perhaps more, because the loss would not be accidental. Instead, the loss results from a cruel and deliberate exploitation of her vulnerability by someone she should be able to trust and depend on.

Research shows that when women feel pressured into having abortions they are at increased risk of suffering negative psychological outcomes. A 2005 study published in *General Hospital Psychiatry* found that male pressure on women to abort was significantly associated with negative abortion-related emotions in the two years following an abortion. A 2004 study in the *Medical Science Monitor* found that pressure to abort was predictive of adverse psychological adjustment following the abortion experience.

Some people have said that we do not need such a law because coercion does not happen. In many cases, women freely choose their abortions, but we also know from anecdotal evidence that many other women are coerced.

When enacted into law, Bill C-510 will send a clear message that coercing a woman to end her pregnancy against her will is wrong. It will send a message to women that the law is there to protect them, so that if someone attempts to coerce a woman to have an abortion she does not want, she can press charges before it is too late for her and her baby.

When Roxanne's law comes to a vote next month, I will stand up for pregnant women and for motherhood. I will remember Roxanne and be grateful for the small part I have played to bring some good out of her tragedy.

• (1200)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar will have five minutes when the House returns to this matter.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SUSTAINING CANADA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

The House resumed from October 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-47, the sustaining Canada's economic recovery act.

When reading reports or listening to speeches on economic issues, it is often possible to be overwhelmed by numbers, statistics and projections. However, beyond these figures and complicated tables are human stories of Canadians simply trying to build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities in times that are increasingly less certain.

As we all know, seniors across Canada face some of the most pressing challenges in terms of maintaining a decent living for themselves. Upon retirement, the vast majority of Canadian seniors see a significant reduction in their income. Whether they have managed to purchase their own homes or not, the expenses they face can appear daunting to them as they enter their retirement years. Indeed, these expenses are significant to those on fixed incomes.

These expenses include electricity, gas, food, home maintenance, property taxes, transportation costs, health costs in terms of prescriptions and assistance devices, and the list goes on. Unfortunately, all of these expenses are increasing as time passes, while income, particularly retirement income, simply does not keep pace.

It is for this reason that we as a society must recognize that our population is aging and that many of our seniors find it difficult to make ends meet. The challenge will only become more acute in the coming years.

While public policy encourages Canadians to save for retirement, it is widely recognized that only one in five Canadians has an employment-based retirement pension plan. It is a simple fact that most Canadians without an employment-based pension plan have little left over to save for retirement.

While others may save independently, many Canadians are relying on the Canada pension plan to support them in retirement and these payments are simply not enough to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

Those are some of the challenges for seniors in Canada.

We as a society must recognize that we have an obligation to consider fully the unique challenges facing Canadian seniors. We have an obligation to consider the kind of programs and initiatives to ensure that those who have worked hard all of their lives can live decent and meaningful lives when they retire.

We need to have serious discussions in this country about public policy considerations, such as reducing property taxes for seniors or providing a rebate for these payments through tax policy, increasing assistance for those who need prescription medications or specialized in-home medical care, and proper community support systems

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that are adequately funded. These are only a few of the areas of concern.

We owe it to seniors in this country to ensure that they can enjoy their hard-earned retirement years.

Similarly, many young families in this country are struggling, which should not be the case in a prosperous country like Canada. It is shocking and intolerable that, according to a 2008 report, one in nine Canadian children lives in poverty. That is one million children who must contend each day with the terrible reality of poverty.

These are working families who, at the end of the month, simply do not have enough money to cover all of their expenses. It is this kind of poverty that is vicious, in that it is circular in nature. It traps people in a cycle of poverty which in most cases is difficult to escape.

Recently, the Senate of Canada released a report on poverty, "In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness". The report contains 74 recommendations that should be considered. These recommendations include a call to increase the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, a national affordable housing program and to make the disability tax credit refundable. We must consider these kinds of public policy initiatives.

I would remind members that it was the previous Liberal government under Prime Minister Paul Martin that began to invest in affordable housing for the first time in a generation. It was also the Liberal Party which, in the last general election, had a specific plan to address poverty in Canada in general and child poverty in particular.

Young people in this country require an increasingly specialized level of education if they are to have any chance at all of competing in the rapidly changing global marketplace. It is only the fortunate few who, through family or other means, have the resources to fully cover the cost of their education. The reality for most students is that they work while attending post-secondary institutions. They also assume large student loan debts which will hound them for years to come.

● (1205)

It is incumbent upon us as a society to have serious debates about what we can do to address the issues facing young people who are increasingly leaving school with unmanageable debt loads which they assumed simply so they could obtain an education.

Not only is it in the best interests of the students to attend school and become as competitive in the world marketplace as they possibly can, but it is also in the best interests of our country.

The future belongs to our young people. We need to do all that we can to position them well as they enter their working lives. For them to do so with the burden of enormous debt is not the way to achieve this goal. We must look at ways to make post-secondary education more affordable and less burdensome. Today unfortunately the opposite is happening.

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Universities and colleges are facing ever increasing fiscal pressures and as a result are charging higher fees. Students, even those who are fortunate enough to find work during their years of study, have to borrow more to cover their education costs. We need to lessen this burden and adequately fund our elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools.

There is an infrastructure deficit in this country which, several years ago under the previous Liberal government, began to receive the attention it deserved. The global economic meltdown in 2008 forced many of these reports from the front pages. If we are to remain competitive and in order to sustain healthy cities and communities, we must have a plan of action that is well-funded to repair or replace and sustain infrastructure across the country.

It is simply not reasonable to suggest that we can remain competitive when our infrastructure is aging and in disrepair. In my home city of Toronto there are sewage systems that are over 100 years old and clearly in need of replacement. This story is repeated across the country. As the previous Liberal government had begun to do, we need to start addressing the infrastructure needs of Canada's cities and communities.

I recognize that in the hue and cry about fiscal realities the inevitable question is, how does one pay for the kinds of programs and initiatives mentioned in my remarks today? It is about priorities and putting in place the public policies we need to get the job done.

How can it be that the government can find \$1 billion to cover the costs of a 72-hour meeting in Toronto and Huntsville which produced questionable results, and yet when it comes to poverty, the cry is that there is no money to be found? That \$1 billion would have gone a long way in helping to address poverty in this country. It would be better spent in this way than on photo ops and closed door meetings.

Similarly, the government maintains there is no money to fund students or address the needs of seniors and young families, yet it continues on a program of corporate tax cuts in the billions of dollars.

Canada's economy is competitive. Corporations are effectively competing on the world stage. We would do better to cancel the billions of dollars in tax cuts for the large corporations and instead channel that money into the areas I have referred to in these remarks. We need to be building schools and hospitals with this money, not corporate office towers. We need to be helping young people go to school, not world leaders at meetings of dubious value at billion dollar conferences.

The reality is that we must adopt public policies that would help Canadians and their families to live the lives they deserve. We can be prosperous and prudent, compassionate and responsible. We can also be progressive and sensible. This is how we build a nation in which all have the opportunity to excel. In so doing, we help create what is considered to be the greatest country on earth.

• (1210)

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Davenport for making an effort at putting on the table a discussion about a vision the country ought to have through the House of Commons.

I went through Bill C-47 and I am sure he did not find that macro-picture which the government says it would like to address. It is another little Chihuahua piece of legislation: lots of bark but very little bite. Here is where the bite is, and I would like the member for Davenport to address this.

There are some very light issues in this legislation about what the government is trying to do in order to maintain the sustainability of the recovery, and yet as part of this package, in part 2 of the bill the government is asking for the authority to impose a \$3.2 billion tax on air travellers. One wonders whether the sustainability of an economic recovery would be maintained by hiding taxes in a piece of legislation that is allegedly designed to do something more.

Is this another one of those cases where it is sound bite legislation, lots of sound and no bite?

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I would probably agree that we are concerned about what is in this legislation, but we are also concerned about what is missing from the legislation. What is missing is the whole idea that as a society and as legislators, we are responsible for the social building blocks of this country, and what I see is that they are being slowly eroded and dismantled. We are not putting enough into both our social infrastructure and our physical infrastructure.

I am very much concerned about the direction in which we are going and where our priorities seem to lie. We want to make sure that we are investing in our communities and our social infrastructure, and that we also look at changing some of the policies and directions. We have an aging population. We have crumbling infrastructure. We have cities in need. We have problems of youth unemployment. Are they being addressed? My concern is that unfortunately they are not being addressed in this bill.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Liberals' new-found conversion to our cause which for a very long time has been to scale back corporate tax cuts so that we can invest in the real priorities of Canadians. I have to say that it is a bit of a death-bed conversion that we are seeing here.

The corporate tax cuts did not just start under the current Conservative government. In fact, they were started and expanded under previous Liberal governments. Now we find ourselves in a situation where the current government is borrowing \$20 billion to fund its additional corporate tax cuts, when we already know that our corporate tax rates are much lower than those of our nearest competitors south of the border.

The Liberal Party in fact supported all of those tax cuts and the budgets in which we found them, either by voting with the Conservatives to keep them in power or by abstaining, thereby in essence still allowing those policies to pass.

I wonder whether the member could comment on how long this conversion will last. Will it be only until the next election and then the Liberals will reverse their position yet again? How can Canadians have faith that the Liberal Party has actually truly agreed that corporate tax cuts need to be cut, and the shift of the tax burden has to move away from individuals to corporations?

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• (1215)

**Mr. Mario Silva:** Mr. Speaker, there has been no conversion because we do not see politics as a religion, nor are we concerned about ideology. We are much more concerned about getting things done for Canadians.

We have to look at things also in a practical way. When the economy is healthy and things are growing, when we think we can afford a tax cut, we will have to put a tax cut in place. When there is a different scenario before us and Canadians are in need, then let us invest in the social infrastructure.

It is not a question of converting from one ideology to another. We do not believe in conversions of ideology. We believe in getting practical things done for Canadians when it is the right time to do them. We have always done things in a practical and meaningful way. That is the direction in which I would like to see the country go. I think the vast majority of people who are in the middle actually believe that is the best way to move forward as a country, not in an ideological way either from the right or the left.

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take the Minister of Finance on a little trip down memory lane to December 2008.

After a rather mean-spirited budget, the finance minister invited the opposition members to come forward with some issues from their ridings. I was asked, so I made some submissions. I talked to my constituents and we gave a submission to the finance minister in January 2009 and there was quite a list there. The sad part is that most of it was not taken care of over the last two years.

There were some things done because of the Auditor General. She brought forward the issue of Marine Atlantic in her report and how Marine Atlantic definitely needed more money for infrastructure. When we look at the importance of Marine Atlantic since Newfoundland and Labrador joined Confederation, it was part of the Confederation deal that it would be maintained, that goods and services would be able to travel freely across the strait to Newfoundland and from Port aux Basques and Argentia back to North Sydney.

The last few years have been really desperate in terms of the amount of infrastructure that went into terminals and into the vessels. The Auditor General noticed this, and yes, there was some money put forward to Marine Atlantic, so I have to give credit where it is due on that one.

When we look at the action plan, on page 18, the Conservatives talk about the \$62 billion, over 16,000 projects and 12,000 already completed. It is kind of shocking when we look at what has not been done in Cape Breton. I brought it up in the House on Friday. I had a question to the Prime Minister about the public building that should have been in Ingonish, a \$10-million building, the same as was spent on the Prime Minister's promotion budget. The building in Ingonish would house Parks Canada, DFO and the RCMP. It was well put together by public works. It was an efficient building. It was an environmental friendly building. But the Conservatives took it off the table. It should have been in one of those 16,000 projects. It was a win-win situation for those three departments that are so important for northern Cape Breton.

Also in northern Cape Breton we had the Cape North arena, which should have been one of the projects. We have projects right across. The most work was done by the community, and the Province of Nova Scotia has put some money in. Even the municipality of Cape Breton, CBRM, came forward with a couple of million dollars, and it is a fairly poor municipality when we think about how it tries to make ends meet. However, it put this money together for the dredging of Sydney Harbour.

I have asked this question many times in the House. It was part of the submission that was given to the finance minister at that time, that this was the number one priority for Cape Breton. So it is not that he did not know about it. The stakeholders and the municipality and the province all stepped up to the plate on this, but where is the federal government? It is nowhere to be seen, nowhere in this action plan. I do not know if the Prime Minister knows where Cape Breton is. He should come down. The whole Liberal caucus came down there this summer and had a great time. The Prime Minister should do this thing, especially when all the stakeholders are stepping up to the plate, and get this harbour dredged. It would mean so much for the future prosperity of Cape Breton.

Right now, coal boats come in half filled because they cannot come through the harbour. It needs to be dredged. We have a growing tourist industry on the cruise ships, up over 50% over the last few years; and of course, the dredging would open it to a container port. We have companies ready to step up to the plate to have a very modern container port in Sydney Harbour, but they need the dredging done. This government needs to step up to the plate and get it done.

Another issue that was brought forward and we were hoping to see in the budget is permanent employees at Citizenship and Immigration. Right now, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in Sydney, Cape Breton, does a lot of processing for immigration. There is a steady flow of immigrants coming into this country, so it is no shock to know how much work needs to be done on these files, but they continue to lay off the employees.

• (1220)

They laid them off again last year and the backlog in the immigration file started increasing again. Now they are hiring them back. It is a totally disruptive system that they have going, not only for the employees but also for the immigration process, as many of the members here know with people coming to their offices trying to get their applications processed. There are 160 jobs. The union and the representatives came to the immigration committee of the House. They showed their case and how important it was. That should have been in the budget.

I am also the critic for rural affairs and I would like to talk about the rural issues that are not being taken care of. Last year was rough on a lot of farmers out west. It was a cold spring and a very wet fall.

My colleague, the hon. member for Malpeque, visited the farmers in Manitoba. He had a hard time getting in the fields. There was a lot of water in the fields and they are in rough shape.

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It has been a rough year, when we look at the numbers in terms of crops that are being harvested. What do my colleagues from the Conservative Party bring to the House to talk about? The long gun registry. That is all they talked about this fall.

Why did they not talk about the conditions that the farmers were facing and how we as Parliament can help these farmers through their crisis? But no, it was not brought up in the House. It took the member for Malpeque to go out there, visit these fields and talk to the farmers. They want action not only by the members, but by the Prime Minister.

It is sad to see what is happening to our pork and beef producers and we do not see the government stepping up to the plate.

Another issue is what is happening with the lobster fishermen. I have many small communities that rely on the lobster industry. They had a very bad year last year, not only because of the amount of fish they were catching but also the prices.

We were thinking that perhaps the Conservatives were listening and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans came out with a policy. My hon. colleague from Cardigan said it was not enough money and it will not be accessible for those fishers, and he was right.

We found out later that most of the lobster fishers could not receive the money, and the little they did receive did not go anywhere. So the program they had to help the lobster fishers was a total failure.

We wonder where the money is going for rural Canada. We do not see it. We do not see it going to the fishermen and we do not see it going to the farmers.

However, they had another opportunity, which is part of our platform, and that is to recognize the volunteer firefighters. The work they do in these small communities across Canada is unbelievable. They are sometimes the mainstay of a small community. Many times these young men and women who are working for volunteer fire department have to put all their courses into it. It would have been a great opportunity to have had a tax credit of \$3,000 for them in this budget. It would have shown respect. It would have helped to encourage them, because they are the lifeline for these rural communities.

As the critic for rural affairs, I cannot believe how little was done on the Conservative side. There was so much opportunity. When we look at the amount of money that was spent on signs, photo-ops and building fake lakes, and promotion of the Prime Minister's office, a lot of that money could have gone into these small projects across the country. It could have helped farmers, fishers, and small communities and we would have had something to show for it.

What do we have now? A big deficit. We could have seen the money go to the areas where it should have gone, but what we see now is a big deficit. The previous Liberal governments invested in communities. We used to have the SCIF program, which helped small communities. It was a good program for the small communities. When a small community would step up to the plate with funds or volunteerism, the SCIF program kicked in. It was a program that could have really worked. The government did not have to reinvent the wheel and it did not break the bank.

What we see are many programs and initiatives that cost a lot of money that did not go where it should have gone and we definitely see it in Cape Breton.

I suggest that the Prime Minister visit there, stop playing politics with Cape Breton and get the projects done, especially the projects where the community steps up to the plate. Just get it done and if the government is going to do it, it should do it fairly right across the country.

• (1225)

I now will entertain questions from my hon. colleagues.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague will answer this question, because it is an important one.

When we looked through the budget implementation bill, looking for the government's response to what Canadians have been demanding, which is better action on the environment particularly dealing with climate change, there was a program, and it is rare for opposition to do this, that the government continued. The eco-energy program allowed Canadians to receive some support from the government to make their homes more energy efficient and to retrofit their homes.

We found that the take-up from consumers in particular, not so much on the business side but on the individual consumer side, was excellent. People were picking it up. We heard from contractors across the country. If we want to talk about stimulus spending, this was a good way to stimulate the economy. The contractors who were doing the renovations were often buying the products locally and doing the work, obviously, at a local level, and it was a way to stimulate the economy.

Instead, we saw the government continue its outrageous support of the tar sands with \$2.1 billion. I am asking my hon. colleague, is this in any way a balanced response to the demand coming from Canadians to deal with environmental issues and to help control their own costs, such as home heating, in these very difficult times?

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the environment was brought up.

Since we are talking about the environment and how we stepped up to the plate, there were two big environment projects that had to be done in Cape Breton. One was the Sydney tar ponds. It was the worst site in Canada that to be cleaned up. There was almost \$400 million announced through our government to clean up that site and it is getting done now.

We also had the former coal mines in Cape Breton that were getting cleaned up. That was a big environmental issue.

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No doubt about it, the environment is still a big issue for Cape Breton because we have so many fishing communities. Time and again, as the tides are rising and the water is getting higher, we are having problems with our breakwaters and wharves.

The hon. member mentioned this program, which was a good program and should have been continued for another year. It dealt with making homes more energy efficient and there was a tax credit. I am ashamed that the government took it away.

**Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague from Sydney—Victoria two questions, very briefly.

The first has to do with the constitutional obligation of the Government of Canada to Marine Atlantic and to the people of Sydney.

The second has to do with a question from my colleague from Cape Breton—Canso and the obligation of the Government of Canada to maintain the efficiencies and the reputation of Canada through the citizenship and immigration offices in Sydney.

First of all, in terms of maintaining the culture of continued growth, as the member for Sydney—Victoria asked me to attend Marine Atlantic in my capacity as transport critic at the time, we realize and we see that the government is not fulfilling its obligation. I wonder whether he would address that issue, the constitutional obligations of government to do that.

Secondly, why would the Government of Canada refuse to make the investment in a very large processing centre in Sydney so that we could eliminate that long, 18-month waiting period before an application for citizenship gets considered?

• (1230)

**Hon. Mark Eyking:** Mr. Speaker, those were two very good questions.

My hon. colleague came to Cape Breton many times and he has seen first-hand the importance of Marine Atlantic. People can go to the town of North Sydney and see the traffic and travellers who go back and forth and we rely on that service. It is critical for Newfoundland and Labrador, and it is critical for the economy in Cape Breton.

To neglect the investment in that piece of infrastructure is really going against the Constitution. There is no exception. We should not have the Auditor General having to step up to the plate for us on this one.

The citizenship and immigration processing centre in Cape Breton is quite a success story. People do a fantastic job. They process the applications quickly. There are not a lot of immigrants who come to Cape Breton but there are a lot who go to Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. Every member in this chamber should realize the importance of processing them in an efficient, speedy manner.

We need to keep these people on full time, because they are trained and they can get the job done. In Cape Breton we can get the job done, and these guys need to learn how to get the job done.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, politics is about choices. In fact, one classic definition of politics

defines it simply as deciding who gets what, when, where and how. When the government has made its choices, it lays them out in the single most important document that comes before Parliament, and that is the federal budget. It is essentially the blueprint for the government's plan between elections.

As an opposition MP, it is my role to hold the government to account for the choices it has made. It is a debate about competing visions and priorities. I acknowledge that things are not always black and white in politics, but I have never before seen such a huge disconnect between the priorities of the government and the priorities of my constituents. Whether we are talking about children, adults or seniors, the government simply is not reflecting the priorities of hard-working families on the Mountain. The Conservative government is making the wrong choices.

Let us look at children first. As policy makers, we know that for children to succeed in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century, they must get off to the very best start. That is hard to do when far too many still go to school hungry. In 1989 the House of Commons unanimously passed an NDP motion to eradicate child poverty by the year 2000, but successive Liberal and Conservative governments have chosen not to implement it. An entire generation of children has paid the price for their misguided priorities.

In fact, under the tenure of the Conservative government, the child poverty rate has actually increased from 9.5% to 12%. It is a case of Nero fiddles while Rome burns. Instead of taking concrete actions to help the most vulnerable Canadians, the government is obsessing about providing additional tax cuts. However, tax cuts do not help the poor because their incomes are so low that they do not pay income taxes in the first place, so there is no tax rate to cut.

For middle-income Canadians, the benefit of their modest income tax decreases have been swallowed up by higher user fees, the rising cost of everything from gasoline to electricity and, of course, the HST, which is now costing the average Ontario family an extra \$1,200 a year.

However, then the kinds of tax cuts that the Conservatives were proposing were not really intended to level the playing field for individuals anyway. On the contrary, the vast majority of cuts were corporate tax cuts, cuts that were specifically designed to benefit the Conservatives' friends in big business.

The Conservatives made a choice. They chose to put the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of kids. They are recklessly mortgaging our children's future by borrowing \$20 billion for additional tax cuts to corporations, corporations that are already taxed less than their main competitors south of the border. It is just plain wrong.

There is a different choice that the government could and should have made. Imagine how far that money would go if we invested it in our children's early education. While the Conservatives would like us to think of child care as mere babysitting, all the evidence, from the groundbreaking Fraser Mustard report on, makes it clear that it is a critical investment in the future success of our children.

### *Government Orders*

Parents understand that. That is why they are spending between \$200 and \$1,000 a month on child care, per child, to ensure their children get the very best start. The Conservatives ought to listen to these parents. Instead of providing their measly child care benefit, they should invest in universal, regulated public child care. That way they would be helping struggling families and giving children the best chance to succeed.

Make no mistake, families are struggling and are worried. They are worried because they do not know how they are going to make ends meet. They have a mortgage and they are barely able to make payments now. They are afraid of what is going to happen as interest rates rise. They are struggling to save for their retirement. They are struggling with the costs of higher education for their children. As part of the sandwich generation, they are struggling to take care of both their children and elderly parents.

In these difficult economic times, families are looking to the government for a little help just to ride out the storm, but the Prime Minister does not even acknowledge the challenges that hard-working Canadians face. He simply points to soaring bank profits and says that the recession is over. For him, if his banking friends are out of trouble, everyone is out of trouble. I see things differently.

There are 1.5 million Canadians still out of work. Six out of every ten Canadians live paycheque to paycheque. Household debt is at record highs. Life is more expensive than ever, and the HST has only made things worse. For me, the recession is not over until middle-class families are back on their feet. Canadians are in this together and a true recovery cannot leave anyone behind.

Bringing about that middle-class recovery is not just about spending money. There are a number of urgent, concrete steps that the government could have taken without spending a dime.

•(1235)

The government can and must protect Canadian jobs from foreign takeovers before they approve such buyouts. Once the purchase is approved, there is little the government can do to ensure that job and production levels are maintained. Due diligence must happen at the front-end. U.S. Steel's purchase of Stelco is a poignant example of what happens when the government fails to take job protection seriously.

Second, the government can and must help the innocent victims of this recession by ensuring that EI is expanded and extended. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments stole \$57 billion out of the EI fund and used it to pay down their deficits. It was not their money. It accumulated solely from contributions made by workers and their employers. Workers have a right to the insurance they paid for and it is time for the government to do right by unemployed Canadians.

Third, the government can and must take on the big banks to halt the outrageous credit card interest rates. Canada is experiencing record numbers for household debt, \$1.41 trillion, or \$41,740 per person. That is the highest level of debt-to-financial assets ratio in the OECD, surpassing even Greece and the United States. The government can, and must, ease that burden and it would not cost a dime.

However then, the Conservatives are much more concerned about their friends in the banking sector than they are about hard-working Canadians. How else could one possibly explain that the very banks that posted profits in excess of \$15 billion in the first three-quarters of 2010 received an additional tax cut of \$645 million from their Conservative friends? Surely that money would have been better spent on supporting decent family-sustaining jobs, investing in blue/green industries and extending the stimulus commitments that were made to cities so that desperately needed urban infrastructure renewal would not end up on property tax bills. That would require the government to choose people over profits, and that just is not in the Conservatives' DNA.

Despite all the rhetoric, elderly Canadians are not on the government's priority list either. In fact, the Conservatives consistently put shameless self-promotion ahead of seniors.

The Conservatives spent \$1.3 billion for a 72-hour photo op at the G8-G20 summits. That included \$1 million for a fake lake, \$300,000 for a gazebo and bathrooms that were 20 kilometres away from the summit site, \$400,000 for bug spray and sunscreen, over \$300,000 for luxury furniture and \$14,000 for glow sticks. The Conservatives would want us to believe that such is the price of hosting events on the world stage, but the security cost of the G8 in Italy was \$124 million in 2009. The year before it cost \$280 million in Japan. It cost \$124 million in Germany.

Once again, it is about choices. For just over half of what it cost to host the G8-G20 in Canada this summer, we could have improved the guaranteed income supplement so no Canadian senior would have to live in poverty. The remaining \$600 million would still have been higher than the expenditures on any other summit. Clearly, the Conservatives' claim of being fiscally responsible is not borne out by reality.

There are dozens of other examples, but just let me conclude with one other.

Out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs in our country is now more than 70% higher than it was in 1992. Canadian households are spending over \$3 billion a year on prescribed medications. Seniors, in particular, are enduring financial hardship because of soaring drug costs. That means our health care system is no longer truly universal.



*Government Orders*

Instead of investing in a national pharmacare program, the Conservatives chose to spend \$5.6 billion on bribing Ontario and B. C. to implement the HST. That just adds insult to injury. Not only do seniors still carry the growing cost of their medications, but they now have to come up with additional money to pay the HST on everything from haircuts to home heating. Even funerals are no longer exempt. How does the government expect seniors to make ends meet when everything goes up except their incomes?

The Conservatives have made their choices and acted on their priorities, but they are not choices that seniors can afford. For me, that makes them the wrong choices. It is time to say “enough is enough”. It is time to put seniors first.

• (1240)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the speech of my colleague from Hamilton Mountain was well-researched speech. I thank her for contrasting the choices that the government has made with respect to this budget.

Those choices include the billion dollars plus for the 72-hour G8-G20 meetings versus taking care of seniors and children in poverty. If there is any two groups of Canadians that we should be most attuned to, it would be those two, particularly the young folks as the choices were not made by them. They were born into certain circumstances.

The question I have is around the HST. I think a lot of folks listening and watching might not understand the perverse logic of how this tax came to be from the government.

Talks were initiated by the Conservatives in Ottawa to both Ontario and then later British Columbia because the government was running the largest deficit in Canadian history. The government borrowed money, more than \$5 billion, to bribe Ontario and British Columbia to raise taxes on those same taxpayers.

I wonder if the hon. member can follow the logical stream in this from a so-called Conservative government, a government that was supposed to be interested in reducing taxes and reducing debt in our country.

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, if governments had theme songs, the Conservative government's theme song would be *Takin' Care of Business*, because the HST surely only benefits the biggest corporations.

The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley talked about the negative impact on hard-working families, and he is absolutely right. Families that are already trying to make ends meet, whose budgets are already stretched beyond belief, cannot possibly pay for the additional HST on basics such as home heating, hair cuts, recreation fees and arena rentals.

However, it is not just families that are hurting. Small businesses, and we do not talk about those nearly enough in the House, are also negatively impacted by the HST. The government says that it is all about helping big business, but what about the real engine of the Canadian economy? Those are small businesses. Think about the people who are providing taxi services, who are running restaurants, who are providing services such as cleaning services to offices. All those folks now have to charge the HST and all those restaurants

have to charge the HST to people whose budgets are already stretched.

The government's priorities are completely misguided, and I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for pointing that out so eloquently.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important to have a quick review of who receives and who does not.

As we approach Remembrance Week, I am struck by the fact that there is a great deal of lip service given to support for veterans, who are also seniors. I was struck by the member's comments in terms of the cost of prescription drugs. We know that seniors are, by and large, the greatest consumers of prescription drugs. What solution does she see for the high cost of that?

• (1245)

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt on this side of the House that what Canada desperately needs is a universal pharmacare program. I spoke about that a bit in my speech, and I would be happy to go on at length. I do though want to get to her other comments about veterans.

One of the national disgraces, frankly, for all of us should be the fact that at the end of this week, on November 6, veterans will take to the streets. They are protesting at members of Parliament's offices because of the abysmal treatment they are getting from the Conservative government. The government pays lip service to the great job that our troops are doing, both past and present. However, when it comes to respecting the soldiers who have come home, who have served their country with dignity and courage, nobody is there to help them, first to readjust but second to deal fundamentally with the most important health issues they are likely ever to face in their lives.

Veterans are now taking to the streets and protesting, and that is fundamentally wrong. In this week, as we lead up to Remembrance Day, I hope the Conservative government will rethink its strategies with respect to paying respect to veterans and do it not just with lip service, but actually put programs in place to give meaningful support to all of Canada's veterans.

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the second piece of budget legislation, Bill C-47, sustaining Canada's economic recovery act.

Sustaining Canada's economic recovery has to be the most important issue before Parliament today for all Canadians. The current Conservative government would tell Canadians that Canada is in shipshape in comparison to other countries around the world, and yet, when I look at my riding of Random—Burin—St. George's in Newfoundland and Labrador to evaluate the success and stability of Canada's economic recovery, it is not encouraging at all.

*Government Orders*

Small communities are facing many challenges today with limited employment opportunities, aging and insufficient infrastructure and few alternatives for young people to establish careers in their home communities.

Regardless of reports of economic recovery, these continue to be difficult times for rural Canadians and for rural communities.

It was in July that Canadians saw the economy start to falter and an indication that Canada's economic growth was not as rosy as the government would have Canadians believe. Consumer confidence has now declined for four straight months. It is foolhardy to ignore that Canada's economy remains vulnerable. We need to ensure measures are taken that will ensure long-term stability and growth, and not a short-term quick fix that will leave us in a worse position in the near future.

The recession hit Newfoundland and Labrador hard. The province suffered the second largest increase in unemployment in Canada. The unemployment rate in Newfoundland and Labrador rose from 13.8% in October 2008 to 17% in October 2009, which was the highest in Canada at that time. Canada's unemployment rate is 2% higher today than it was when the federal Conservative government was elected just over two years ago. Unfortunately, the full-time jobs that were lost are now being replaced by part-time work.

Families have had no choice but to depend on the employment insurance program, particularly the best 14 weeks' project, which calculates benefits based on the highest 14 weeks of earnings. While I am pleased that the government decided to extend these employment insurance pilot projects after many appeals to do so, what Canadians want are long-term jobs. In the meantime, these pilot projects are vital for the seasonal industries that are found across the small communities throughout Random—Burin—St. George's and throughout our country. The short-term nature of the extension of the pilot projects leaves one to wonder whether the Conservative government really appreciates the tentative nature of Canada's economic recovery.

Rural Canadians have specific needs that cannot be ignored in building Canada's future prosperity. We cannot leave rural Canadians behind. Unfortunately, our rural communities are underserved by the Conservative government. Services, such as high-speed Internet connections, expanded cellphone coverage and local postal service are essential to enable communities to connect to one another and to the world.

Rural communities are being left behind because of a lack of access to basic services. The Conservative government has divided communities into haves and have nots based upon where people live. Something as accessible for some as broadband Internet service is taken for granted in the large urban centres and 80% of Canada. However, for many of the people I represent, high-speed Internet is not a reality and it poses a substantial hurdle for economic growth.

One indicator of a strong economy is ensuring Canadians have access to the tools needed to move ahead and be gainfully employed. Education is one of the keys to providing these tools. Unfortunately, in rural communities, students who do not have access to high-speed Internet are at a disadvantage. There are courses they cannot access that are readily available to students at urban centres. They are

disadvantaged because of where they live and yet they live in Canada.

The Liberal Party of Canada believes that economic opportunity and a high quality of life can be achieved in all regions and is committed to tackling the rural-urban divide.

Too many Canadians are leaving rural communities because they cannot find jobs or do not have access to essential services, like Internet and education, and even basic services like banking and mail service.

Canada's economy is increasingly linked through the Internet. As jobs, education, and communication become more dependent upon the Internet, Canadians without Internet access or Internet skills will be left behind.

• (1250)

Internet business opportunities are compromised without high-speed Internet. Opportunities to market products globally do not exist without high-speed Internet and access to education resources is greatly hindered by our lack of high-speed Internet services.

It is imperative that the Conservative government take a look at the issues in rural Canada, like rural broadband, and work toward a plan for nationwide high-speed Internet to give every community the essential resources to work toward Canada's economic recovery, instead of relying on an economic stimulus plan which one would have to question just how effective it was since consumer confidence has been steadily declining since July.

Of course, the government points to its \$200 million broadband strategy as proof of doing something about access to broadband for Canadians. This is the same government that is willing to spend \$16 billion on jet fighters without an open competition, which Alan Williams, the former assistant deputy minister in the Department of National Defence, says would save 20% if we had an open competition, and in this case that would be \$3 billion. One can just imagine what could be accomplished in terms of connecting Canadians to high-speed Internet with just the savings that would be realized by holding an open competition for the fighter jets.

Then, of course, there is the \$10 billion that is being spent on prisons, and the list goes on.

Bill C-47 raises the issue of pensions. We have been pressing the government to bring forward meaningful pension reform to make retirement easier and more secure. We called for three specific pension reforms: a supplementary Canada pension plan to give Canadians the option of saving more for retirement; allowing employees with stranded or abandoned pensions following bankruptcy, the option of growing their pension assets through the Canada pension plan; and protecting vulnerable Canadians on long-term disability by giving them preferred status as creditors in bankruptcy.

*Government Orders*

Canada is aging. One-third of Canadians lack the savings to maintain their standard of living after retirement and the same number again have no retirement savings at all. Today's pension crisis cannot be ignored and should not be ignored but the Conservative government has continuously failed to delivered on its promise to introduce pension reform.

The fiscal record of the Conservative government is cause for concern for all Canadians. Canada was in an enviable financial position with a healthy \$13 billion surplus when the Conservative government took over in 2006. The Conservatives abandoned prudent measures that were built into the federal budget under Liberal leadership and spent the cupboard bare, plunging Canada into a deficit before the recession even hit.

The finance minister continues to lead the government on a spending spree with taxpayer money. The Conservative government's economic record is nothing to boast about. Spending ballooned by 18% between 2006-08, putting Canada into a deficit position even before the recession began in the fall of 2008.

Even today, with a deficit of \$55.6 billion, nearly \$2 billion higher than projected just last spring, the Conservative government remains determined, as I mentioned earlier, to waste billions on megaprisons, untended stealth fighters and unaffordable tax breaks for large corporations.

What Canada needs is an economic plan that puts the needs of Canadian families first with strategic investments in health and family care, pensions, learning and jobs, and global leadership.

I know families in my riding are not in a better position economically as a result of the investments by the government. What I hear from them is that they are not better off after Conservative budgets. They are worried about making ends meet, whether it is finding or paying for child care, looking after sick or aging loved ones, paying for their children's post-secondary education or simply saving enough to retire.

Recently, the Liberal opposition shared its family care plan with Canadians and the government. In fact, we encourage the government to run with our plan because it would mean better services for Canadian families. The Liberal family care plan recognizes the important contribution of family caregivers and would invest \$1 billion in a six month family care employment insurance benefit and a new family care tax plan.

Not only is the Liberal plan the right plan for Canadian families, it is a way to contain health costs by making it possible for Canadians who are sick to stay at home and be cared for by family members. The smart thing for the government to do would be to snap up the idea and support the 2.7 billion Canadians who are providing care for seniors. Unfortunately, the Conservative government has different priorities.

● (1255)

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Random—Burin—St. George's spelled out fairly well how the government is really a borrow and spend government that has driven us into the biggest deficit in Canadian history. It also has the record for the biggest spending budget in Canadian history.

The member mentioned rural Canada. Both of us are from rural Canada and we think it is extremely important to build the economy in that area. In my province of Prince Edward Island, ACOA, which is supposed to be a regional development agency, has, in the last couple of years, become a home of political patronage for friends of the government, instead of being a home to people who really want to attract business and do the economic projects to draw people in so as to boost that rural economy.

I wonder if the member could tell me what her experience has been in Newfoundland and Labrador relative to regional development. Is it happening under the government or is it not?

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, there certainly is a need for agencies like ACOA, FedNor and the list goes on. Unfortunately, these agencies must take their leadership from the government of the day, which tends to happen in most bureaucracies.

There are people who are committed at the ACOA level and at any of these funding agencies, but when they look at the leadership, at the priorities and where the emphasis is being put by a government, they must determine whether the money available to them to spend in regions is in fact being spent according to the priorities of the government of the day.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question of principle for my colleague and it is a question surrounding the HST, which has different implications in different provinces.

Last month, the NDP member for Welland asked the government to remove the HST from the sale of poppies. While seeming like a small thing, the sale of poppies actually helps out legions which use the sale as their chief fundraiser throughout the year. As it turns out now, about \$375,000 will be going back because, after some pressure, the government relented and is taking the HST off the sale of poppies.

The government's argument leading up to this decision was that it was unable to remove the HST from certain items. Since that has now been proven wrong, would there not be some value in the government taking another look at its increased taxation policy and removing the HST from things that Canadians see as essential, like home heating, as the Government in Nova Scotia has done, because Canadians simply do not have a choice when spending the money?

● (1300)

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, this goes back to getting our priorities right. The member is absolutely right about home heating. Seniors, for example, who cannot afford the cost of home heating and the cost of their medications, will have to sit down with their friends at a shopping mall in order to keep warm during the winter months.

This is about priorities. The whole idea of paying HST on poppies shows no respect for those who have worked so hard and who sacrificed so much on behalf of Canadians.

*Government Orders*

This goes back to what is important to Canadian families, not what is important to large corporations, especially at a time when it is unaffordable. Canada has the lowest taxation policy with respect to corporations compared to the U.S. and other countries, and that is thanks to a previous Liberal government, but it was at a time when we could afford to make tax cuts.

When we are looking at budgeting, we need to take the issues and concerns of Canadian families into account.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance recently announced that Canada is facing a record deficit of \$55.6 billion. I am always amazed that this government has no problem spending billions of dollars on the G20 and its fake lake, on the F-35 fighter jets—which might not even be the right plane and are definitely too expensive—and on an action plan that has not created any long-term jobs and that now, because of the deadlines, threatens to eliminate assistance for some people. These are all expenditures that do not provide any economic stability. It has to be seen to be believed.

Not only does this government spend money irresponsibly, but it also makes cuts in important sectors. This summer, the Conservative government made cuts to youth initiatives and community programs. For example, in the riding of Papineau—the riding I am honoured to represent—funding for Canada summer jobs was cut by \$8,000 compared to last year. Although it may not seem significant, the cuts nevertheless translated into unemployment for four or five young people who otherwise would have been helping community organizations during the summer. A significant number of jobs subsidized by Canada summer jobs consist of counsellor positions for summer camps. The loss of five counsellors affects almost a hundred children and teenagers, as well as their parents.

This very government that makes heartless cuts, proudly announced an investment of several hundred million dollars in youth programs in its recent budget. Why, then, did they cut the funding for Papineau's young people? Perhaps we will find an answer if we take a look at Conservative ridings. However, without even looking elsewhere, we have always known that our young people are not much of a priority for this government. That is why I believe it is clear that the recent budget is filled with gimmicks and has no vision for galvanizing our young Quebecers.

Our youth today believe in the environment and in our culture. They desire the jobs of tomorrow. Unfortunately, there is nothing in this budget for culture. There was nothing, not even a mention of the word “culture”. Words can be very revealing.

There is nothing about climate change or renewable energy. After embarrassing us on the world stage on several occasions with their inaction on climate change, the Conservatives continue to ignore this issue in the 2010 budget, which contains no new climate change initiatives. This is also the case for investments in renewable energy, a sector that other countries are developing and spending money on.

The government does what it likes: it cuts economic development. A weakened Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, which could have helped create local jobs over the years, has been allocated a paltry \$29 million over two years in the 2010 budget.

● (1305)

[*English*]

This is unbelievable and frustrating. The Conservatives have us \$55.6 billion in deficit after a decade of surplus budgets under the Liberals. The Conservatives managed to put Canada into deficit even before the global recession hit, by increasing government spending by 18% in their first three budgets. They are the biggest spending government in Canadian history.

However, it is okay, because even though we have reached a record high deficit, they have a plan. Somewhere down the line, five years from now, everything will be back to zero deficits. I hope you will forgive me, Mr. Speaker, if I do not leap to believe that.

This is a promise from the same people who in the last election talked about a government that would not run a deficit, period, while they were busy running a deficit. Yet since then, their track record of waste has steadily piled up: a record \$130 million on shameless, self-promoting advertising; \$1.3 billion for a 72-hour G8 and G20 photo op, spending on everything from the fake lake to glow sticks; \$10 billion to \$13 billion announced on American-style megaprisons to lock up unreported criminals as the crime rate declines; \$16 billion on a bad deal for stealth fighters awarded without competition or guaranteed jobs for Canadian industry; and \$20 billion in corporate tax breaks that we cannot afford.

Budget 2010 failed to address the real economic challenges facing Canadian families, like record household debt, the rising cost of education and home care, pension security and the loss of 200,000 full-time jobs. The Conservative record of waste and mismanagement does not reflect the priorities of Canadians. This borrow-and-spend Conservative government has got to come to a stop.

That is why a couple of weeks ago the Liberal Party presented an economic plan that will reduce the economic pressures facing middle-class Canadian families. Canadians have a choice between our economic track record of fiscal responsibility and a plan to make strategic investments and lasting economic legacies, or the Conservatives who spent Canada into deficit before the recession and want to waste billions more on prisons, untendered stealth fighters and tax breaks for the largest corporations.

*Government Orders*

The Liberals will ease the economic pressures on Canadian families with strategic investments in health and family care, pensions, learning, jobs and global leadership. We need to ensure that Canadians have the means to make ends meet. We need to help our single parents and our modern parents find and pay for early learning and child care.

We need to be there for our young people, to help them get the degrees they need to be able to compete for the jobs of tomorrow. We do that by supporting their post-secondary education. We said it time and time again over the summer as we crossed the country that if students get the grades, they should get to go.

Our investments in the learning economy, in the knowledge economy, in the capacity of Canadians to participate fully in building the jobs of the future and making sure Canada continues to be a world leader on economic terms and in terms of modelling the kinds of solutions the planet needs mean we have to invest in our young people.

We also have to invest in our seniors, because the work they did to bring us to this place means that we do not simply need to marginalize them and allow them to suffer in silence. We need to make sure that they are living well, that they have the support of family members when they go through difficult times. These are things that are addressed by the Liberal proposals but ignored in the Conservative budget.

We have presented a balanced and fiscally responsible economic plan, and all the finance minister could offer was a vitriolic attack on the opposition. As a country we got through the worst of the recession, thanks to the Chrétien-Martin legacy of balanced budgets compared to the Conservatives legacy as the biggest borrowing, biggest spending government in Canadian history.

The priorities of this place need to be Canadian families first with strategic economic investments while reducing the Conservatives' record deficit. We will help our young people be the leaders we need them to be. We will face the challenges awaiting us around our 150th birthday seven years from now together.

Our capacity to pull together as a nation only happens when we start looking at the long term and investing in the capacity of individuals to contribute to their families, their communities and their country. That is where a government is strong, when we are enabling individuals to become full participants in our society.

The Conservatives like to talk a lot about enabling individual success, letting people succeed on their own with no need for government interference, but what we actually see is that people need a boost so they can get to a place where they can contribute and shape their future, strengthen their communities and care for their families.

We have a country that is extraordinarily wealthy in so many different ways. We need to make sure we are leveraging that wealth into allowing individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute in their very best ways to the world around them.

We can no longer survive on the laissez faire approach of a government that does not believe in government and sets out to make everyone else believe less in government by its mistakes,

misspending, short-term ideology and attacks and aggression toward anyone who disagrees with it.

The government expects Canadians to fend for themselves even during one of the most brutal, jobless economic recoveries we have seen in generations. Our families deserve better. Our seniors deserve better. Canadians deserve better.

● (1310)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when we look at other so-called developed countries around the world, usually categorized in the OECD as western economic developed countries, and try to find another country that has no national housing strategy, a developed federal government, a so-called western power that has neglected to have any kind of a plan or a strategy around housing needs within its country, we find that Canada is the only one.

It is strange to me that the Conservatives have obsessed about a national prison strategy. They are going to spend billions on that. I am wondering if that is meant in a sense to take the place of a national housing strategy. The government sees anybody who may be homeless or who is threatened with homeless as near to somebody who should be in jail.

The Conservatives are willing to spend billions on that and nothing on national housing, nothing to help Canadians who are facing a housing crisis get a roof over their heads.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the member represents a riding on the very west coast of the country, very far from my riding of Papineau, and the concerns faced by citizens in both of our ridings are very much the same.

The need for affordable housing in Papineau is greater than it has ever been before. It is the number one thing I hear of when I talk to low and middle income families, single mothers and aging seniors who are worried about keeping a roof over their heads as the months and years go by. The fact that Canada does not have a national housing strategy is a real shame.

There is another area that that impacts as well. I recently spoke with a number of experts in immigration, and in resettlement and integration, in my capacity as immigration critic for the Liberal Party, and two elements that came back that would help new arrivals the greatest were a national housing strategy, giving them opportunities to settle and contribute from a point of stability, and a national strategy on public transit, on which we also do not have a pan-Canadian outlook.

I thank the member for bringing up that point, and I agree with him on the need for a national housing strategy.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening with interest to the member opposite's comments. I understand that he voted for the budget that he just pilloried, so he either voted for the budget because it was expedient to do so or perhaps because he thought it was good at the time that he voted and then he changed his mind.

*Government Orders*

I would just like to ask the member to consider maybe breaking through and transcending the encrusted tradition of criticizing because one is in opposition and finding something good to say about what he voted for, and then perhaps the credibility would be greater when he criticizes.

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party supported the budget because we believed a lot of what the Conservative government had to say. We had some concerns about some of the directions and some of the decisions that were taken within the budget, but we agreed that Canada needed to spend, to invest in things.

We have to establish something important. There is nothing inherently wrong with a deficit, with borrowing money, if we invest it wisely in a way that is going to give us returns, as individuals or as a society, a few years down the line. Our problem with this budget, as we have seen how it has unfolded, is that the partisanship involved in the decisions made and the focus on short-term, electorally pleasing expenditures rather than long-term investing in social infrastructure, for example, have left us weaker than we should be for the amount of money Canadians poured into stimulus to recover from this global recession.

• (1315)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is a good debate because we are able to talk about many things that impact on Canadians and how the government implements what we believe to be a misguided budget, a budget that loses out on opportunities.

Unfortunately, for almost 15 years the riding I represent in northwestern British Columbia has been experiencing a steady decline in some of the foundational elements of its economy especially in the resource sector, including fishing, forestry, mining. As well there is a lack of creation of the next economy. It is to that issue I put my mind when determining whether or not this budget deserves support. Is this budget preparing us for the next economy, not just in Skeena—Bulkley Valley in the northwest of B.C., but right across rural and urban Canada?

On many different levels, I question the choices that were made in this budget. This budget will be running the highest deficit in Canadian history. The government will be borrowing money to spend on a number of things which many Canadians have great concerns about or feel are deeply flawed. Opportunities lost may be a better name for this budget, rather than the spin the PMO came up with.

The numbers do not lie. Canadians are experiencing more household debt. Canadians are borrowing more money per person than ever in our history. Adjusted for inflation, adjusted for real term dollars, Canadians are more indebted than ever before. Canadians are borrowing increasingly larger amounts of money for mortgages. They owe more on their Visa cards and lines of credit. All of this is a stop-gap measure. People do not want to borrow money. They do not want to have to take out such large mortgages, but the reality is there is a housing bubble and increased costs and spending.

Governments often take credit for things they have had nothing to do with and they also get blamed for things they had nothing to do

with. However, there are some things about which I question the government on its choices.

Child poverty is an important indicator for all of us, regardless of political persuasion or stripe. We have seen it grow from 9.5% to more than 12% in this country. That number does not lie. More and more children are living in poverty now than when this government took office. While the Conservatives cannot be held accountable for all of it, the Conservatives must recognize that their policies, to this point, if they were designed to alleviate child poverty, are failing. Child poverty could go up by as much as 30% in this country and the government would pat itself on the back. That is unconscionable.

Members on the opposite side care about the issue, but they do not care enough to push their own cabinet, their own finance minister to change the dial on some of the government's choices. More than a billion dollars went toward the 72-hour G8 and G20 summits. The government lauded Canada for earning its place on the world stage and then weeks later, for the first time ever, was voted down for a seat on the UN Security Council. It was the first time Canada ever asked for one and did not receive it. So much for Canada's place on the world stage. We blew more money on the G8 and G20 summits than any other country that has hosted the summits and any country that is about to host the summits. We have seen the budget numbers come in from Korea and other places, and other countries are spending 10% to 15% of what the Conservative government spent over three days.

This is not the Conservative government a lot of its supporters voted for. It was pointed out earlier that in the first three years of taking office, the Conservatives increased public spending more than any other government in 30 years. Before the recession, before the downturn in the economy, before the stimulus spending, those guys were spending on things that were not contributing to the long-term sustainability of this country.

It is a government that has turned the tool of a tax cut into an obsession. Tax cuts can be very useful in doing certain things in the economy at certain times in certain places. It has been said that if all one has is a hammer, every problem will start to look like a nail. The government truly believes there is not a problem in the universe for which a tax cut is not the automatic and only answer.

As a former small business person I will argue that tax cuts can help if they are strategic and intelligent, and if they fit in with some larger strategy, but if we rank the top five priorities for a struggling business, the taxes being paid is not number one. It is the ease of doing business, the ability to do business, to have a market. It is the ability to get qualified and trained employees on a regular basis. These are the concerns of businesses.

*Government Orders*

• (1320)

Recently I spoke with the owner of a small business in Terrace, British Columbia. The fellow owns Checkers Pizza. He has done a fantastic job building his business. He is dealing with the HST right now. Just in the time the HST has been in, he figures it has cost him more than \$15,000. It prohibits him from hiring staff and expanding his business.

The way the HST was set up helps his competitors that are a chain. His business is not part of a chain; he is a single operator of a business. He has to charge HST on all of the products that he gets in because they are locally sourced, which is what we want. We want businesses to buy locally. However, his competitors have all their processed ingredients for pizza and whatnot brought in and they are able to pass on the cost of the HST. He cannot as a small business operator and it is killing him. It is absolutely frustrating for him. He would likely be a conservative-minded person. He is fiscally prudent and he is socially conservative. However, he is so frustrated with the government because it does not pay attention to the most fundamental and basic principles of business and it is hurting him.

We also know that the government has borrowed \$20 billion over time for tax cuts that went to companies that simply make no difference in their hiring policies because of them.

We saw the banks earn record profits even in the midst of a recession. They dipped for a moment but came raging back. Those profits were not being put back into the company. They were cutting staff at the same time.

We saw this with the oil companies which received more support from the government than companies in any other oil producing nation. With respect to companies drilling for oil in other countries around the world, it does not matter whether we are talking about Iraq, Iran, Venezuela and Nigeria, our government gives more subsidies than any other country.

These same companies will be at the finance committee this afternoon asking for more, which I suppose is their right, but common sense and decency indicate that the government should refuse them, and say that enough is enough. At the same time as handing out more than \$2 billion in subsidies to the tar sands alone, the government was cutting the eco-energy program for average Canadians to retrofit their homes, to spend less of their money on heating their homes, to put less greenhouse gases into the atmosphere if people were heating with a fossil fuel.

This makes no sense as our competitors are ramping up efficiency. The United States, Europe, Australia and the Far East are spending taxpayer money on making their economies, their industries, their individuals more efficient, not less efficient. We do not need to subsidize the tar sands. The Exxons and Shells are doing fine. They are doing better than fine.

Where we need help is for low income seniors who are struggling to pay next month's heating bill. The government needs to give them a small bit of support to help them put more insulation into the walls of their home, to get better windows and a better heating source so that they will pay less for their heating. A byproduct of that is it contributes less pollution.

We have been waiting for the green energy revolution in this country for a long time. In northwestern British Columbia oil companies that want to push risky projects are lining up. Enbridge wants to run 1,200 kilometres of pipeline across mountains and rivers all across northern B.C. and put supertankers into the water on the west coast. It has all sorts of support from the government. The government kicked in \$30 million for a program to train people to build a pipeline for three months.

We want real job training and real support for the green energy projects. Business folks come to my office all the time. They are revolutionizing the forestry sector. They talk about bio-coal, wood pellets and changing the way we do forestry which is long overdue. When they look to the government for equivalent support that the government is giving to the oil and gas sector, there is nothing. These business people are conservatively minded. They want to make a go of their businesses but they want fair treatment. What they see across the border in the U.S. is a completely unfair playing field. The Americans are actually supporting these industries.

The most perverse logic we see in the budget and from the government is the concept that the government borrowed more than \$5 billion to cut cheques to the governments of Ontario and British Columbia in effect to bribe them to raise the taxes on their own citizens with the implementation of the HST. In British Columbia in particular, we saw a government that was entirely duplicitous in negotiations with the federal Conservative government for months. There was an election and within hours of the election being over, it foisted the HST on its citizens.

Thankfully the people of British Columbia have recall legislation. The people of British Columbia are standing up and threatening the government. They are asking it to rescind the HST. We were able to push the federal government to do it on the Royal Canadian Legion's poppies. The government should take the HST off of essentials. As it did with the poppies to help our veterans, the government should take the HST off such things as home heating to help everyone.

• (1325)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has a beautiful riding from what I understand. My niece is a teacher in his riding, in the community of Kitkatla.

If we look at the current situation and all the points the member has made about the misgivings of this particular government, there is no doubt they are there. The expression he used was "opportunity lost". He brought up a valid point. When I think about opportunity lost, I think about pensions first and foremost and just how we seem to be on the edge of a new way of doing pensions across the country.

*Government Orders*

For example, my riding is probably a lot like his. People in the trades travel a lot in this type of environment. They go to Alberta, Saskatchewan, Africa, Russia, especially countries in the oil and gas sector. What is one of the things he would do to help people who are not with a particular company?

Where is the opportunity lost for the Conservatives to make meaningful changes or perhaps some new legislation regarding pensions to allow people who move from company to company or country to country to find the income they need to replace their current income when they decide to retire?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek who is observing the debate today has done an incredible job getting out and talking to folks facing the pension crisis which is upon us right now in Canada. It is a storm that has been brewing for many years.

The government can choose to hide its head in the sand on this issue, but if the Prime Minister actually has any of the credentials that he claims to have as an economist, he will know for a fact, undeniably, that if we do not address this issue now, the generation presently moving into retirement and generations in the next 10 or 20 years, the Canada pension plan will not be there for them.

We have seen with our European friends that public pensions are becoming more movable. Pensions that accrue with one company can be transferred to another company. As my hon. friend says, we have similar ridings in the sense that professional people move around in the trades. They need to be able to take their pensions with them. There are small tax adjustments the government could make to allow that or insist that companies not dump their pension programs. The government has to start funding pension programs. When it came to providing \$18 billion for jets or lifting seniors out of poverty, the government chose the jets.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague about the HST in British Columbia. He and I travel back and forth all the time and we still hear a lot about the HST from folks in British Columbia. It is not very popular out there, which is probably not a surprise to anybody in this corner of the House. What is surprising is that nobody responsible for bringing in the HST wants to take responsibility for it. Nobody wants to say whose idea it was or that it was a good idea.

In Ottawa I hear that it was Premier Campbell and the B.C. Liberals that are responsible for the HST. In British Columbia, I hear it is the Prime Minister and the Conservative government that are responsible for the HST. The reality is that it was a big group effort. It took federal Conservatives, federal Liberals and provincial B.C. Liberals to bring us the HST.

I am wondering if my colleague could say why it is that nobody will take ownership of this idea. Why do they blame it on somebody else?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to get the expression wrong but it is something to the effect that victory has a thousand fathers but failure has none. The HST has proven to be not just a political failure but an economic failure. Business owners are saying this is a tax shift. All that has happened is that large multinational corporations actually do quite well and did as of July 1 when the HST came in, but small and medium size local businesses

are getting hammered, never mind the consumer who is paying more tax.

The Conservatives clearly came up with the idea. They promoted the idea and budgeted for it and the federal Liberals supported it and voted for it. To blame their provincial cousins or to say it is a provincial issue entirely is simply wrong and not true. If they think it is such a good idea, then they should own it, be proud of it and campaign on it. I dare them. They will not say a word about it in the next federal election, not in British Columbia or Ontario.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in its sixth report to Canadians on the economic action plan, the government itself admits that economic growth remains fragile and that too many Canadians are still unemployed.

During a meeting held in Toronto in June, leaders of the G20 countries agreed that stimulation measures should continue to be implemented in order to strengthen the economic recovery. I will provide examples of the astronomical amounts of public money wasted on this event later in my speech. Yet, the Conservative government is refusing to push back the deadline for the infrastructure program, which ends on March 31, 2011. Numerous projects are at risk of not being completed.

According to their own data on page 8 of the economic action plan, more than 2% of the projects have not yet begun, just months before the end of the program. Do I need to remind the Minister of Finance that we live in Canada, that there are four seasons in the year, including winter, which begins on December 21 and ends on March 20, leaving little time to complete projects that are not yet finished? In addition, this government has shown no transparency.

Still on page 8 of its economic action plan, the government does not even dare mention how many projects have been completed. The information it has provided is not black and white. It says that 97% of the projects are under way or completed. Are they under way or are they completed?

A government with transparent management would have clearly stated how many projects were finished to date and how many were still under way. If this government is actively managing the implementation of its economic action plan, as it claims to be doing, why is it not sharing this information and extending the work deadline in order to really allow economic recovery to take root?



*Government Orders*

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives and the finance minister are trying to take credit for Canada being able to sustain itself and do better than other countries of the G7 during the economic crisis. What the Minister of Finance fails to tell Canadians is that Canada was able to buffer the economic crisis due to the Liberals not allowing bank mergers and putting in strict financial controls so we would not have a sub-prime mortgage type of crisis. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin ensured that the CPP was funded for 75 years.

What did the current finance minister do? Remember the introduction of the 40-year mortgage with no down payment? Remember trying to create the sub-prime mortgage scenario? Remember trying to raid CPP to pay for his boutique-type tax cuts? The fact is, the opposition stopped the finance minister.

Instead of taking credit for fiscal management, it is high time the Conservatives take a long hard look in the mirror and realize they are the biggest spenders since Confederation.

[Translation]

They managed to turn the \$13 billion surplus that the Liberals accumulated through sound fiscal management into a deficit of more than \$56 billion.

I would now like to go over some examples of how the Conservative government has wasted public money. In addition to spending billions of dollars on partisan promotional signs, the government demonstrated lack of judgment when it spent \$1.9 million to build a fake lake in the Toronto media centre. That is just one-fifth of the \$1.2 billion spent on the G20 and G8 summits. Money spent needlessly on a backdrop could have been used for social housing, for better community services, for job creation and to get people back on their feet so they can retire.

What about spending \$16 billion on an untendered contract for F-35s? Is that responsible? How many taxpayers' dollars could it have saved by calling for tenders? Why is this government refusing to invest in Canadian companies? How many jobs will this cost Canadians?

During the worst recession in decades, and at a time when Canadians are having a hard time taking care of sick loved ones, saving for retirement and paying for their children's studies, the borrow-and-spend Conservatives have spent the last four years wasting billions of taxpayers' dollars. Since coming to power in 2006, the Conservatives have spent \$94 billion on contracts for professional and special services, which is \$2.2 billion more than the previous Liberal government.

The situation keeps getting worse. The public accounts show that there was a \$1 billion increase last year in contracts for special services. This represents a total of \$10.4 billion. We also see that the Prime Minister spent almost \$7 million of taxpayers' money in just one year so that he and his assistants could travel around the world. Recently the government sent the largest delegation ever to the Sommet de la Francophonie, which was held in Switzerland. The Prime Minister has increased his office's budget by 30% over the past two years to nearly \$10 million annually.

His ministers have also spent more money, or 16% more annually, even though they keep saying they are committed to tightening their belts to help lower the Conservatives record deficit of more than \$56 billion. The total costs for ministers in 2009-10 reached \$67.6 million, compared to \$59.3 million the year before. That is what they call tightening their belts. If the Conservatives continue such outrageous spending, they will not be able to fasten their belts.

● (1335)

[English]

Last week when the Liberals questioned the outrageous spending, the government leader in the House was quick to defend the Prime Minister saying that the Prime Minister had an important responsibility to communicate with Canadians and that there were fair and reasonable costs associated with that. We agree with him that the Prime Minister has a duty to listen to Canadians, and he should listen to Canadians, and that costs associated should be fair and reasonable, but this is not the case. These costs are outrageous and Canadians are telling the Prime Minister and the finance minister that they have to stop this mismanagement of public funds.

The finance minister is labelled the “architect of deficit” in many economic and financial circles. He has a history of destroying finances. He did it in Ontario. He borrowed money to give tax breaks that left the province with a huge deficit, from which the province is still reeling. Now he wants to steer Canada down that same lane. Canadians need to be told how the finance minister intends on adding further to the deficit by borrowing money to pay for unneeded tax cuts to big businesses to the tune of approximately \$6 billion.

[Translation]

I want to close by condemning this government's incompetence when it comes to managing public funds. In 2006, the Conservatives inherited a \$13 billion surplus and today they have a \$56 billion deficit. What is more, this budget has nothing for seniors, nothing for women, nothing for the homeless, nothing for social housing and nothing for family caregivers.

Canadians deserve better.

● (1340)

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question regarding infrastructure.

*Government Orders*

My colleague from LaSalle—Émard mentioned the deadline and the fact that the government should announce an extension in order to allow municipalities to complete the work. At home, in northern New Brunswick, the next two nights will be plenty cold: between -10°C and -17°C. Asphalt needs to be poured and infrastructure needs to be built. After water and sewer pipes have been put down, roads need to be redone. But it is hard to pour asphalt in -10°C to -17°C weather. We have to wonder whether we are making a skating rink instead of a road.

Can my colleague from LaSalle—Émard talk about that? Winter may start on December 21, but Canadian reality is catching up to us, and some projects definitely cannot be completed and never will be because winter will be over before the construction season starts up again.

Is this a serious problem?

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him, on behalf of his constituents, for the excellent work he does in his riding.

In fact, I wanted to raise this point in my speech. Winter is just around the corner, and construction comes to a halt at that time. No work is done. Because of the March 31 deadline, numerous projects will not be completed. Municipalities and provinces will not be able to finish the work, which will then be abandoned for lack of funding.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as long as the member has raised it, in my view, the biggest lie in the two budgets was the economic stimulus package for shovel-ready projects, if the member will recall that terminology.

One of the things we have found is that many of these projects in fact have not generated the jobs that were intended. We now have this problem that many of projects have had all the engineering and consulting work done but do not have shovels in ground and they face the possibility of not being completed within the time.

In my view, any project that has been agreed upon by the government, which is being delayed for no reason or for causes outside the control of either of the parties and which would create jobs, should be given the green light to go ahead and be completed.

Would the member like to comment on that?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

It is true that a lot of projects will not be completed for reasons outside the control of those who are trying to get them done. Since it is outside their control, I think this government is being unfair. A promise is a contract. If the matter goes to court, and one party has suggested that it would pay, it is responsible for the expenses. So the government should be held responsible too.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was taken aback by part of the member's speech, which I thought was very impressive. We forget to draw links between what was a record established prior to arriving in

federal governance. The provincial government in Ontario at the time had all these tremendous tax cuts in order to grow its way out of a deficit position. It did not quite work out in that manner, certainly when it came to corporate tax cuts.

Would the member please comment on that?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Mr. Speaker, the government is proud to say that it is creating jobs. But I have to wonder whether jobs have really been created with these projects. Furthermore, are the jobs that have been created full-time or part-time? What are the proportions? That is where we might see the government's transparency. When it tells us how many jobs it has created or maintained, it should tell us specifically how many it has maintained, how many it has created, and whether they are temporary or part-time jobs.

● (1345)

[*English*]

**Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this important budget bill, Bill C-47. It is another in a continuing series of discussions we are having with the government about what it should be doing to deal with some of our difficult economic realities. Among other things, it should be investing in communities and people, and looking after families that are finding it hard to make ends meet in these difficult times. As jobs continue to be lost or changed in nature, incomes go down, the cost of living continues to increase, and people struggle to keep body and soul together as they attempt to provide their children with support, education, and help with their health care needs.

As we continue this discussion about the budget and the economy, it is important to understand how they connect, and how we as government support communities that are struggling to keep all of their citizens' heads above water. It is important to understand and reflect on what got us where we are today. We need to consider the 2008 collapse of the world's financial sector and understand why it happened.

The government did not recognize the 2008 recession until the opposition on this side of the House made it aware of the problem. Then, all of a sudden, the government began to realize that it needed to respond in a serious way to this economic and financial tsunami that was coming at us.

The cause of this was that we allowed our banking systems, both here and around the world, to continue to be further and further deregulated. Besides the banks, we deregulated a lot of other financial practices. We allowed the ethos of greed and fear to be the driving force behind the decisions made by corporations and governments around the world. Finally, to keep things from getting even worse, governments had to step in and become engaged again.

Deregulation and free trade, which went hand in hand with the deregulation, allowed some corporations to become more powerful and wealthy than many countries. We saw a push towards less government intervention, which is what is now challenging the government of the day. Even though they are great believers in less government intervention, this government was forced to intervene in the economy as never before.

*Government Orders*

At the same time, we lowered taxes for corporations over and over again, at the provincial and the federal levels. Finally, the government woke up and realized that it had to come to the table with big bags of money to help its friends in the business world to weather these difficult times. But because it had given away so much of the treasury, so much of the capacity of the government to play a role in our economic life, the government had little money left. The result is that we now find ourselves with a huge deficit, and we will be in deficit for a long time to come.

Why are we in the New Democrat caucus speaking so aggressively against this budget today? It is because the government will not be turning these corporate tax breaks around. Instead, the government wants to reduce even further its ability to intervene in the economic affairs of this country.

• (1350)

If we do not stop, take a long look, and do something different, this will be tragic. It will be especially tragic for those who are most at risk and marginalized, and this is the group of people that government has the greatest and most urgent responsibility to help.

For the six years that I have been in this place, and particularly over the last two years since the collapse of the financial world, I have been calling for a national anti-poverty strategy. Six provinces in this country recognize that something significant needs to happen if we are going to deal with the increasing number of people who find themselves unable to make ends meet. Provincial strategies have been put in place. I was in the Northwest Territories a couple of weeks ago, and they are moving on a strategy to deal with poverty.

The provinces are telling us that they will not be able to do all that they have to do. They will not be able to put in place those programs that they know are necessary to lift people up and give them the opportunity to take advantage of the new economy when, a year or two from now, this recession has eased off.

The provinces just do not have the resources, and they are calling on the federal government to be a partner in this effort. They know that we need to move away from this ethos of greed and fear to one of hope and concern for the common good.

Those of us who have been engaged in this exercise over the last three years know that it makes good economic sense to deal with poverty. The choices we make will affect not only our ability to help those who are in difficulty, but also our ability to turn our economy around. Failing to address the problem is costing us in many direct and substantial ways.

We heard from all kinds of people as we travelled the country, getting input on what the federal government should be doing about poverty. They told us the choice is clear: we can pay to address poverty now, or we can wind up paying a lot more for a lot longer.

We pay for poverty through lost productivity, lost opportunity, and increased family violence. We pay for it through the health care system and our criminal justice system. We pay for it through growing demands on an already-frayed social support system. We pay for it through our children's reduced life chances, employment opportunities, and earning capacity.

For the first time in their lives, thousands of families across this country are going into Christmas relying on the good graces of provincial and municipal welfare systems, or what is left of them. People are finding that there is not much to be had.

After the government of the day's 1995 elimination of the Canada assistance plan, the reduction in the transfers to provinces, and the huge rollout of corporate tax breaks, not much was left in the coffers when people came calling in their time of need. People who pay their taxes, work every day, and pay into unemployment insurance are finding as they face this Christmas that the safety net they thought was there has disappeared.

If nothing else, when we consider this budget we should be addressing the difficult reality that is confronting many of our friends and neighbours, our constituents. We need to deal with the question of poverty in this country.

**Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the question the member raised has come up often in the finance committee, namely, whether we need to cut back right across the board, without differentiating, whether we ought to try to grow out of this now, and make it up later on.

Some of the groups from the poverty coalition came before us and reminded us of the pain caused during an economic downturn. They told us how difficult recovery can be for those who had nothing in the first place. I tend to agree with my colleague.

I wonder if the member would like to comment on whether there was a time when we had to look at providing means tests so that individuals could get certain benefits in our social programs.

• (1355)

**Mr. Tony Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that the member go back to a time in our history when we used a means test to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving. That is long past.

We as a country, as a government, need to take the same approach we took a few years back. It was driven by the NDP, and it looked at the question of poverty and seniors. We brought forward hugely successful programs: the Canada pension plan, the old age security plan, and the guaranteed income supplement. We put those vehicles in place so that we would not have to get into long and hurtful discussions about who deserves and who does not. We put in place programs to help seniors, and we literally lifted all seniors out of poverty.

We need to be doing the same thing for all of our citizens today, no matter where they live or what their socio-economic condition may be.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned that he has done a lot of work on poverty and an anti-poverty strategy. I know he had wide consultations across Canada with many people active in the movement to eliminate poverty. He came up with a private member's bill that calls on the federal government to adopt a strategy for the elimination of poverty in Canada.

*Statements by Members*

I wonder if the hon. member might talk about what that process would be. Perhaps he could also relate how he developed this piece of legislation that he tabled in the House.

**Mr. Tony Martin:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member himself participated actively in the discussions by bringing to the House the stories of the people he represents.

The hon. member is absolutely right: there are real opportunities here. There will be a report tabled in this House, probably after the Remembrance Day break, that will make solid recommendations. If adopted, they will go a long way towards developing a partnership with the provinces, territories, municipalities, and first nations that will eliminate poverty in this country once and for all.

Bill C-545 would serve as the framework for this federal project. This empowering piece of legislation would give the government the vehicles it needs to begin working in partnership, so that we can once and for all get rid of the scourge of poverty that affects so many of our constituents, neighbours, and family members.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned poverty reduction in his speech. He mentioned six jurisdictions that are now making efforts to reduce poverty. One of them is my own province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which has a wide-ranging poverty reduction strategy. This strategy includes subsidized heating costs for seniors and nutritional supplements for young low-income mothers.

This could be important. Yet the vision does not lead to an overall poverty reduction strategy. Lacking a general narrative or theme, we have only a patchwork of short-term measures.

I wonder if the member could comment on one of the general themes that he would choose as a plank for poverty reduction.

• (1400)

**Mr. Tony Martin:** Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland was one of the first provinces to move forward with a strategy. But they are saying to us that, unless the federal government is at the table, it will be difficult for them to achieve all they know they can achieve.

There is no lack of good ideas out there. We heard them from many people, and there will be a lot of them in the report that will be tabled.

Bill C-545 mentions three areas that could immediately be addressed by the federal government and by all of us here: housing, income security, and social inclusion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** We will now proceed with statements by members, beginning with the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pay tribute to a former member of Parliament for Kamloops as well as a war hero, 93-year-old Don Cameron.

Don is presently on a mission to ensure that the death of every fellow veteran throughout Kamloops is recognized. Working in collaboration with the local legion, Veterans Affairs and officials from the last post fund, Don is heading up an effort to find unmarked veterans' burial plots and ensure that a proper headstone is in place.

This has proven to be a difficult task, with Don spending hours every day combing through newspaper obituary notices, looking for mention of military service or looking for familiar names. He then presents the names to the local cadets who have agreed to search the maps provided by the local cemeteries to detail which plots are marked and which are not.

This kind of painstaking work speaks to the character of Don Cameron. There are not too many people today who would take on this difficult task with such selfless determination.

On behalf of the constituents of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, we thank Don for his exemplary efforts.

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### BETTY LOUISE CROSSLEY

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, but with sadness, to rise in the House to recognize a wonderful person. Betty Louise Crossley, born Betty Noble, was an activist and an extraordinary member of the Willowdale community.

Her husband, Kelvin, two sons, Kelly and Matt, and, of course, her grandchildren were her immediate family; however, her family life extended to many others whom she met and was close with over the years.

She was an outstanding teacher and her students will all have left more learned but, more important, more engaged in the world around them. The same is true for anyone who had the privilege of getting to know her.

In a time of increasing apathy, getting people more engaged, which is so critical to improving society, is one of the highest legacies possible and it is very much one left behind by Betty Crossley.

Betty has now passed on but her family and friends know that, as she called it, her “unsolicited advice”, which was always greatly appreciated, will live on.

We thank Betty. She will be missed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### ENERKEM

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on October 13, Enerkem was selected as one of the 100 best clean technology companies as part of the 2010 Global Cleantech 100, which “highlights the most promising private clean technology companies from all around the world.... These companies are the most likely to make the most significant market impact over the next five to 10 years”.

*Statements by Members***CASA DOS AÇORES DO ONTARIO**

The company produces green fuels using waste materials, such as household garbage, thereby actively pursuing environmental goals that are very important to Quebeckers. Enerkem operates two plants in the Eastern Townships, one of them in Westbury.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I would like to congratulate Enerkem on being selected for this prestigious distinction, which makes it one of the environmental jewels in our region's crown. On behalf of the people of Compton—Stanstead, I wish the company every success in its pursuit of environmental innovation.

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[English]

**ALGOMA UNIVERSITY**

**Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, I attended a dinner to honour Dr. Celia Ross, who has retired as president of Algoma University.

The community recognized Celia's outstanding contribution and the extraordinary growth of our university. Algoma University now has over 1,200 students and is expanding to Timmins and Brampton. Its 10% growth in enrolment is well above the Ontario average and includes more international students.

In 12 years, Dr. Ross introduced studies in community economics and social development and computer games technology.

Strongly committed to supporting Anishinaabe communities, Celia helped affirm Algoma University's core partnership with the Shingwauk Education Trust. With her leadership, Algoma received its own charter in 2008.

I congratulate Dr. Ross, Algoma University and its new president, Richard Myers from New Brunswick. Algoma's future is very bright indeed.

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●(1405)

**CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are a very generous people who have clearly supported their government in sharing some of Canada's prosperity with the global family.

On behalf of Canadians, CIDA has delivered program funding that provides medical and food aid, economic assistance and democratic infrastructure. CIDA is the government's face of our citizens' compassion.

Many dedicated Canadians are working in foreign countries lending a hand up to those less fortunate and making certain the funds are spent on the most needy.

Today I would also like to salute the non-government organizations representing Canada in providing humanitarian aid to countries all over the globe. Canadians believe in the creed that "to those much is given, much is expected".

Today let us thank Canadians on the ground in foreign fields that are sharing the message of our caring and compassion. May the fruits of their toil be one of hope, peace and understanding.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased on behalf of the Parliament of Canada to recognize Casa dos Açores do Ontario located in my Davenport riding as it celebrates its 25th anniversary.

Canada's long and storied history with the Azores dates back hundreds of years. The nine lush islands of the Azores has for mariners formed a welcome horizon over the Atlantic Ocean with Canada to the west. For the 400,000 Canadians of Portuguese origin who were born in the Azores, both places are special in their hearts.

The Azores is home to many esteemed poets and the first two presidents of Portugal. As the first Canadian member of Parliament to have been born in the Azores, I share this pride.

[Translation]

Azoreans on both sides of the Atlantic cherish their country of birth, the place they have always considered their homeland. For the past 25 years, Casa dos Açores has helped build bridges between two neighbours: Canada and the Azores.

I would like to congratulate Casa dos Açores on this special anniversary.

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[English]

**THE KINGS MUTUAL CENTURY CENTRE**

**Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to participate in the opening ceremonies for the Kings Mutual Century Centre, known in the Annapolis Valley as the Apple Dome, located in Berwick, recognized as the apple capital of Nova Scotia.

This amazing complex was made possible because dedicated volunteers from several communities joined together and spent many years bringing it to fruition. The planning, the fundraising and the level of co-operation was phenomenal.

Visiting former NHL star, Rick Middleton, could not believe this incredible facility was located in a small town in Nova Scotia. Several times he commented on what people can do when they have vision, dedication and co-operation. The Apple Dome is debt free and is already booked solid with activities.

I am proud that our government supported this wonderful initiative as part of Canada's economic action plan. It has been a great economic boost for this region and a great asset for future development.

I congratulate all of the wonderful volunteers who made the Apple Dome dream come true.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is once again trying to impose its ideological agenda on Quebec women by reopening the abortion debate. The chair of the anti-abortion caucus introduced a bill meant to isolate women who are considering the procedure.

It is not just domestically that this government is calling into question a woman's right to choose. While the minister responsible for CIDA is announcing her child and maternal health plan for the 10 poorest countries, we still do not know whether the organizations that offer abortion-related services will continue to be funded. All forms of birth control, including abortion, should be funded by this plan.

The Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances, the Fédération des femmes du Québec and Action Canada for Population and Development are just some of the organizations that oppose these backward and ideological decisions. The Conservative government must stop tampering with the hard-won rights of women once and for all.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the bedrock principles of Canadian society is the freedom to believe as we choose and the freedom to worship without intimidation. This is not how things work everywhere in this world. Yesterday, we got another glimpse of the very real pain that extremism and intolerance cause.

We mourn today the death of dozens of people in Baghdad who, when they woke up yesterday, wanted nothing more than to go to their church and to worship their God. They never got to. Interrupted by a car bomb, the Our Lady of Salvation Church was overrun by a group of armed thugs who first shot the priest, then herded the congregation into an enclosed area and set off explosives when the Iraqi authorities launched a rescue attempt.

This misguided and evil act needs to be denounced.

Perhaps the Pope expressed it best when he called it “absurd violence, made more ferocious because it was directed against unarmed people gathered in the house of God”.

While it may not seem to us that our words coming from so far away can make a difference, we must still say them, and from this distance, we pray for God's mercy on both the victims and their attackers.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**CHINESE CANADIANS**

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in June of this year, CSIS director, Richard Fadden, accused municipal politicians in British Columbia and provincial politicians in at least two provinces of being under the influence of a foreign government

and then went on to identify China as a country aggressively engaging in this practice.

The people of the Chinese community were justifiably outraged. They were being accused of being disloyal Canadians.

At the public safety committee, Mr. Fadden failed to clarify his remarks and failed to apologize saying that he would forward a report to the minister. The minister has not adequately shared that report with Canadians. Mr. Fadden must apologize and, if not, he must resign. Failing that, the minister must ask Mr. Fadden to resign and, if not, the minister himself must resign.

As for the Prime Minister, his silence is deafening and insulting to all Chinese Canadians.

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**VETERANS' WEEK**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this year, Canadians mourned the loss of our last first world war veteran, Mr. John Babcock. After a long and full life of 109 years, his passing was a significant reminder that we must keep the memory of his great generation alive.

During Veterans' Week, let us remember historic milestones of the first world war which are synonymous with our proud military heritage: Passchendaele; the Battle of the Somme at Beaumont-Hamel; and the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Throughout these battles, regiments from coast to coast saw action together to forge a new and stronger sense of Canadian identity.

Ninety-two years ago, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the guns of the first world war fell silent. This November 11, our nation will pause to remember the generations of Canadians who have bravely served for our country and we will honour those who continue to serve today.

\* \* \*

**SANDY CAMERON**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the many people who knew, respected and loved Sandy Cameron mourn his death and the loss we will experience.

His decades of leadership, compassion and hard work in the downtown eastside helped countless people. Sandy's enduring and thoughtful columns in the *Carnegie Newsletter*, his books of poetry and his work at the Carnegie Learning Centre, as well as his kind and gentle ways of helping people, are things that inspired a whole community.

He told us and recorded our history. He was a wonderful teacher, a mentor and a guide who, along with his partner of 25 years, Jean Swanson, helped forge a strength of community that is legendary across Canada.

Most of all, Sandy worked for social justice and peace. He believed and lived that it came from the people. His unwavering belief in our own ability to create a better world without violence and inequality is what he left us. The best thing we can do is carry on that work because that is what he would expect us to do.

We thank Sandy for the gifts he gave us. His words live on.

### VETERANS' WEEK

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, next week, Canadians across the country will mark Veterans' Week. As we remember our veterans, we take a special moment to honour the many Canadian aboriginal people who joined in the fight to protect the values and freedoms we continue to enjoy today.

Canadian aboriginal veterans have reason to be proud of their wartime contributions. More than 7,000 first nations people served in the first and second world wars and the Korean war, along with an unknown number of Inuit, Métis and non-status aboriginal people.

Many aboriginal people currently serve in the Canadian armed forces. These people overcame cultural challenges and made impressive sacrifices and contributions to help our country.

As the granddaughter of a Métis veteran, I can testify that their courage, sacrifices and accomplishments are a source of pride to their families, communities and all Canadians.

This Veterans' Week we honour their legacy. This Veterans' Week we remember.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### 1995 REFERENDUM

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, 15 years ago, with my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, who was also a minister in the Parizeau government, I asked Quebeckers “the national question”. With an unprecedented voter turnout where 4.8 million votes were cast, representing more than 94% of the electorate, our country slipped through our fingers by 54,000 votes.

There is nothing left to say about this result, which nevertheless was respected because that is how things work in a democracy. Since then, Canada has continued to define itself as a country, a country that we do not identify with and a country that does not bring us together.

Now Quebec has a choice: face the music and join the ranks of the provinces or achieve its destiny as an independent, sovereign country. Moving Quebec toward sovereignty, continuing this fight here and elsewhere, is why we are still here and we will be here until Quebec is free and independent.

\* \* \*

•(1415)

[English]

### CENSUS

**Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, under our system of government, the cabinet has the collective constitutional responsibility to decide the policies and direction of the nation and administer the day-to-day operations.

Earlier this year, the Prime Minister made the decision to do away with the long form census and replace it with a shorter voluntary form. The voluntary form will not be nearly as accurate, and this decision has been opposed by almost every group, organization and individual in Canada.

### Oral Questions

The Prime Minister made this decision without consulting Canadians, interested stakeholders, his own caucus or the cabinet. In allowing a decision to be made in this manner, all members of cabinet violated their constitutional responsibility and breached the oath all members took when they were sworn into cabinet.

I do not expect the Prime Minister to admit this mistake and make the right decision. However, I am calling on all members of cabinet to carry out the responsibilities given to them under our country's Constitution and do the right thing: reinstate the long form census.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc has shown that it cannot be taken seriously when it comes to our armed forces. It is all over the map on the F-35 fighter jets.

Last Friday, the Bloc finance critic stated that he was opposed to buying the F-35 jets and said, “If I were the finance minister, I would take the fighter jet money and use it for more pressing needs”. Yet, the previous day, the Bloc member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel gave a passionate defence of economic spinoffs of the F-35 procurement. He said, and I quote, “Reversing this decision would have serious consequences for the Canadian aerospace industry, particularly in Quebec. Our workers do not need uncertainty. Too many jobs depend on this, especially in the Montreal-Mirabel aerospace sector.”

Once again, the Bloc is contradicting itself rather than being honest with Quebeckers. Once again, the Bloc is showing its true colours: it will say anything. Quebec deserves better. The Bloc is not serving Quebeckers.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### POTASH INDUSTRY

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government wants Canadians to be quiet about the sell-off of Saskatchewan's potash industry to foreign control. It does not want to hear anything more.

The Conservatives negotiated with a hostile bidder over the weekend, but now they do not want to listen to anyone else, not even the Premier of Saskatchewan.

Since the Minister of Industry had lots of time to tweet this weekend about going to bed early, having a nice romantic dinner, enjoying a hockey game and watching a Hallowe'en movie, will he be able to assure Saskatchewan that its premier's advice has been heard and heeded?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Let me just say this, Mr. Speaker. We certainly value the advice of the Premier of Saskatchewan. The government is committed to doing what is best for Canada. The government is committed to doing what is best for the Canadian economy.

Saskatchewan is very fortunate to have 13 strong members of Parliament on the government side of this House. They have delivered for the people of Saskatchewan like no team has, and they will continue to do so.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Fantasyland, Mr. Speaker.

Never before has there been a takeover of this magnitude, and the resource deals that approach the same size, like Alcan, Falconbridge and Inco, all fell into foreign hands under the Conservatives.

If potash goes too, Saskatchewan will lose jobs, investment and revenue and Canadians will lose control of an entire industry, 53% of global reserves of a nutrient vital to food production worldwide for generations to come.

Why is that not a strategic deal-breaker for the government?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me tell this to the House. I know both the Minister of Industry and the Prime Minister have talked to the Premier of Saskatchewan. They also regularly hear strongly and loudly from 13 strong Saskatchewan members of Parliament on the government side.

The government will stand up and do the right thing, just as we do each and every day, but let me talk about another time. For 13 long years when 11,000 takeovers took place, how many did the previous Liberal government cancel? None, not one.

• (1420)

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** None of those deals approached the magnitude of this one, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister dismisses all of this as just a bunch of Australians buying out a bunch of Americans. Not only is that factually wrong; it is insulting to Saskatchewan.

Will the government listen to Premier Wall and to the premiers of Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec and former premiers Calvert, Romanow, Devine, Blakeney and Lougheed and Canadian business icons like Dick Haskayne of Calgary and Roger Phillips of Regina and even former BHP chairman, Don Argus, who said Australia would never allow a deal like this?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me tell the member for Wascana that the Minister of Industry will only approve a deal if it is of net benefit to Canada.

The Minister of Industry and the government will always stand up and do the right thing, and the hon. member can be confident of that.

[*Translation*]

**ARTS AND CULTURE**

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative cuts to culture in 2008 resulted in the loss of \$15 million in revenue for our cultural industry and caused the cancellation of more than 170 tours.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens had to get sponsors in Egypt to pay for their latest tour. This further proves the Conservatives' disregard for our cultural industry.

Are they going to tell us that Les Grands Ballets Canadiens are also an American company?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. In each of our four budgets as a Conservative government, we have increased funding for the arts, culture and heritage in Canada. This includes festivals, libraries, museums, theatres and artists directly. In fact, the Department of Canadian Heritage is supporting artists as no other government has in the history of Canada.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on what planet?

These cuts are harming our culture and our economy. The programs that were cut created jobs throughout the cultural industry; they opened doors to foreign markets and allowed our cultural industry to shine on the world stage.

The Conservatives are wasting billions upon billions of dollars, but they are prepared to cause irreparable harm to our creators just to save \$5 million.

Do they realize that the money they wasted on a 72-hour summit cost 250 years of international presence for our culture?

[*English*]

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. When it comes to supporting arts and culture in this country, this government will take no lessons from Liberals. It is this government that, in a time of recession, decided to create two national museums, Pier 21 in Halifax and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. It is this government that doubled, from \$30 million to \$60 million, its support for cultural infrastructure across this country, which means that museums and theatres in small towns and communities across this country have support like never before. We increased by 20% our support for the Canada Council for the Arts, which supports artists directly, artists helping artists through a peer review process that is unparalleled in government.

We are doing more than ever before, more than any government has ever done to support Canadian artists, and we are very proud of that.



*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**OMAR KHADR**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the Conservative government told us that it was not participating in the negotiations regarding Omar Khadr. Yet we recently learned from diplomatic notes that a request from Omar Khadr to be transferred to a Canadian penitentiary would receive favourable consideration from the Conservative government.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain why, just a few days ago, he denied all rumours of negotiations with Mr. Khadr's lawyers and the American government when it has now come to light that there were negotiations going on between the three parties?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada did not participate in the negotiations concerning the sentence. In fact, when asked, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Navy Captain John Murphy, said that Canada was not part of the agreement and that the agreement was between the Government of the United States and Khadr's defence team.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know that there were definitely no negotiations about the sentence, but there were certainly negotiations about the plea deal. And if it is true that Canada did not participate and that the Americans spoke on Canada's behalf, that is even more serious.

Diplomatic documents reveal that the government would support the extradition of Omar Khadr after he served one year in Guantanamo. Yet the Minister of Foreign Affairs' press secretary said that the plea deal was between the Americans and Omar Khadr.

Let us get the story straight: will the minister authorize the transfer of Omar Khadr once he has served one year in Guantanamo or not?

• (1425)

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the United States agreed to send Omar Khadr back to Canada, and we will implement the agreement between Mr. Khadr and the Government of the United States.

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**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Cooperation still maintains that CIDA halted its grants to KAIROS because that organization is inefficient. Yet her own officials recommended that the funding requested by KAIROS be renewed. They indicated that CIDA should not put an end to the 35-year relationship it had had with KAIROS.

Can the minister tell us why she overturned a decision made by her own officials?

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think I have been very clear that this government wants to ensure that its international assistance is getting results for the people living in poverty in developing countries. That is why I was pleased to announce our continued support for the eradication of polio and our support for the Micronutrient Initiative.

These are the kinds of projects that will make not only the world but also the children and mothers who are suffering healthier. These are the kinds of projects that make a difference in the lives of the people we want to serve.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, KAIROS is another victim of the Conservatives' short-sighted ideology, which leads them to make decisions meant to silence anyone who does not share their ideology. For instance, KAIROS objected to the Conservative government's official policy and called for stricter controls over Canadian mining companies operating in Mexico and Guatemala.

Will the minister admit that KAIROS' funding was cut off for purely partisan and ideological reasons?

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, I reiterate that we want to make sure that our international aid is making a difference. That is why when we see Canadian mining companies being responsible, working with local communities, building schools and working with farmers so that they can increase the productivity of their fields and actually supply the food for the mining company's cafeterias, these are the kinds of things we encourage and promote. This is making good use of taxpayer dollars.

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**POTASH INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that everyone, except perhaps the Prime Minister, the industry minister and the 13 Conservative MPs from Saskatchewan, opposes the foreign takeover of our potash industry.

Clearly the BHP Billiton bid for PotashCorp brings no net benefit to Saskatchewan or to Canada.

Why will the Conservatives not act now, put their hopeless approach to foreign investment review out of its misery and turn down this deal today? Is it because, as the Prime Minister said in answer to our leader just two weeks ago, this is just the purchase of an American company by an Australian company?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry has important responsibilities under the Investment Canada Act. He will exercise those responsibilities wisely and well.

We believe these types of transactions should only be approved if they demonstrate a net benefit to Canada, and the people of Canada can count on this government and the Minister of Industry to do the right thing.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the arguments for rejecting BHP's takeover of Potash Corporation were equally valid when the government sold out Canada's steel industry, our nickel industry and our aluminum industry.

*Oral Questions*

Canadians expect the government to change its ways and to start representing the interests of Canadians.

Will the Conservatives agree to amend the Investment Canada Act? Will they give Canadians a role, make this process more transparent, end the rubber stamping and avoid more disasters?

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had his way, there would be no foreign investment in Canada whatsoever.

This government has shown in the past that we have not been afraid to do the right thing. This government has in the past always stood up for Canada.

I want to tell the House that Canadians can count on two things: one, they can count on the Minister of Industry to do the right thing; and two, they can count on the 13 strong members of the government caucus from Saskatchewan. They fight each and every day for Saskatchewan. They have done so in the past and they will always accept that important responsibility.

[Translation]

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, they are all wimps. We know that the Conservatives prefer to make political and partisan decisions, instead of using good economic sense. The Conservatives have to understand the difference between purchases by foreign interests that only want to control our natural resources and foreign investments, which create jobs, innovation and sustainable development for our communities.

Are the Conservatives willing to amend the Canada Investment Act so that Canadians, who own Canada's natural resources, are given priority?

● (1430)

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government will not take a partisan approach. It will not take a political approach.

What we will do is follow our responsibilities under the Investment Canada Act. What we will do is only approve the deal if it is of net benefit to Canada, and that is the bottom line.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He just said that the government will keep the promise it made to the U.S. to allow Khadr to return to Canada after he serves the first year of his sentence.

However, the government has forever claimed that it was not involved in any discussions or dealings with anyone on this issue. Now we know obviously it was talking to the United States government all of the time.

Why did the government continue to mislead Canadians, the media and the House of Commons?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** That of course, Mr. Speaker, is a false premise. The Government of Canada was not part of the plea negotiations. In fact, the chief

prosecutor of the tribunal, Navy Captain John Murphy, when asked about whether Canada was part of this deal, said the agreement was between the U.S. government and the defence.

[Translation]

**Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in a diplomatic note sent on October 23, Canada said that it was inclined to favourably consider Omar Khadr's application. The agreement negotiated would never have been possible without that guarantee. That proves that the government and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were involved.

Why is this Conservative government incapable of telling the truth? Why did the minister mislead the media, the House of Commons and, especially, Canadians?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the government did not participate in the negotiations on the sentence, and the prosecutor made that very clear. The American government agreed to allow Omar Khadr to return to Canada. We will do everything we can to ensure that the agreement reached between the American government and Omar Khadr is carried out.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, officials from the CIDA minister's own department have said that KAIROS continues to meet all the requirements to qualify for CIDA funding to support development overseas. However, the minister continues to stonewall this House in trying to explain why she denied its funding.

Her officials recommended that KAIROS should receive funding. Does she not trust her own officials, or is it that she is not actually in charge of her own department?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that this government wants to ensure that its international assistance is actually having an impact and making a difference for the families and children in developing countries. That is why we were proud to support Save A Family, based in London, Ontario, that is going to be working in communities in Africa and other countries, to actually work with families and work with communities to ensure that they have a better future.

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is insulting Canadians with that answer. Documents from CIDA prove that her officials told her that KAIROS absolutely fit government policy, yet for months the minister has been misleading Canadians and showing contempt for the good faith and good work of millions of Canadians who support KAIROS.

*Oral Questions*

Will the minister now apologize for misrepresenting the truth and finally approve funding for KAIROS?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to tell the hon. member opposite that what this government will do is make sure that there are more schools, that there is more education, more health, more medicine, more produce for farmers, more ability for them to feed themselves, stay healthy and ensure that healthy babies are going to be alive.

We are supporting members of KAIROS when they have individual proposals that are actually going to have an impact on people living in these communities. We have done that in the past and we will continue to do that in the future.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

[Translation]

**ARTS AND CULTURE**

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a survey of about 300 cultural organizations by the International Exchange for the Performing Arts (CINARS) confirms that, as expected, the federal government's cancellation of the PromArt and Trade Routes programs in support of international tours has had a devastating effect: more than 175 international tours have been cancelled and \$16 million has been lost.

Will the government increase funding for the Canada Council to support international cultural tours?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has tabled four budgets in this House, and in each of these four budgets, funding for the arts and culture has been increased. The member referred to the Canada Council. We increased its budget by 20% and the Bloc Québécois voted against this measure. Why?

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Heritage budget may have increased, but artists do not have more money, they have less.

The minister told the House that he had transferred the money for artists to the Olympic torch relay. The crux of the problem is that the Conservatives do not acknowledge the economic impact of the cultural sector and they despise any type of support for a nation's cultural expression.

Will the government finally understand and restore funding for international tours by further increasing the Canada Council's budget?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we increased the Canada Council's budget and the Bloc Québécois voted against it. That is what the Bloc Québécois dared to vote against. We also provided funding for the Festival de la Galette, which they voted against, the FestiVoix, which they voted against, and the Festival Envol et Macadam, which they voted against. We also decided to fund the jazz festival and more, and they voted against it.

Every time we increase funding for the arts and culture, the Bloc Québécois votes against our measures. We are committed to a

Canada-wide program that is good for the whole country and all artists, and the Bloc opposes our proposals.

\* \* \*

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, 20 years after the failure of the Meech Lake accord, the Conservative government is still refusing to make public the federal cabinet documents and minutes from the Meech Lake accord negotiations, although the Access to Information Act would permit this.

Why is the government circumventing the law? What does it have to hide?

**Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, civil servants process access to information requests and they do so by enforcing the relevant exemptions under the Access to Information Act. Section 14 of the act states that they may:

refuse to disclose...information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to be injurious to the conduct by the Government of Canada of federal-provincial affairs.

That is what those who processed this request did by applying this section.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to justify censoring cabinet discussions about the Meech Lake negotiations, the Prime Minister's department is hiding behind section 14 and is saying that this information could be "injurious to the conduct of federal-provincial affairs".

Can the government tell us what it is trying to hide? What is so serious that it could make relations between Quebec and Ottawa worse, as if that were even possible?

**Hon. Josée Verner (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just told the member from Québec that civil servants process access to information requests. They applied the law and section 14.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Conservatives were warned not to make the same mistakes with their \$16 billion fighter jet contract. However, they are not listening. They have not released the operational requirements and have not held a public competition in Canada. The government is moving forward on the largest military contract in Canadian history with no transparency at all.

Why are the Conservatives so irresponsible with taxpayers' money?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member for Beauséjour to open his ears to the words from members of his own party.

### Oral Questions

Senator Colin Kenny said that he was delighted we are going ahead with the joint strike fighter. He said:

We can't afford to lose ground in the aerospace industry, and our involvement in this contract will create new jobs and opportunities

Senator Dallaire said the F-35 stealth jet is an "excellent" plane and Canada should be buying more of them.

This is coming from the member who was involved in the cancellation of the Sea King replacement program and bought used submarines from the U.K. Whether it is helicopters that will not go up or subs that will not go down, the Liberal Party cannot fly and cannot float on military procurement.

• (1440)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the waste does not end at reckless sole-sourced defence contracts.

Here is a quick tally from last year: consultants, up \$3 billion; advertising, almost \$200 million; and the Prime Minister's propaganda budget, \$10 million, 30% more than two years ago. Ten million dollars is a lot of money for a Prime Minister who will never answer an unscripted question and has not had an open, transparent, public town hall meeting since he became Prime Minister.

How can the government justify all this waste?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberal credibility on procurement for the military is zero.

Let us listen to what the former defence minister, Senator Art Eggleton had to say. He said, "Our participation will greatly enhance interoperability with our allies", which is one of our key defence objectives.

The member for Beauséjour completely agreed with him when he was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of defence in 2002. He said:

Our cooperation with the United States, for example on joint strike fighters has earned Canadian companies substantial industrial benefits.

The Liberals are being so cynical in promising to cancel the F-35s, the same thing they did with the Sea King replacement program. They have zero credibility.

\* \* \*

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, despite giving a company in his riding 5.2 million FedDev dollars under the guise of creating jobs, it did not. The same firm, COM DEV, in fact fired 81 employees.

On the other hand, Cynthia Moyer's exemplary FedDev application was rejected for arbitrary reasons, and her firm closed.

Why is the government funding firms without a strategy and funding firms that cut jobs rather than create them? Why do they refuse to help small and medium size businesses in southwestern Ontario? Where is the fairness for those hardest hit by this recession?

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for South-**

**ern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member needs to get his facts correct.

The unfortunate layoffs at COM DEV are not related to FedDev funding. Our investment is in new micro-satellite technology for a growing part of that company that is creating jobs in southern Ontario.

**Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the minister makes up excuses, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says its members are dissatisfied with the programs provided by FedDev.

Its members say the application process is time consuming and cumbersome and there is no meaningful way to inquire about applications, and no help from FedDev. Lost jobs in southwestern Ontario have been mostly replaced by contractor part-time service industry jobs, not jobs of the future.

When will the minister work for small businesses that create seven out of eight new jobs, instead of providing one-off funding for companies that cut jobs?

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again the member is completely wrong. This government's number one priority is to create jobs and stimulate the economy, and we are doing just that. That is exactly why the Prime Minister set up FedDev Ontario with a five year mandate and \$1 billion.

I will point out to the House that since May 2009, 185,000 new jobs have been created in southern Ontario. What is really of concern is that the Liberals voted against that kind of stimulus for Ontario. Why did they do that?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last summer, our government committed to buying F-35 fighter jets to replace the aging CF-18 fleet. This decision was made a full 13 years after the program was launched. During these 13 years, a bidding process was organized, and Lockheed Martin was awarded the contract to manufacture this first-generation fighter jet.

Could the Minister of Industry speak about the advantages of our government's decision for Canada's aerospace industry?

## Oral Questions

[English]

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** I will be happy to, Mr. Speaker. Our government has taken the fourth and next step of this 13 year F-35 program to ensure the Canadian aerospace industry would benefit the greatest and our forces would have the best.

Last week, however, the Liberal leader took time out to commit to return the Canadian Forces to the times of the decade of darkness and to shut down Canadian aerospace jobs in such places as Montreal, Winnipeg, Mississauga, British Columbia, eastern Canada. I call on the Liberal leader to retract his position and to stand up for Canadian aerospace jobs.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

## HARMONIZED SALES TAX

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am receiving complaints from Albertans who are being charged HST on many transactions, including mailing gifts, sending courier packages and hiring Alberta-based moving companies to send goods to provinces that have adopted the harmonized sales tax.

The Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and all of the Conservative members of Parliament from Alberta voted to impose the HST on Albertans. Did the government consult anyone in Alberta on the implications of the HST and if so, whom?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, provincial taxation is a provincial responsibility in Canada. Recently two provincial governments decided to move to a harmonized sales tax.

With respect to mail and courier services, nothing has changed at the federal level. For mail and courier services, the sales tax has always been applied on the basis of where the consumption takes place. This has not changed. It has always been the case.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is question period, not answer period.

Canada Revenue Agency is unable to answer the basic questions of constituents on the implications of the HST for Albertans.

Could the minister please inform the House who benefits from the HST paid by Albertans? Who pays the collection cost of this tax destined for the coffers of another province? What additional administrative burden is now imposed on Alberta businesses to collect and remit this new tax?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** This is question period, Mr. Speaker, and here is the answer again.

Nothing has changed at the federal level. Provincial taxation is a provincial responsibility. For mail and courier services, the sales tax has always been applied on the basis of where the consumption takes place. This has not changed. It has always been the case.

[Translation]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a number of experts interviewed by *Le Devoir* have pointed out that the seismic testing to be done on the Newfoundland portion of Old Harry, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, poses significant risks to a number of endangered species.

Will the government act on the unanimous motion of the National Assembly, calling for a halt to the current exploration?

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring the safe, responsible and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources. We will continue to work with the provinces and territories across the country in order to promote responsible development.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the seismic testing in Newfoundland has repercussions for hundreds, if not thousands of kilometres. What is happening in Newfoundland has an impact on Quebec.

In the name of due diligence, will the government act on the motion of the National Assembly and halt the current exploration until we have the results of the environmental assessments ordered by Quebec?

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will continue to work with the provinces and territories to promote responsible development. Quebec had indicated that it wants to enter into an offshore agreement similar to the ones that the federal government has with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. We look forward to working with it on such an agreement.

\* \* \*

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the enabling accessibility fund for people with disabilities was meant to support projects from across the country, not just in Conservative ridings. Yet over 90% of all funding went to Conservatives. It was quite the Conservative feast.

The minister has refused to be straight with Canadians about this fund. The facts, which that Canadian has such an aversion to, point to a full and complete abuse of the fund.

Could the minister responsible ensure that the next round of funding be available to all Canadians with disabilities, not just her Conservative colleagues?

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week I was very pleased to be able to announce the launch of the call for proposals for the mid-sized projects under our extended enabling accessibility fund. These are for projects from \$500,000 to \$3 million to go into communities right across the country to help make communities more accessible.

We are focusing on ensuring that rural and remote areas that do not often have access to the funding for this get extra points on the evaluation system. We support accessibility for everyone in those areas.

• (1450)

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible for people with disabilities has hijacked the accessibility fund, cancelled the PAL survey for active living and sat back quietly while the long form census, so important to disability groups, was changed.

After six years as an MP, three years as a minister and seven and a half months after we raised it in the House, why does the minister responsible for people with disabilities not have an accessible constituency office?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no government has done more to help those with disabilities become fully included in our society than our government has. We removed barriers to participation across the country, whether in the over 300 enabling accessibility fund projects so far, or in our federal government offices in which we are investing significant dollars to make accessible. We have also launched the RDSP, the registered disability savings plan, to help families save for the future.

We have done a lot, we have a lot to do and we keep doing it. I just wish the opposition would support it for once because its record on this is pretty dam bad.

\* \* \*

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that Omar Khadr is a Canadian citizen. The will of the House, the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada was to have Khadr brought home to face justice in Canada.

Canada has been the only country to accept the Guantanamo process and that fell far short of Canadian, U.S. and international legal and human rights standards. There is no justice in Guantanamo.

In light of the diplomatic notes that have surfaced, the obvious question is this. What else is the minister hiding and what other plans does the government have for Omar Khadr?

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our friend and closest ally, the American government, agreed that Omar Khadr return to Canada. We will implement the agreement between Mr. Khadr and the U.S. government.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives, specifically the Minister of Foreign Affairs, have repeatedly said that Omar Khadr was America's problem, that no talks were under way and that this had nothing to do with them. We now find out that on October 23, the government had in fact been in

talks and had in fact considered a request by the U.S. to bring Omar Khadr back to Canada. The diplomatic notes are clear.

Why did the minister deny that this was the case? Why did he mislead Canadians? Why is he hiding from the truth? He should embrace the truth. It might even set him free.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Government of Canada was not part of the plea negotiations. The chief prosecutor of the tribunal reiterated this on numerous occasions. I will not go back into this response. We are not and were not part of the plea negotiations.

\* \* \*

### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada today aboriginal women are more than three times as likely to be a victim of violent crime than non-aboriginal women. Our government is concerned by this disturbing pattern of violence and the impact it has on their families and our communities. We believe all women have the right to be safe, regardless of the community in which they live.

Could the Minister for the Status of Women update the House on what the government is doing to address this issue and help protect these women?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar for her tireless efforts on this issue.

I am proud to inform the House that our government is taking several concrete actions to address the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women. We have committed \$10 million to create a new centre for missing persons with the RCMP, improve law enforcement databases, boost victim services and support the creation of community and educational safety plans and create a national website for public tips.

Elizabeth Bastien of the Native Women's Association of Canada has said that this is a significant investment, one that can go a long way in addressing the challenges experienced by women and families in our communities. We will continue to keep women safe.

*Oral Questions*

●(1455)

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the environment minister says he wants to create regulations for the shale gas industry in Quebec. Yet the natural resources minister told the House his government will not get involved in shale gas mining.

Does that mean the water taking regulations the environment minister says that he is working on will be merely a public relations exercise? In other words, will they have teeth and be strong enough to halt a shale gas project that compromises surface water supplies in Quebec, or will they just be a rubber-stamping process for approving industry proposals?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we are committed to working with the provinces and territories on the safe and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources. Shale gas represents a tremendous opportunity for Quebec. It is up to the Quebec government alone to decide and to set the framework for the development of those resources. We will continue to work with the provinces and the territories.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it has now been almost two years since the government implemented its 98% Canadian content standard for labelling products as made in Canada. Ever since, all stakeholders in the agri-food sector have been criticizing the standard, which has cost millions of dollars and significant market share for our producers and processors, who are calling for a threshold of 85%.

After two bogus consultations and promises to change the standard, will the minister give in to the arguments of the UPA, which is calling on the government to adopt labelling rules that eliminate all ambiguity regarding the origins of products, thereby allowing consumers to make informed choices?

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the consultation is to ensure that consumers, the Consumers' Association of Canada and processors can all agree on the best possible wording. We also conducted another consultation, which is still under way. Of course we expect to be able to report on the results of this consultation in the very near future.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, new questions have surfaced in the tragic death of Ashley Smith. A Correctional Service report says that her repeat transfers went against doctor's orders, interfered with her treatment and escalated her self-harming behaviour. It reveals that her death may not have been a suicide at all, but a desperate cry for stimulation and release from her segregation cell.

The treatment of mentally ill offenders is still deficient and the conditions that led to Ashley's death still exist in our federal prisons. Instead of building more prison cells to warehouse the mentally ill, will the government act now to provide safe and effective treatment?

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this truly was a tragic incident and our sympathy to the family of Ashley Smith. This matter is before the courts and it would not be inappropriate for me to comment on specifics on that case.

In the government's 2008 federal budget, Correctional Service Canada did receive permanent funding of \$16.6 million annually for institutional mental health services, commencing in 2009-10.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, ever since our government was elected in 2006, we have consistently stood up for victims of crime in our country. Not only did we establish an ombudsman for the victims of crime and commit record funding to services for victims, we backed it up by passing a number of bills aimed at cracking down on serious and violent crime in the country.

Could the Minister of Justice please update the House on the status of our tough on crime agenda?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not only have we passed the truth in sentencing bill, we also have the identity theft and tackling violent crime legislation. We have a very busy agenda before the House. I am calling for a conversion by members of the opposition. I am calling for their support to help us get tough on crime in our country. I know they will not like this, but I know my colleagues on this side of the House will like this. We will be introducing more legislation, all of it to help victims and law-abiding Canadians. I know that will be supported.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner has indicated that Fisheries and Oceans does not have enough scientific data on the current state of fish habitats to allow the government to regulate surface water removal from Canada's fish-bearing waters, as it is obligated to do under the Constitution.

Can the minister tell us if she has the scientific data needed to allow the government to come up with draft regulations for the shale gas industry?

*Routine Proceedings*

●(1500)

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, shale gas represents a tremendous opportunity for Quebec. It is up to the Province of Quebec to set the framework for the development of that resource.

Unlike the Liberals, who want to tell Quebeckers how to develop their resources, our government is going to work with the provinces and territories to help realize the benefits of those resources.

\* \* \*

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after months of waiting, instead of targeting programs to end violence against aboriginal women, the Conservatives announced a long laundry list of unspecified programs not for aboriginal women.

A missing person's centre is necessary. Sisters in Spirit proved that when they showed how impossible our current methods are at tracking who is missing. Why is the government paying for the national police support centre for missing persons with money that should be focused on the problems of violence against aboriginal women?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are supporting a centre for missing persons because this is a responsibility that all of us share, and I can tell the hon. member that this was a very well received announcement that we made in Vancouver. In particular, the Native Women's Association of Canada welcomed this. They themselves are the ones who raised awareness about the murdered or missing aboriginal women, and we responded to that call with a new \$10 million program and a new centre for missing persons with the RCMP.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, without consultation, the Conservative government has announced the closure of two border crossings in Quebec and a significant reduction in the operating hours of three border crossings by April 2011. At the same time, the United States is investing in small border crossings to improve their infrastructure for safety reasons. The harmonization of border crossings is a failure.

Will the Minister of Public Safety suspend his decision to close several border crossings in Quebec and to reduce the operating hours of others?

[English]

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this side of the House does believe Canadians deserve value for their money and programs that do produce results, and we are pleased that CBSA has said that no job losses are expected as a result of these port closures and that alternative ports are located very close by, less than 20 kilometres away.

The decision to transfer services from very low traffic sites to other nearby sites will give people better value for their money.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The issue is not whether or not the government is part of the plea bargaining, because the government cannot be part of the plea bargaining. Only the prosecutor, defence or anyone else that is allowed by Khadr to be part of the process can be part of the process.

The question is this. The government talked to the U.S. Department of State and said, "If you arrive at an agreement, we would agree to have him transferred into this country". That is an agreement by any name. By any other name that is an agreement to say Khadr can come back.

Did you not negotiate with the United States Department of State to have Khadr come back?

**The Speaker:** The Speaker did not.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question remains this. Is the Government of Canada part of the negotiations, the plea negotiations? No, the Government of Canada is not part of the plea negotiations, and I am very happy to see that my hon. colleague, after spending this question period repeating that, has finally agreed with me that that is the case. We were not part of it.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**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 pleasure to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition.

\* \* \*

●(1505)

**INVESTIGATIVE POWERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT**

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-51, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act.



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

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### INVESTIGATING AND PREVENTING CRIMINAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ACT

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (for the Minister of Public Safety)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-52, An Act regulating telecommunications facilities to support investigations

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

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, in accordance with its order of reference on Wednesday, March 3, 2010.

Your committee has considered Bill C-393, An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes) and to make a consequential amendment to another Act and agreed on Monday, November 1, 2010, to report it, with amendments.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. In accordance with the order of reference of Friday, October 8, 2010, your committee has considered Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (suicide bombings) and agreed on Thursday, October 28, 2010, to report it, with amendments.

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### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-588, An Act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act (members of the board).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to introduce this private member's bill regarding the Canadian Wheat Board. This bill finds its origins in the fact that there is no business case for abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board. In fact, it is the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world and yet the government has been on an ideological crusade to bring it down.

This bill would enhance the powers of the board of directors of the Wheat Board. It would change the way the board of directors is chosen and selected. It would reduce the number of directors appointed by the government. It would diminish the arbitrary discretionary powers of the minister to interfere with the activities, administration and operation of the Canadian Wheat Board, and it would reaffirm the fact that the Wheat Board is not a government institution or agency. It is in fact a wholly owned co-operative enterprise operated and owned by the grain producers of the prairie region, and their success is paramount. The government should get its hands off the Wheat Board, and this bill would codify the powers

### Routine Proceedings

of the directors to chart their own destiny and their own control of this great Canadian institution.

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

\* \* \*

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the various parties and if you seek it, I am sure you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, when the House begins proceedings under the provisions of Standing Order 53.1 on Tuesday, November 2, 2010, no quorum calls, requests for unanimous consent or dilatory motions shall be received by the Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

● (1510)

### PETITIONS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we know, many people who suffer with MS look to some treatment that has been in its preliminary stages in other countries.

My petitioners have requested that they have some suggestions for the Minister of Health in terms of how we could facilitate moving forward in terms of offering hope again for those who suffer with MS.

PENSIONS

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition signed by hundreds of people in my riding of Hamilton Mountain who share my belief that spousal homicide should not pay.

The petitioners are outraged that it is currently possible for people convicted of killing their spouse to collect CPP survivor benefits and/or the death benefit.

They are equally outraged that it is possible for people convicted of killing their spouse to collect survivor benefits and/or the death benefit under CPPD.

They know that it is a long-established principle in law that no one should be able to benefit from the commission of a crime and that principle must be enshrined in the eligibility criteria for government benefit programs.

*Routine Proceedings*

What the petitioners are asking for is the immediate passage of my bill, Bill C-527, which would amend the Canada pension plan to prohibit the payment of a survivor's pension, orphan's benefit or death benefit to a survivor or orphan of a deceased contributor if the survivor or orphan has been convicted of the murder or manslaughter of the deceased contributor.

## PREVENTION OF COERCED ABORTION

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit this petition from more than a thousand Canadians in support of Bill C-510, Roxanne's law.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from citizens across many communities and from all walks of life who wish Parliament to know that they genuinely support and value the contributions of our veterans and that they regard a veteran as a veteran, regardless in which deployment or where an individual may have served.

The petitioners join the Veterans Ombudsman and General Walter Natynczyk in condemning the new veterans' charter and the Department of Veterans Affairs for creating barriers to serving Canada's veterans.

The petitioners also demand that existing services, such as veterans' hospitals, be mandated to serve modern-day veterans, including the more than 200,000 members of the armed forces who have served in peacekeeping missions since the Korean war.

The petitioners want there to be a full hearing in the House of Commons, in response to the issues of pensions, special care programs, services and the preservation of an independent Department of Veterans Affairs and that Parliament act to ensure veterans and their families receive the supports they have been promised and to which they are entitled as members of the armed forces, past, present and future.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to table a petition today signed by many people from greater Vancouver, who in fact signed it at this past summer's pride festival in Vancouver, in support of full and explicit human rights protection for transgender and transsexual Canadians.

They note that transsexual and transgender people are victims of discrimination, harassment and violence because of their gender identity and expression and that they are often denied employment, housing and access to trans-sensitive health care and often have difficulty obtaining identification documents because of their gender identity and expression.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to support a private member's bill that I have tabled, Bill C-389, that would add gender identity and expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act and would also amend the Criminal Code to include gender identity and gender expression as distinguishing characteristics and as aggravating factors to be taken into consideration at the time of sentencing and in hate crimes legislation.

[*Translation*]

## FRANKLIN BORDER CROSSING

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to the House of Commons a petition signed by nearly 5,000 citizens from my riding who are asking the Government of Canada to commit to reviewing its decision to close the Franklin border crossing on April 1, 2011. I would like to point out that this decision was made without informing elected officials from the affected municipalities, businesses, citizens or our American neighbours. No consultations or public meetings were organized by the Canada Border Services Agency to explain the decision and the possible alternatives to municipal authorities and the merchants using this border point.

I would like to point out that this border crossing is important for our economy and the tourism sector, for the safety of our residents and the village of Franklin's viability.

● (1515)

[*English*]

## PASSPORT FEES

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my petition calls on the Canadian government to negotiate with the United States government to reduce the United States and Canadian passport fees. The number of American tourists visiting Canada is at its lowest level since 1972. It has fallen by five million visits in the last seven years, from 16 million in 2002 to only 11 million in 2009.

Passport fees for an American family of four could be over \$500 U.S. While 50% of Canadians have passports, only 25% of Americans do.

At the recent Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, attended by myself and over 500 elected representatives from 11 border states and 3 provinces, a resolution was passed unanimously which reads:

RESOLVED, that [the] Conference calls on President Barack Obama and [the Canadian] Prime Minister...to immediately examine a reduced fee for passports to facilitate cross-border tourism; and be it further

RESOLVED, that [the Conference] encourage the governments to examine the idea of a limited time two-for-one passport renewal or new application;

To be a fair process, passport fees must be reduced on both sides of the border. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to work with the American government to examine a mutual reduction in passport fees to facilitate tourism and, finally, promote a limited time two-for-one passport renewal or new application fee on a mutual basis with the United States.

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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### IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. You moved so quickly after question period that I missed the tabling of documents under routine proceedings.

I would therefore like, pursuant to section 94(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to table, in both official languages, the 2010 annual report on immigration.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### SUSTAINING CANADA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know we have spent a lot of time speaking to the budget's effects domestically within Canada and what it will do to Canadians, good or bad, but I would like to spend a few minutes discussing what will happen to Canada's image overseas; to our own image of helping other people who are in desperate need and who are dispossessed.

I am aware that international co-operation is a contentious issue right now as we look through the budget and at what is going on. However, I am more interested in the future rather than debating the decisions that have happened in the past. I am very much aware that CIDA has decided that it wants to focus on three areas: health, education and food. I am not so much against that idea, as those things are very necessary, but I wonder where the money will come from to be able to do it.

I have looked on in concern as CIDA has continued to narrow down its funding programs in such a way that, as it focuses on those three things, many other things are not getting done. I think that is a concern.

I think it is also a great concern, not just for people in Canada but also various multinational groups and others overseas, that CIDA has had its budget frozen for the next five years. It is not only that. It is also the fact that that represents almost a full 25% of the deficit reduction that will be going on over the course of the next five years.

My concern about that is that as the needs grow and as our other partners around the world, Britain, the United States, Norway, the United Nations, Brazil, China and other countries, begin to ramp up

### *Government Orders*

their international co-operation dollars, we are actually in a situation where we will fall behind. That does concern me.

I do not want to pick fights over the particular decisions that are made. My concern is that as the rest of the world moves forward, even in very difficult economic times, groups, like the Government of the United Kingdom, Britain, have decided that, in spite of their own massive deficits and the deficit cutting that they will do, they will still reach 0.7 of GDP by the end of their mandate. I think that is significant.

It is also significant that Norway and other Scandinavian countries are up at 0.9. It is interesting that the Obama administration wants to claw its way to 0.7 as well. We know that Brazil has signed on and that it is becoming an economic powerhouse. It will reach its 0.7 budget, which is significant because Canada, by freezing our aid dollars, will fall down below 0.3. I do not think any of us really expected or wanted that but it will happen. It is happening at a time when we all, as advanced nations, decided in 2005, in Gleneagles, Scotland, to sign on to the millennium development goals. Up until that time, poverty was just a dog's breakfast. It was all over the place. Nobody knew quite how to attack it. Nations were running on all sorts of different cylinders.

However, the leaders of the industrialized world at that time decided that the time had come to pull it all together, to come up with some major themes in which all the major countries of the world could come together.

I want to mention briefly what was agreed to in Gleneagles, Scotland. It was agreed to end poverty and hunger; to have universal education and gender equality; child health; maternal health; combat HIV-AIDS; environmental sustainability; and global partnership.

Those are very important goals and, as we saw this past September at the millennium development goals summit at the United Nations, we are failing. I want to commend the government for its own actions around child and maternal health. The fact that it attempted to show leadership in that area is a good thing, but we need to back that up with the funds that would help us get to that point.

It is also important that as a government we did not sign on to child and maternal health nor to the global fund. We also did not sign on to environmental sustainability. We signed on to global partnership which allows people in developing worlds to take more part in the allocation of aid dollars and in what needs to be done.

In universal education, Canada has done a very good job, even under the present government for a number of years, of keeping our levels high in universal education but now they are beginning to dip. The Government of Canada is freezing its budget at the same time that others, equally oppressed by very difficult times, are deciding to move ahead anyway and do their best to fulfill the millennium development goals.

*Government Orders*

Why is it that we are being presented with a budget like this and debating it, which is a really good thing, that we have opted to do this at a time when other countries, which are far more financially stressed than we are, are opting to go ahead? Once again I would remind the House of Great Britain and all the strains that it is under. Even its coalition that came together has decided that it will stick together and stick to 0.7.

● (1520)

Some great things are coming out. When I look at Haiti, I think about the 200 people who have died as a result of the cholera outbreak. The whole island was wiped out and it needs rebuilding and rebuilding is going to take funds. The Government of Canada matched funds with Canadians in a strong response to Haiti. However, Bill Clinton told me in New York that it will be a 20 year project. If in the first five years of that project, CIDA has frozen its budget, I do not see how we will get there.

I would like to talk a bit about Sudan. People know about my own particular interest in Sudan. Sudan will be signing a referendum in January of this coming year. That is only two months away. Many of us will be there as that is going on. South Sudan will be the world's newest country. I realize that CIDA has said that it will put money toward food, and that is important. I also realize that the Government of Canada has given \$800 million to Sudan since it came to power in 2006. There is nothing wrong with that. That is important. Sudan has stayed a country of focus for both the previous government and the current government.

Our problem comes with the World Food Programme report that now says that food assistance has more than quadrupled from 1 million to 4.3 million people in South Sudan in 2010 who will need help. How do we help them if we have frozen the budget? I do not understand.

I spoke with southern Sudanese officials just this past week and they are greatly worried about the two million people who will come back in massive migrations from all sorts of countries around Sudan and swell over the villages that are already there. The health concerns are major. Although CIDA has said that health is a major concern, how will we meet those needs if we have frozen the budget? There are other things as well.

When it comes to Sudan, it is important to realize that both the previous government and the current government made serious commitments to the people of south Sudan and to the country of Sudan as a whole. Many of us in the House will be there to watch the referendum signing ceremony. In the years following that, what are we going to do with the two to three to four million people who have visited Sudan and have decided to stay? How can CIDA possibly keep Sudan as a country of focus if its budget is frozen? I am concerned about that.

There is Congo. The *Globe and Mail* had a good article last week saying that the Canadian government had a very unique opportunity to go into Congo and help to stabilize that region because of our bilingual nature, the training of our troops and the excellence of our CIDA people. However, it will not happen, in part because we have not made that commitment. Where will CIDA's money come from if it enters into the massive problems in that region?

We have some serious thinking to do. If this budget has been cut by 25% to just CIDA alone and we are part of a worldwide scope to try reach out to these countries of the world and help stabilize them, how will we do that if we are suddenly frozen and we fall below 0.3 when our other partners are moving toward 0.7?

These are serious issues and I am worried. I do not want to pick fights about what should have been done about KAIROS. Those are for another day and another time. I just want to talk in broad strokes. What will we do as a nation if our budget is frozen?

This is an important issue for members of the House and for Canadians. According to a recent poll, 77% of Canadians think it is important for Canada to be known as a world leader in funding solutions and 62% of Canadians think this funding should not be frozen.

The sum of \$4.5 billion will be cut from the CIDA budget because the money will be frozen and it will not continue to be increased. What will we do as a nation? How will we answer the world when other countries are looking to us for leadership as part of broader partnerships. Do we tell them that all bets are off? Do we tell them that we have frozen our budget, that they will be left on their own and that we will keep doing what we want to do?

We are part of a global alliance. It is my hope that all of us will look at this budget and realize that one of its fundamental flaws is the fact that our hand of compassion to the world has just been cut off because of our own inability to continue to increase funds for international co-operation.

● (1525)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from London not only on his comments with respect to this budget legislation, but for the work he has done in Canada and internationally in terms of international development and co-operation.

I have had the privilege of having a number of conversations with my colleague and his passion and knowledge on questions of international development, particularly with respect to the African continent are an inspiration. It is in that vein that I would very much like our colleague to share with us his views on how the lack of funding for development projects and for Canada's commitment to multilateral organizations like the United Nations has been reflected in our participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Our colleague's knowledge of the African continent and of some of its difficult conflicts is worthy of sharing with this House as well as his views on what Canada could do more of to participate in the United Nations peacekeeping exercises and missions on that continent.

Does he have a sense of the number of Canadian military personnel, for example, involved in peacekeeping efforts under the United Nations banner?

I think a source of pride for many in this House is our past participation in those missions. I know we would benefit from the member's insight in this matter.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend's question is an important one.

*Government Orders*

We are about ready to look at the purchase of 65 stealth fighter jets. Right now Canada has between 30 and 50 peacekeepers worldwide. In 1992 we led the world in peacekeeping. We had more troops, more skin in the game in 1992, but today we are right near the bottom. We are 53rd out of 55 countries in peacekeeping.

There are 35 peacekeepers. I do not think Canadians know that or necessarily understand it, but that is a real issue. Peacekeeping is essential to international co-operation as well. We need that security in order to do our work.

I appreciate my friend's inquiry into this because we cannot separate peacekeeping, foreign development, international development and our troops from one another. They are a whole unit. It is time we realized that peacekeeping has to be part of the game and we have to be part of it.

• (1530)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is probably no member in this House who has more knowledge and authority on the issues he just spoke about. The member is very articulate in showing the relative and absolute decline in the influence of CIDA as far as our nation is concerned. It shows an absolute decline in numbers.

For whatever reason, we have chosen to deal with our deficit on the backs of the poor of this world. We have recently suffered a slap in international prestige before the United Nations. CIDA is a diminished force. Of course, there is what happened to Bill C-300 last Wednesday night. All of this makes us, in my judgment, a diminished nation.

I am interested in the hon. member's views on the diminished nature of CIDA going forward.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, to put it simply, the rest of the world is looking at us and wondering what has happened. I know that from speaking with people.

Right now we are 22nd on the list of OECD donors. We used to be near the top. We are now at a point where the rest of the world is no longer factoring in Canada. The delegations and others that we speak with about international co-operation realize we are on a downward track. It affects very much how the world will respond. Canada used to be one of the key players in peacekeeping and international co-operation. Without Canada, that work is greatly hindered.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to say a few words on economic recovery and on the budget.

First, in case I am not on my feet again, I would like to pay my respect to the older Canadian veterans who did so much to make it possible for us to be here today and have freedom and democracy in this great nation, and also to remember our newer veterans.

It is fair to say that we understand more what our veterans go through and what they suffer when they come home. It is vitally important that the Government of Canada has a package in place to ensure that when these veterans return they are able to live a normal life. Some of them suffer physical and mental illnesses. We must have the funds in place to assist them. That is why I have some concern about the lump sum payment for veterans. If that takes place and something happens and the fund is gone, what happens to them?

Will there be people on the street with no dollars, people who stood in a foreign land in order to preserve our democracy? I hope the government will take that in hand.

I had the privilege of sitting at the cabinet table for a period of time representing veterans and I did learn many things. One thing they told me was that we certainly should know our history, and I do the best I can, because if we do not know it, we are very apt to repeat it.

In looking at the economic situation in the country today and reflecting back to when I came here, there was a previous government in place. When I reflect on the budgets that were presented at that time and the projections that were made, very fine people with great intentions gave great projections, none of which were met, and all the deficits were added onto the debt.

In fact, when Mr. Chrétien formed government and Mr. Martin gave us our first economic update, the debt was \$38 billion, going to \$60 billion if we did not do something. It kind of reflects what is taking place today and it is a great concern. Today I am fearful of how the economic situation might be straightened out in this country. We have to be sure it is not straightened out on the backs of the poor.

In Prince Edward Island, and in the Cardigan riding which I have the great privilege of representing, agriculture, fisheries and tourism are very important. In the agricultural field, I often hear the minister and other government members talk about it being from the gate to the plate. It sounds great but I can tell the House there is absolutely no problem at the plate, but there is a great problem at the gate.

If we go beyond the gate of the family farms and meet with the people who are involved in the agricultural sector and get an understanding of the debt they are carrying, farm debt has doubled in the last three years. It is a sad situation. This is the second largest nation in the world. If we are not careful, we will not be able to feed ourselves. It is certainly true that the measures we have do not meet the requirements for what is needed in the agricultural sector.

There is one thing a number of constituents say to me. They want me to remind the government that it is the government. In fact, some people in my riding feel it has been the government a bit too long. For government members to stand in their places and indicate what took place five, ten or fifteen years ago is not good enough. People need answers.

At the agriculture committee, a number of things have been suggested. The emergency advance payment program must be re-established at a higher level to meet producers' needs. Producers have a great difficulty. Looking at the hog industry in Prince Edward Island, many people had great difficulties. Another suggestion that was made to the committee was that we have funds in place to make sure that Canadians know that they are eating Canadian pork. The problem with the hog industry in particular is that little or nothing was done and they went broke.

We need to take care of our farmers.

*Government Orders*

Fishing is another very important industry in the province. There are a lot of problems in the fishing industry in Prince Edward Island. There are certain areas in the lobster fishery that are doing quite well. However, there are areas that are in a very serious situation. They need help from the government.

● (1535)

On June 10, 2009, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a \$65 million investment to help the Atlantic lobster industry. Why was it not an announcement of \$165 million or \$265 million, because the government is going to spend practically none of it anyway. That is the difficulty in the fishery. The fact is 80% of the total dollars that were announced have not been spent.

There were \$15 million of this fund put in place in order to help fisher people who are in great difficulty, for example, in area 26A. There are always ups and downs in every industry. The pork industry needed help a year ago and a number of my constituents did not get any. They went broke. There is great difficulty in the fishery in 26A. I remember travelling in that area a number of years ago and the catches were high, but for the last number of years the people have been in a desperate situation and they need some input from the government.

The difference between fisheries and agriculture is that when fishers go broke the fleet is repossessed. It goes back to the lending institution and somebody else buys it. Somebody else invests in it. The fact is that all governments have issued lobster licences to people in this area. It is the responsibility of the Government of Canada to put a publicly funded rationalization program in place to help, in somewhat of a decent way, take out of the fishery those people who wish to come out. It is important to realize that the government issues the licence, but the people involved in the fishery spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on boats and traps to get their fleet in order, only to lose it.

The difference between the fishery and agriculture, when the government does nothing for the agricultural sector, people just go broke and go away. In the fishing sector they go broke and the lending institution is hurt. It is always a family operation and the people go broke, but it goes back to the lending institution. Someone buys the fleet and that fleet is back on the water creating the same amount of pressure on the fishery in 26A. It is not the only area in Atlantic Canada that has great difficulty. If the government does not put something in place that would take these people out of the fishery, there is going to be a continuous cycle of people going broke, people reinvesting in the fleet and the strain remaining on the resource.

As far as a recovery for people in the fishery is concerned, I suggest that the government spend some of the \$65 million it announced. It has dealt with fishermen since it made that announcement. Nothing has happened in my area. The people are still up against it financially. They are asking to do this and do that, but in the end there is nothing done in order to take that fleet out of the system. The licence has to be taken back by the government and taken out of the system altogether. If 30% are taken out, it leaves 70% of the people able to make a living. Why would the government not see that? That is exactly what we need in order to ensure that the economy in that area of Prince Edward Island becomes even better.

A number of things were put in place. In fact the Liberal government put in place pilot projects in the EI program. Pilot programs have succeeded for years. They should be made part of the EI program so businesses can continue to thrive in Prince Edward Island.

● (1540)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Cardigan is well known in this House as somebody who defends the fishing industry, coastal communities, agriculture, and those who require employment insurance at periods of the year when there is no work.

I hope that the member for Cardigan will share some of his vast experience in this House and in government as a senior minister. I wonder whether he might comment on small craft harbours. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has a budget for small craft harbours.

A previous Liberal government increased the budget. In fairness, the current government, as part of the economic stimulus program, also increased the budget for the important work of repairing fishing harbours around the country. Certainly, in my riding of Beauséjour, a number of wharves still need work.

I wonder if the member might share with us his views on whether this program should be extended or allowed to sunset, as the Conservatives seem to want. We think this would be irresponsible.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Beauséjour, who represents fishers, understands very well how important small craft harbours are. Small craft harbours are just like our homes. If we do not spend money on them every year, they deteriorate. It is for the government to decide whether it is going to keep them in proper condition or not.

If this sunsets, if these dollars are not left in place, we know what happens. It is like anything else. These harbours become a massive bill for government, or they deteriorate and we cannot use them.

I remember all the barricades that were up when we formed the government in 1993. It was pretty sad. There were barricades up, and we were not able to use them, because they were not safe.

I agree with the member for Beauséjour. Let us ensure that the barricades are not put back up.

● (1545)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate listening to my colleague from Cardigan when he has an opportunity to speak in the House.

I want to ask him a question that I think is relevant to today's discussion. During my fourth or fifth year on the Hill, there was a debate about cutting back the support for the Pictou-P.E.I. ferry, the ferry service through the Northumberland Strait. I recall that the former premier of Nova Scotia, Premier John Hamm, for whom I have a great deal of respect, phoned my office. We had a great discussion about the impact that this would have on the people of Pictou County and P.E.I.

*Government Orders*

I know the member has a terrible reputation. He has been besmirched in this House for fighting for the people he represents and for dragging too much back to his constituents. I am sure that this is a reputation he will never want to apologize for.

However, I want to ask him, what is the current state of the Northumberland ferry service? Does he believe that the current government will be able to address the situation to the benefit of the people of P.E.I. and Pictou county?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** Mr. Speaker, the Wood Islands-Caribou ferry service is a vital link. If we want to maintain, just maintain, the economic growth that has taken place in eastern Prince Edward Island, we must have the Wood Islands-Caribou ferry service in place. It is no good to have members of the government saying they support the service. That is no good at all. It is a government decision, a political decision, that will decide whether the Wood Islands-Caribou ferry service remains.

The government has asked for a public service review of the ferry. I can tell members that I am some concerned about this public service review. What happens if the public service review comes back and says that this service should not be there, that the fixed link was built and this should not be there?

Nothing could be more devastating to the economic growth of eastern Prince Edward Island than failing to reinstate the funding for the Wood Islands-Caribou ferry service. We need to maintain it as it is today.

**Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to participate in the debate on Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures. It is nicknamed Sustaining Canada's Economic Recovery Act.

This gives me a chance to address broadly the government's economic priorities. I have to say that in my home community of Burnaby there are lots of folks who question where the government is headed. They question the expenditures that the government is undertaking, especially during this period of recession. They question things like the large expenditures the government undertook on the G8 and G20 meetings, which were larger than those of any G8-G20 meeting in the past, and more than any that are planned in the future. People in Burnaby are left wondering just what the heck is going on when the government puts out that kind of money for that kind of meeting.

People in Burnaby are wondering about the planned expenditures for building more prisons. They do not understand why that should be a priority, especially when crime is falling in many of our communities. They just do not get why that kind of building program should be a priority for the government.

People wonder about the purchase of new fighter jets to the tune of \$9 billion, and the \$9 billion maintenance contract associated with the purchase. They do not understand that kind of expenditure when there are other needs in our community going unmet. They do not understand why the government continues with its massive corporate tax cuts at a time when the government is in deficit, and why government would borrow to continue these tax cuts when it does not have the money for them. It does not make sense to people.

People would not do that in their own budgeting. They do not understand why the government is pursuing such activities.

They do not understand why this is not a time for us to work together to solve some problems instead of undertaking massive expenditures. People in Burnaby are coming together to put forward a clear program on homelessness and affordable housing. They favour addressing this issue by working together, across political lines, working among different agencies, with the public and private sectors.

There has been a lot of activity in Burnaby over the last year on this issue. A lot of it was motivated by the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness. I want to pay tribute to the co-chairs of that group, Wanda Mulholland, a citizen activist on homelessness issues, and Irene Jaakson, from the Lookout Emergency Aid Society. I also want to recognize the various other partners in the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness.

People have come together from all over the community to address these issues: the Fraser Health Authority, B.C. Housing, all of the local MPs and MLAs across party lines, the Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Burnaby Community Connections, Burnaby Mental Wealth Society, Faith Lutheran Church, West Burnaby United Church, South Burnaby United Church, the Burnaby Hospital, the city of Burnaby, the Salvation Army, the community policing offices, the Progressive Housing Society, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness from the United Way, the Greater Vancouver Shelter Society, the Progressive Housing Society, the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Police Service, the Mental Health and Addictions Geriatric Team from the Fraser Health Authority, and the Dixon Transition Society. All kinds of organizations and their representatives have come together to work on solutions to housing affordability and homelessness in Burnaby.

Recently, we marked this with a National Homelessness Week, which included a number of events that highlighted the program in the city of Burnaby.

What is remarkable about Burnaby is that there is not what might be considered the usual collection of community agencies, churches, and other agencies that serve people who are underhoused or homeless. Nevertheless, this message has spread to the business community in Burnaby. The exciting news is that the Burnaby Board of Trade has also got on board with this campaign and taken some significant initiatives of its own with regard to housing and homelessness.

A recent survey by the Burnaby Board of Trade established that homelessness and affordable housing were the top two social issues that business members could address. A full 64% of the members of the Burnaby Board of Trade identified those two issues as the key social issues in our community. The Burnaby Board of Trade Social Development Committee then began working on these issues.

*Government Orders*

●(1550)

The Burnaby Board of Trade's committee identified a number of reasons that homelessness was important in our community and to the business community. They noted that homelessness is just plain bad for business, that it is expensive, that it is a waste of human capital and productivity, and that it reflects poorly on our society. They found out that homelessness numbers are increasing in Burnaby and other communities in greater Vancouver. They noted that affordable housing is in short supply. They talked about solutions to those problems, and made some recommendations.

But they did not leave it there. They decided that they were going to take it further, and they got together with the Surrey Board of Trade and the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce. Last September, they took a motion and a report to the annual meeting of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Ottawa. That annual meeting adopted the report suggested by those three organizations, the two boards of trade and the chamber, on reallocating federal funding to develop a national plan to end homelessness.

That was a significant move. To have the Canadian Chamber of Commerce adopt a policy for ending homelessness and providing affordable housing is an important development. The government should be getting ready, because it will be hearing from representatives of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce on this issue when they have their next meeting here on Parliament Hill.

It is interesting to note that in the report adopted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce they make some clear statements. They say:

Homelessness is bad for business and the federal government does not have a national plan to end homelessness in Canada. Homelessness has a direct financial impact on businesses as it deters customers, damages employee recruitment and retention, harms tourism, and discourages companies from setting up offices in areas with a visible homeless population.

They begin their report with some bold and clear statements about the impact of homelessness on our communities and on the ability of businesses to be successful.

They note a number of statistics. The one that is often drawn to our attention is that Canada is the only G8 country without a national housing strategy. They note that homelessness costs Canadian taxpayers between \$4.5 billion and \$6 billion annually, including health care costs, criminal justice, social services, and emergency shelter costs. They note that between 150,000 and 300,000 people are homeless in Canada, which is shameful to report. They note that in greater Vancouver homelessness increased by 22% after the homelessness count in 2008.

The Burnaby Board of Trade, the Surrey Board of Trade, and the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce know about affordable housing and homelessness. In their report, they say, "The sooner the federal government commits to ending homelessness in a reasonable time frame, the sooner Canadian businesses and citizens will benefit from the resulting increase in Canada's economic productivity and quality of life. The development of a national plan to end homelessness is the necessary first step towards fulfilling this commitment".

They make four recommendations. They call upon the federal government to reallocate funds from within the federal budget

envelope to develop a national plan to end homelessness; to establish a reasonable target for the reduction of homelessness in Canada and set a reasonable time frame to accomplish this goal; to maintain a housing-first approach of creating and sustaining affordable and supportive housing as a first priority in the development of the national plan; and to consult with other levels of government and community partners in the development of the national plan.

If the Canadian Chamber of Commerce gets it, I wonder why this is not on the agenda of the current government. That is another failing in the government's economic program.

●(1555)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member with great interest. Perhaps he does not know about the homelessness partnering strategy. Of course, I realize that his party did not read the budget and voted against it. In my riding, extensive work is being done through that strategy. It supports everything from food banks to the development of low-income housing.

This is solidly in the budget. Perhaps he could speak to how he should actually support our budget, because we are doing many things on this issue that he cares about.

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the member go back and talk to housing activists from coast to coast to coast. The first thing they will tell her is the federal government is not pulling its weight on this.

I was briefly the housing critic for the NDP awhile ago and in that short time I had a stack of reports, over a foot high, from every corner of the country, from coast to coast to coast. The first recommendation in every one of those reports was the need for a national housing plan, a national housing strategy, that actually built homes for Canadians.

We do not have that now. We have some maintenance of old programs. We have the Conservatives still living off the avails of the NDP budget that we talked the Liberals into at the end of their term. They cancelled a corporate tax cut and put a billion dollars into affordable housing and homelessness programs. The Conservatives are still living off of that. They implemented it after the Liberals were defeated and they came into power. It is just not good enough.

We need a national housing program that builds homes for Canadians. Other G8 countries have that. Every community in the country that has looked at this has identified the primary failure for our communities and our country to address the housing and homelessness issue is because the federal government is not involved in a serious way. That needs to change.

●(1600)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has outlined a number of the failings or the frustrations with which members on this side of the House find common ground in terms of the government's budgetary priorities.



*Government Orders*

Could my hon. friend give us the benefit of his insight? He has talked about affordable housing. I agree with him. It is a major challenge that the government has ignored, not only in large urban centres like those in British Columbia but the small rural communities that I represent as well.

One issue the member might enlighten us on is his sense of the government's failing with respect to early learning and child care, making serious investments, not giving a tax break to parents, which may be a very worthy family policy but fails to deliver actual child care spaces right across the country. Has the member a view on the government's failure with respect to early learning and child care?

**Mr. Bill Siksay:** Mr. Speaker, all of us know that after housing costs, child care costs are probably the most significant expense for families in our communities. That is certainly the case in my community of Burnaby—Douglas. People there know they are spending a great deal of money on that. They are envious of other places that have better child care and early learning programs.

They look at Quebec, for example, and wonder why we in British Columbia cannot have a similar program, why we cannot nationally have a similar program. The reality is we could if we had the political will to do it.

They look at some of the things on which the federal Conservative government is spending money. They wonder if we would not be better off if it spent it on some of these things that actually improve the lives of families and children in our country.

We know that early learning and child care even out all of the benefits of coming from a wealthy family, that this early start for children is hugely beneficial to the future development of that child and the future development of our society.

The fact is we have been dragging our heels for decades on that. The former Liberal government promised and promised that program and never ever brought it forward. We need that to change and the sooner the better because it will make a huge difference in the lives of Canadian families and in the future of Canadian children.

**Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this chance to speak to Bill C-47, the second budget implementation act.

Everybody, rich and poor, young and old, doing well and not doing well, we are all looking for the same thing: a chance, a real chance. Even the rich who have been rich all their lives, to develop a new product or to break into a new market, at some moment they need a chance, too.

For those who are not rich and for those who are poor who have not had the same chances or who did not give themselves the full chance they needed, what do they do? Where do they go? For them, for all of us, at some moment, government matters.

A budget matters. A budget offers a path to our economic future as a country and for each of us as individuals. However, the impact of a budget is far more than just economic. It can add a piece to a life that up to that moment does not quite work. A budget has often to do with money in the form of an investment, in training, learning, health, research and development, housing, literacy, in things that

might not make today much better than yesterday, but which will give us a shot at a better tomorrow.

I have watched the government for more than four and a half years. I have listened as it has brought down several budgets. A budget day offers many announcements about many things, so much it seems is about to be done. Then the next day and every day after that we also begin to see what is not being done. For me, the test for any budget of any government is, what will its impact be 5 years or 10 years from now? How will it make us better off, as a country, as individuals? How much is a budget just stuff and in truth will not have any real impact on our lives at all?

That is my disappointment with the government. More than four and a half years have passed with very little benefit to the future of Canada and Canadians.

Learning, we know, will be central to every country's future. As parents, we worry about our kids. As we look into the future, more than anything we want to know that they will be okay. We see these immense, unimaginable changes ahead and we do not know how our kids will adapt.

We know that passing on to them some money will help a little, but money gets spent. Over time, we have come to realize, to know that in their future their only real security, their only real opportunity is learning. Therefore, when things change, they have in them the capacity to learn and change with them.

Our kids need to learn more and better in their early lives, to have enriched opportunities outside their own homes as well, in early learning and child care, just as they do when they get to kindergarten and beyond. They need to have better chances at college and university so their learning is not interrupted constantly by the need for part-time jobs or years off to limit the debt they incur.

Many adults who do not learn to read early in their lives, who live under the suffocating ceiling of illiteracy need literacy programs to give them another chance at life.

What is the government doing in these regards, in this budget? What has it been doing in these more than four and a half years? Very little. Enough to say in question period and in scrums that it is doing something. Enough to meet its political needs, but not enough, not nearly enough, to meet the needs of those outside government, to meet the needs of Canada and Canadians for the future.

When this recession ends, one thing is certain, the world's economy will not go back to where it was before the recession began. Shifts have taken place. There are new ways to do things, new technologies, especially in the energy sector, new opportunities, new risks. The need for any government, for any company, is to move to where the world is going, not to where it was or is.

*Government Orders*

●(1605)

In this budget and in the last four and a half years what has the government done to prepare us to succeed in the future? It has done just enough to say it has done something.

It is even more dramatically the case for those who are poor and who need a chance in so many different directions, affordable housing, income assistance, child care, disability supports and even more so still, those who are aboriginal. The government has done just enough to say it is doing something, but not nearly enough to make a difference, to offer a chance at a real life.

For more and more families, it takes both parents in the workforce to make ends meet. We are living longer. We are living healthier. However, as extended families, less often do we live together. What happens when something goes wrong, when there is a major illness in the family, a child or an elderly parent? When lives are closer to the margin, how do we adapt? How do we help caregivers? The government has done just enough to say it is doing something, but not enough to make a difference.

If someone notices just how little the government is actually doing for Canadians, the government discourages those voices. According to how the government thinks, these problems should not exist. If government gets smaller, if a little more money is put into the pockets of people, everything will be fine.

The reality is, however, that life as it is really lived annoyingly gets in the way, unless of course the government does not notice. For the Conservative government, it is the miracle of ideology. If the Conservatives know something already, then they do not have to listen. The government does not have to listen to community groups, so why not cut their funding. It does not have to listen to people who oppose or criticize it, so why not fire or humiliate them. Because we cannot know what is not knowable, the census is cut. Everybody knows that if something is not measured, then it does not exist. If it does not exist, then it cannot be a problem. If it is not a problem, why have government programs to fix what does not need fixing? It is magic, magic for the government but not magic for those who need a chance.

In a time of global economic transformation, in a time of climate change, in a time when the gap between the rich and everyone else has grown, in this more than four and a half years, as exemplified by the second budget implementation act, the hallmark of the Conservative government has been political management, not national stewardship.

●(1610)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last weekend the member was in the United States and he probably had an opportunity to observe the rally to restore sanity and/or fear. It is a tongue-in-cheek, ironic exercise to poke fun at yet initiate serious discourse on things like the political rhetoric or what passes for political discourse in the United States.

I would be interested in the hon. member's observations on what passes for political discourse here and whether we are in danger of some similar kind of nonsensical conversation.

**Hon. Ken Dryden:** Mr. Speaker, it is a question for all of us. As much as we find a lot of the debate we have here fascinating, I am

not sure many people at home do. We can see it in the problems with low voter turnout, especially among younger people. The majority of those who do turn out feel an obligation to vote, not necessarily out of a great engagement in the process. That is a problem for all of us.

Our biggest problem, and we can see this in the United States, comes when there is nothing really compelling on the table. That is when the problem arises. All of us have been around tables where we disagree with each other. Unless we have something to focus on, something we think is much more important than each other, we will focus on each other and the snipping begins.

That is our challenge and it is also the challenge in the U.S.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, we have been particularly hard hit by the global economic recession. We have a forestry-dependent community and a cattle industry and they are truly struggling. The message I am hearing from my constituents is that absolutely education is important, all these things are important, but we need to find ways to keep our economy vibrant to provide the jobs that provide the tax base that would enable us to do many of the things we truly want to do.

My question at this point is, will focusing on jobs, economic growth and economic opportunity not actually lead to the ability to provide some of the support that the hon. member spoke about?

**Hon. Ken Dryden:** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that when the economy is working well, the greatest social justice program is a well-functioning economy. However, one of the challenges we are finding now, even when there are two jobs within a family and oftentimes there are not, is that the end result still has the kinds of problems that I was talking about, whether it has to do with housing or other experiences in low income and poverty.

I do not think it is enough just to say we will do what we can in terms of the economy. I would caution the members across the floor to not just look at and listen to what they are doing, but to look at the dimensions of what they are doing.

Anybody can do a little bit, an inch deep, but if the challenge is a foot deep, then an inch deep does not matter a heck of a lot. An inch deep can lead to very nice, interesting rhetoric and make everybody feel better, but it is the other 11 inches that are really the question. That is my problem with the focus and direction of this government for the last four and a half years.

●(1615)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join in this debate this afternoon. Certainly a number of speakers have touched on various aspects of the budget and have referred to the continued spending. One speaker referred to the gravy train and the billions that have been spent in various areas, so I believe those issues have been brought forward already today. I would like to get more specific with my comments and look, for the most part, at two issues that I can bring home to my constituents, that will have a fairly significant impact on a couple of different aspects of day-to-day life in my riding.

*Government Orders*

One of those issues is the lack of any kind of long-range planning or long-range funding commitment to particular programs. I know there was a fair amount of concern raised in the House last year as we drew down to the fiscal end of the year. Many community groups did not know whether their funding was going to be renewed or if they were going to be able to continue to operate going forward. It causes a great deal of uncertainty and a great deal of concern.

One group in particular, ACAP, the Atlantic coastal action program, is a network of not-for-profits that do very good work in the environment, educating constituents and communities and empowering communities to do something about the environment. It went right to the wire last year before it realized whether it was going to get funding. We are finding that same type of pattern emerging from the government at this time and it is truly unfortunate.

When we looked at some of the programs that had been offered through NRCan, a number of them had been initiated under previous Liberal governments. The present government changed the colours, for sure. It threw a little blue and a little green in there and went from eco-energy to EnerGuide and it figures it has a new program. That is okay. As long as the results are there and the impact is there, we see merit in those types of programs.

There was merit. There is empirical evidence that shows that these types of programs had a considerable positive outcome for homeowners throughout the region. For the most part, low-income and middle-income households throughout the region were able to go into home renovations and home retrofits that would allow them to bring down energy costs, but even more so, would have an impact on the reduction of greenhouse gases. That was a tremendous benefit.

To date we have not seen that commitment to go forward with this program. Applications are no longer being accepted. The funding is set to lapse in 2011. The Conservatives will say they are going to assess this program; however, there is an incredible amount of uncertainty that lies in the lap of these community groups that are not just trying to do good things, but have proven that they can be of great, positive benefit to these communities if given the opportunity and a little bit of support from the federal government. I would hope that the federal government would see the merit in these programs and continue to support them and not let it go until the last minute. Give these groups an opportunity to succeed. Give these groups an opportunity to plan going forward. That is my wish and I would like to see that carried forward.

The other issue that I want to bring forward is EI. Certainly with the economic downturn we saw the government take some half measures to help those who were most impacted. There was a downturn coming in Canada before the global economic downturn, but some of the measures that had been undertaken, such as the extension of five weeks of EI to all Canadians, was a program that had been initiated as a pilot project under the previous government to 21 different areas of the country, areas of highest unemployment.

• (1620)

The government saw the merit at the time, that this did have an impact and would be a way to help some of those who had lost their

jobs or were struggling to find work. So it decided that it would extend that.

Other pilot projects that had been initiated have approached their sunset date as well. I am talking specifically about the best 14 weeks, and working while on claim is the other one. Those are two of the most important programs.

The government has recently said it is going to continue those pilot projects through until next June. That is just not enough. Some people who are receiving benefits now are workers who are in seasonal industries. They are not seasonal workers, they are in seasonal industries. For people who work in the tourism sector, the lion's share of their employment is from mid-June through to Thanksgiving weekend, and then it is pretty spotty after that. Unless they are at a ski resort, employment is pretty spotty. Not a lot of people are on the beaches at Ingonish in the middle of February.

People are still in those communities. Their children are still going to schools there. They will find work. They will go out and will survive by picking up part-time jobs, filling in part time here and there. They will take work when they can. What they need is some type of assurance that the premium they are going to receive over the course of that winter will be one that can at least sustain them.

That is why we believe the continuation of the best 14 weeks program is essential for these communities and for these industries. We are not just hearing it from the workers. I am sure many members of this House, from both sides of the aisle, have heard from constituents. From Catalone to Country Harbour, I have heard them say that it is essential that we maintain the best 14 weeks as opposed to the last 14 weeks.

We are hearing it from businesses as well, business operators in the fishing industry, fish processors, those in the lumber industry, woodlot owners, and tourism operators. This has an impact on anybody who operates in a seasonal industry.

It is the best 14 weeks that one can pick from that year. There are some weeks with great intensity, where a worker may work 60 or 80 hours a week. That provides them with a very good stamp. Maybe after that peak season, things will slow down.

We will use the fishery for an example. After a crab or lobster season, when the mackerel boats come in, processors are having trouble getting workers to come out and work a few hours to offload the mackerel boats or the herring boats, because it gives them a poor stamp that would affect their benefits for the rest of the winter. It is tough. We are talking about households. We are talking about kitchens and sometimes the cupboards are going to be bare.

I would have liked to have seen the government being more aggressive. I would have liked to have seen a strong statement on what the government is going to do for workers in seasonal industries, especially on the topic of the best 14 weeks and the topic of working while on claim. We have not seen that. Certainly that is unfortunate.

Hopefully we will see some kind of statement forthcoming, but the one that extended the benefits of this program just until June of next year is not adequate.

*Government Orders*

•(1625)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to allow my Liberal colleague, who is a member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, to elaborate on some fisheries aspects, like the government aid that should exist in response to the recent crises that have hit the groundfish, shrimp and crab industries this year and the lobster fishery last year. All these crises unfortunately have a common denominator, namely government complacency.

A plan was announced to help the lobster industry and of the \$15 million earmarked for this plan, only \$8 million was spent.

I would like to hear what the hon. member has to say about that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine works hard on that committee. Certainly I was expecting a question more on small craft harbours but nonetheless he makes a very valid point. He asks a very pertinent question.

I do not know if there were signs out on this but I would bet there were. The government, with great fanfare, with great hype, announced this great envelope of money that was going to help those in the lobster fishery, as we saw the significant downturn last year in the lobster fishery. We can identify that envelope of money, that program of money, but if we make the regulations so stringent and so restrictive, so that there is no net benefit to those who most need it, then what is the point? What is the use of that? There is no benefit to the people who most need it, and that was a prime example that we saw last year with the lobster program.

These individual operators, these individual fishermen, it was their own enterprise and they were not able to access the help they needed, when they needed that money, when they needed that assistance.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am really interested to know where the government speakers are, because I really do want to ask them, given the current deficit the government is in, to give us an accounting of what the situation is regarding arrears in corporate tax, GST and income tax.

The economy is in tough shape, and it is owed to us to have information as to how much could be owed to the government, how much in taxes could be collected in terms of outstanding GST amounts, corporation taxes, income taxes and any other taxes the government is collecting. However once again, we do not have the benefit of having government speakers making presentations on this bill so that we could ask them these questions.

I would like to ask the member whether he has any observations on that.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, I heard in question period today a reply from the Minister of Justice that the government is going to advance its crime agenda.

The crime is the \$6 billion tax cut to the corporations in this country on borrowed money. It is going to be my children and my grandchildren who are going to be paying for this corporate tax cut.

That is the crime we should be dealing with. The crime agenda is a crime to all taxpayers in this country.

•(1630)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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 Lac-Saint-Louis, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, the G8 and G20 Summits.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-47. It is certainly interesting to watch the debate as it has unfolded and listen to the Liberals talk about the corporate tax cuts and how they would stop them, when they were the party that started them when they were in government. It is just amazing.

The NDP has been consistent for the last number of years, calling for an end to these tax breaks, and suddenly the Liberals have jumped on board in a big way. I guess it is interesting when they take our speaking notes.

My particular focus today is going to be on pensions and seniors. I am kind of saddened because there has not been enough talk about the seniors' situation in the House during the debate.

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that I spent the last two years touring Canada talking and listening to Canada's seniors. I have been saying throughout the 38 community meetings that I have attended from coast to coast that it is time to change the conversation.

We have EI premiums and we have our pensions, which are deferred wages. Neither are payroll taxes. They are purchases that we make as Canadians to protect our future. That expression, payroll taxes, was started in Canada by the former Liberal government, and we have to take that language back and bring about that change, take it back away from corporate Canada, away from the right wingers who view this as their own particular territory.

Pensions are clearly the assets and money that belongs to workers. EI premiums are very clearly intended to purchase insurance against hard times. As I said, they are not payroll taxes, no matter who says they are. They are premiums for the provision of protection for workers and their families.

Two years ago when I met a number of delegations of seniors, they were talking to us and trying to get our attention, saying that there was a crisis developing on pensions in Canada. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives were seized with pensions at that time.

I reported to the House that the NDP held round tables two years ago, followed by months of intensive research, and on June 9 of that year we proposed an opposition day motion on pension reform. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP opposition day motion on pension reform was passed unanimously by the House.

*Government Orders*

That particular motion set out a road map for retirement security for seniors, a road map that to date the government has failed to implement. It was during the debate that our leader, the member for Toronto—Danforth, called for an immediate increase to the guaranteed income supplement to help 300,000 seniors who live below the poverty line. I will say that a majority of those seniors who live below the poverty line are women.

We also laid out a strategy for the doubling of CPP, and we said there must be a national pension insurance plan. Later in that year, October 22, 2009, the member for Toronto—Danforth, our leader, and I released a New Democrat seniors retirement security plan.

I want to say again that the first line in the House that was spoken by the leader of our party was to address the situation with seniors who live in poverty. We must eliminate seniors poverty now, and it can be done.

This is a national disgrace, but how did it happen? How during 13 years of a Liberal government with five surplus budgets and five years of the current Conservative government did they allow this to happen on their watch?

It happened because the Prime Minister and the federal Liberals before him put the interests of Bay Street ahead of the interests of the workers and the pensioners of this country. I am here to say that our New Democratic caucus under the leadership of the member for Toronto—Danforth will no longer stand for this.

Today when I look at Bill C-47, I do not see the things seniors need. I remind the government that the NDP plan proposed an immediate increase to the GIS to close that seniors' poverty gap, and we can even put a price tag on it. Statistics Canada says fixing the poverty gap for seniors would cost less than \$700 million.

This \$700 million would ensure dignity and respect for the seniors who built this country. However it is not here in Bill C-47.

To pay for this particular boost for seniors, all it would take is the cancelling of one of the yearly tax breaks to the corporations of this country, the tax breaks that have been going to the banks and big oil and big gas.

• (1635)

Next, in consultation with the provinces, we can begin the process of strengthening the Canada pension plan. We know, and I have reported in the House before, that 63% of working Canadians today have no pension and no savings. How could they save when they are barely getting by? Consider that 93% of all working Canadians are part of the Canada and Quebec pension plans. There is no other option that will provide the advantages at so little cost.

Specifically, we are proposing a phasing in, in consultation with the provinces, of the doubling of CPP. I reported to the House just last week that pension expert Professor Kesselman and Jack Mintz, who worked for the government during the studies they have been doing, both agreed with the NDP plan for the increase in CPP. Our plan, as it is proposed, would increase the benefit from \$908 a month to \$1,817 to help secure a livable retirement for Canadians.

I also believe it is time for a national system of workplace pensions insurance. I am sure it is not news that underfunded

pensions are an epidemic and collapsing pension plans are demanding a range of solutions. Today we are still fighting to move workers' underfunded pension assets to the front of the creditors line during CCAA and BIA.

Members will likely recall that I introduced Bill C-476 to protect pensions assets during CCAA and BIA in the House and another bill, Bill C-487, which would have done the same for LTD. Today I would suggest that one of the main problems facing Canadians is preserving private pension assets.

We are all aware in the House of the situation of Nortel workers. The Nortel workers became the poster children for the suffering workers who face companies using CCAA or BIA to avoid their responsibility to their workers and retirees. The frustrating thing for the NDP caucus remains the fact that the bill could have been before the House before the Nortel pensions were reduced to 64%, had the Liberals and Conservatives supported my original call for unanimous consent to address that motion. We could have helped those workers, instead of watching them lose over 30% of their pensions.

Beyond CCAA and BIA, the NDP recognized that workers also need insurance guaranteeing a minimum pension income when their workplace plans fail. As part of the NDP's seniors' retirement security plan, we proposed a self-financing mandatory insurance system funded by the plan's sponsors, and I stress the word "self-financing" as there would not be a cost to the government.

This is not as groundbreaking as it sounds. In fact, this is standard in the United States, Britain and elsewhere in the world. There are countries in which the governments actually back the pension plans. Where has Bill C-47 contemplated such important measures? The answer is it does not.

The NDP has proposed a national plan ensuring pension payouts are secured up to \$2,500 a month. We insure our cars, we insure our homes and, in fact, we insure ourselves. Is it not common sense that we should insure our futures, our pension plans?

We are pleased that in June, as the last session of the House was ending before the summer break, the Minister of Finance agreed with the NDP plan for enhancing CPP. In fact, recently the Ontario minister of finance also agreed with New Democrats in our call to increase CPP.

*Government Orders*

I want to talk a bit about the government's actual spending priorities that we have heard repeatedly. They include \$9 billion in corporate tax cuts so far with the one this year; \$16 billion for stealth fighter jets; \$9 billion for prisons, and I have suggestions of some people we might put in them; and \$130 million last year in advertising. Yes, everyone heard that, \$130 million spent on advertising. What did seniors get? They got \$1.55 a month. People can imagine their disappointment.

• (1640)

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a budget implementation bill today and I noticed that my colleague from the NDP chose to make pensions the focus of his talk today. It is a major concern at a time of economic turmoil and global economic downturn that we have been dealing with, and very successfully, in Canada.

Several times in his speech, the member chose to attack what he calls “corporate tax cuts”. I wonder what it is about this that our NDP colleagues fail to understand. We went through a global economic recession. Other countries had to nationalize their banks and they had to use a lot of taxpayer money to take over those banks. Where does that come from?

We had some corporate losses in Canada. He mentioned one of the companies that we lost with terrible economic consequences for the workers. This affected the jobs and pensions of those workers. We are lowering corporate tax rates so that our corporations can be competitive in a very tough world and maintain the employment that provides the taxes to provide the services and the pensions that the member is looking for.

By the way, we cut taxes for all Canadians; small businesses and individual Canadians. When we cut the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%, why did the member vote against that?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, it sounds like some people want to be all things to all people.

However, I want to be very clear when I say that the corporate tax breaks that the government is giving away to the big corporations have only gone to profitable corporations. This does not help the guy little down the street running the variety store and it does not put money into the pockets of Canadians.

We can take a look at the bank profits and at the bonuses the banks have been paying their executive boards if we want to see where that money is going.

The reality is that 300,000 seniors are living in poverty. I make no apologies to anybody.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to continue with the theme of tax relief, it certainly is appropriate to give tax relief when the government's revenues are in surplus. However, we are looking at a deficit this year of \$56 billion.

How, in heaven's name, does it make any sense whatsoever to give a \$6 billion tax cut, as the hon. member rightly says, to the most profitable companies in Canada, which, cumulatively, will add up to about \$20 billion, while simultaneously running a \$56 billion deficit that will go up to \$165 billion?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, it was the Liberal government that started the tax breaks initially. The corporate tax rate in Canada was approximately 35% to 38%. The previous Liberal government lowered it to 22%. Then the Conservative government came in and lowered it and it is making its way to 15%. Between those two parties, we have seen a tremendous lowering of the tax shift from the corporations to the working people of this country.

We cannot go back to the 1950s, but at that time the corporations paid 85% of the taxes and we paid 15%. Today, thanks to those two parties, we are paying 85% and the corporations are paying 15%.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his work on the whole issue of pensions, especially on the doubling of the CPP, and for convincing the government to go against its natural inclination to allow Bay Street insurance companies to benefit through an expanded program.

What sort of confidence does the member have that we will see the government follow through on those commitments to double the CPP in the near future and to also bring in a private insurance plan to protect private pensions?

• (1645)

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Mr. Speaker, we have the word of the finance minister that that is an area the government is looking at. Professor Kesselman, who is an advisor to the government, has endorsed it. Jack Mintz, the person who ran its consultations, wrote the paper for it. I am optimistic that something will happen on this file.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate.

On the weekend, our American friends had a rally to restore sanity and/or fear in Washington and it attracted a substantial crowd. It was a sort of humorous, ironic poke at previous rallies. At its core, it was really a response to the bombastic nonsense that gets spouted by the Conservative right, with, may I say, some assistance by the left, as well, which is not without guilt in this matter.

The lunacy that passes for political discourse in the U.S. sometimes makes us shake our heads. It is hard to take things seriously when the United States is looking at multiple trillion dollar deficits, historically high unemployment and absurd disparities between the über-wealthy and literally millions of people who are desperately poor. However, listening to the high-paid media punditry is a little like watching a dialogue of the deaf. It is all gesturing and positioning but no hearing or listening. Yet America goes from crisis to crisis and back again.

My favourite sign at the rally was one that said, “What do we want?”. The response was, “Reasonable discourse”. Another sign said, “When do we want it?”. The response was, “Well, sometime in the not too distant future”.

*Government Orders*

Indeed, in some respects, that applies to our situation here. Canadians do tend to be a touch overly smug about our American cousins. We do tend to sort of watch them like a train wreck in slow motion and want to scream at the television, “Engineer, stop this train”.

However, we should really have our own rally here to restore fiscal sanity.

How can the Conservatives possibly pat themselves on the back if they take a \$13 billion surplus, inherited from Messrs. Martin and Chrétien, and turn it into a \$56 billion deficit in three short years? How do they take an unemployment rate of something south of 6%, turn it into an unemployment rate of something north of 8% and call themselves a good fiscal manager? How do they take spending, which, by any measurement anywhere, is out of control, and count themselves as a good fiscal manager?

How do they take \$14 billion out of a revenue stream year after year, which, over five years, is something in the order of \$90 billion, jack up the debt by \$156 billion and freeze funds for the most desperately poor in the international community, and still go around patting themselves on the back?

That is why I think we should have our own rally here to restore fiscal sanity to our nation.

The irony was that it was called a rally to restore sanity and/or fear, because in this nation, with the current government, it really is give fear a chance, tap into people's fears and they will let us do almost anything. We certainly do not need to have any political dialogue that makes any sense at all. In fact, members are so disgusted with the level of discourse in this chamber that they supported the hon. member for Halton's motion to reorganize the way in which we carry on political discourse here in this chamber.

• (1650)

We also do not want anything that would pass for miracle research, hence, the big fuss over the census. The census is probably the bedrock of empirical data for this country. It is relied upon by literally thousands of organizations. However, if we do not have that bedrock of data, we do not necessarily have any problems and, if we do not have any problems, we do not need to worry about them. We can simply rely on our own ideology to initiate or not initiate things as we see fit. All we need to do is play on people's fears. We can say that the crime rate is out of control but who actually knows? There is no data to support that one way or another. Without the census, there is no hard data and no objective way of deciding. Therefore, we just play on the fears, so we will be having another crime agenda, according to the justice minister in question period.

How would we actually know that there are crime related issues if there is no data to support it one way or another? Therefore, we repeat and repeat and feed into fears and, whether it is objective nonsense or not, we keep on with the repetition of phrases like tax and spend, one of the favourite phrases around here.

It is irrelevant that the government is far and away the nation's most aggressive and biggest spender, literally in the history of the nation. It is supposed to drum that tax and spend message home. It is irrelevant that the government has burdened multiple future generations with debt. It is irrelevant that debts and deficits are

merely nothing but postponed taxes. It must drive that tax and spend message home because it may get people fearful enough and dumb enough to believe that the biggest borrow and spend government in our history fancies itself as a good, economic steward.

A rally to restore fiscal sanity is in order. Canadians are sensible people but even sensible people can be stampeded by fear. We want to keep fear alive. It can take a healthy balance sheet inherited from Messrs. Martin and Chrétien, a sane banking system and strong economic fundamentals and turn it upside down and blame the very people who brought us the fiscal sanity in the first place. The government's economic credentials would do credit to a Monty Python skit: up is down, in is out. As Jon Stewart said, “we are living in hard times we are not living in end times”.

Does anyone not smoking something actually believe a finance minister who says that he will not cut transfers, not cut program spending, not cut his largest program items and still balance the budget? However, he will offer a further \$6 billion in tax relief to corporations that do not need it, commit a further \$35 billion to an airplane and spend \$10 billion to \$13 billion on prisons, which the government did not really tell Canadians about when it was passing the Truth in Sentencing Act. It was not until the Parliamentary Budget Officer caught the government with its hands in the cookie jar that it fessed up to it at the last minute.

When we put that all together, it just does not make a lot of sane economic rationale.

A rally to restore fiscal sanity cannot begin soon enough. Our nation cannot afford to go the way of the U.S. where its revenue base has been destroyed, costs are through the moon and the country is slogging through a legacy burden that would have destroyed a lesser nation.

Borrowing to cut taxes just does not work. It never has worked and it never will work. CEOs would not cut back their revenues and then let costs get away from them. It does not work in a business, it does not work at home and it does not work in government.

I am hopeful that I am starting a revolution, a rally to restore fiscal sanity. Tax cuts are not a religion. It is rank demagoguery to say tax and spend and all that sort of silly nonsense that gets spouted by the finance minister and the Prime Minister and others.

The government needs to have conversation about its revenue base and its cost base. The government spends 15% of the nation's GDP. It cannot carry on the way it has been without bequeathing to our future generations multiple billion dollars worth of debt. That is no way to run a nation and it is certainly not fiscal sanity.

*Government Orders*

•(1655)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments about restoring our fiscal sanity. One of the other issues would be restoring our social sanity in the sense that we are missing the broad picture.

One of the key elements of a broad policy outlook would be through pensions and pension reforms. One of the ideas that has been floating around for quite some time, certainly on this side of the House, and one which we have looked at with a great deal of attention, is the idea of supplementary CPP. To do that, it would allow this large and one of the best managed funds in the world to be available to the average Canadian who may be moving around from place to place, from one company to another, people with a great amount of skill that they can put on the market, both national and international. It would allow them to invest in their future once they retire.

I would like for the hon. member to comment on that and other social policies he feels this particular budget misses out on.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member touches on probably what will be a future insane conversation in this chamber.

The need to have a supplement to the Canada pension plan is obvious. People's pension situations are desperate. They are only going to get worse. The last time they were meaningfully addressed was by Mr. Martin and Mr. Chrétien, when they actually upped the payroll deduction in order to properly fund the Canada pension plan.

In order to have a supplemental plan, it is going to require a payroll tax. Listen to the nonsense dialogue that will come out from the other side that we cannot do it. We cannot have it both ways. Either we will have an adequate pension or we will not. One way or another, it has to be paid for, but to aspire to a dialogue such as that would be a bit too much to hope for.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that the government really has a lack of focus. It is confused. It lurches from misstep to misstep. The long form census is a really good example of that. I think the public are beginning to see this, but its confusion in some ways is exceeded by the confusion of the opposition party itself.

The member introduced Bill C-300 last week in the House, which we voted on, regarding corporate social responsibility for mining companies that operate in other countries. It was an excellent bill and his party had the ability to make it pass. Yet his leader had 30 members miss the vote so the bill would be lost. That gives a terrible message to people out there in the public who supported his bill, liked his bill a lot and wanted to see his party support him.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, naturally I was rather disappointed in the results after all of that work. I thank the hon. member for his observation that it was an excellent bill, but it failed and it failed for a number of reasons, all of which are contained in the House.

The first and foremost reason that it failed was the Prime Minister whipped the Conservative caucus. I have never seen a situation where a prime minister insists that 140 of his members show up and vote against a private member's bill. He also, in the last hour of debate, had two of his senior ministers speak against the bill. He

further had one of his senior ministers go out and scrum against the bill. It was an extraordinary response to what literally millions of Canadians wanted done.

On the other side of the House, there were a number of people who did not show up, including a number of members in the hon. member's party. It is what it is and it is a disappointment to us all. I thought we could have actually done something on this file. It looks like, for the balance of this legislative period, for the balance of this Parliament, nothing will be done because the Prime Minister shows no interest in a legislative response to the egregious abuses of Canadian mining companies operating abroad.

•(1700)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before we resume debate, I would like to remind all hon. members of the House that the matter before us at this time is Bill C-47. When members ask questions, they ought to address that bill. It is a broad bill, so there is a great amount of leeway involved with that. The last question did not address it and I gave the hon. member from Scarborough—Guildwood significant latitude in terms of answering the question. However, I would encourage all members in future to ask questions regarding the legislation before the House.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mississauga—Brampton South.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Mississauga—Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to have this opportunity to share my time with the member for Scarborough—Guildwood, who so eloquently spoke on the issue before us, which is Bill C-47.

I rise to speak to Bill C-47, the second act to implement the provisions of the budget of 2010, which we heard in this place on March 4. As I have mentioned in the past, budget 2010 not only fails to address the real challenges facing Canadian families, it fails to even recognize that those challenges even exist. That is why Bill C-47 is a continuation of that failure. Therefore, the Liberal Party and I will not be voting in favour of the bill.

The budget 2010 stimulus package is not working. That is the underlying premise of what I will be talking about here today. The question I ask many of my constituents and many Canadians when I travel the country is whether they are better off today than they were when the Conservatives came into power. The overwhelming response is, no, they are not better off.

I will speak to a few key areas that this budget touches upon and the concerns that many Canadians have brought to my attention.

The first issue that comes up time and time again is jobs. The unemployment rate is 2% higher today than it was during the last election when the Conservatives came into power. In particular, if we look at the jobs number, full-time jobs have been replaced by part-time jobs. We have lost over 200,000 full-time jobs.



*Government Orders*

People who have part-time employment are unable to find full-time employment. Around 11% to 12% of people who currently work in part-time jobs have difficulty trying to find the full-time employment they are seeking. Employers trying to find employees for certain jobs are unable to do so as well.

At the Montreal conference that the Liberal Party held not too long ago, one of the themes that emerged, and this was when we did public policy, was that there were jobs without people and people without jobs. The job market has gone through a major restructuring. People looking for jobs are unable to find them. People who have jobs are not satisfied with the one they have.

This is a real concern. This is the number one issue that I hear about time and time again. Unfortunately the job story is one that the government does not get and it is something as parliamentarians we need to address. This budget in particular fails to do so.

The second issue that comes up in my discussions with my constituents and Canadians is the current trend we see with the government with respect to borrowing and spending. Household debt is at record levels. The average Canadian owes about \$42,000, which is one of the highest amongst the OECD levels.

I want to emphasize this point because my constituency of Mississauga—Brampton South very much relies on trade. We have the Pearson International Airport and major highways in the constituency. Trade is absolutely critical for economic growth and activity in my region.

As a trading nation, we have a monthly trade deficit now at a record of \$2.7 billion. What further compounds the issue now, focusing on the borrowing aspect of it, is that we have a record deficit of \$56 billion and climbing. This number continues to be revised, over and over again, as the government is unable to demonstrate that it has any type of control when it comes to borrowing money. It increased its spending and doubled it just before we entered the recession. It was the most expensive endeavour taken by the government. It turned a \$13 billion surplus into the \$56 billion deficit that we see before us.

This is something that obviously is consistent. If we look at all of the budgets of the government, it has increased spending at unprecedented levels. What is even more troublesome is that in the next four years, it is projecting a deficit increase of \$156 billion over those four years. It actually adds to our debt, which in turn costs Canadian taxpayers and future the generations \$10 billion in interest. This is the kind of legacy the government is leaving for our children.

The government is borrowing and spending at a reckless rate and is leaving a legacy for future generations that will cost hard-earned taxpayer money to pay and finance the deficit and debt left by the government. People just do not understand how a government could spend so much money and borrow so much money.

• (1705)

Then people focus on the spending. We in opposition have highlighted this because it is important that the Canadian public realize the rate at which the government is spending money.

For example, the government spent \$130 million on shameless, self-promoting advertising. I spoke with the Auditor General at

committee last week about these quarterly reports and statements the government put out. She clearly indicated that it was simply a show and tell exercise. She said that it was simply a government exercise to promote and market itself. She said that the numbers were not substantive and the figures were not accurate. Those audits clearly demonstrated that the figures were not reflective of the real picture.

The Conservative government is spending all this money on twisting things in order to promote itself, and the public is now becoming acutely aware of this pattern. The government spent \$130 million promoting itself through signs with respect to the economic action plan, for example, in my riding. That money could have been used for additional projects. This is a clear example of the government's loss of control and its reckless spending.

The government spent \$1.3 billion on a 72-hour photo op. This was unprecedented, especially when we compare the cost to G20 summits in other countries, particularly the amount of money spent on the fake lake and glow sticks. This kind of spending at a time when people are worried about their jobs and concerned about household debt cannot be justified.

Here is another example of how the government has spent so much money. It wants to spend \$13 billion on American Republican-style megaprisons for unreported crimes. This is not in line with the priorities about which I hear. It is an expenditure that makes absolutely no sense in the current context with a record deficit and the job situation that we face as a country in this difficult economic time.

The government is going to spend \$16 billion on F-35 stealth jet fighters. It was a sole-sourced awarded without competition. People are stunned that the government would continue with this decision in light of the record federal deficit.

The Auditor General presented a report recently with respect to the helicopter purchases. She indicated that the sole source process for the F-35 was not the best way to go. It was not the best value for money proposition for the government and for taxpayers. This is alarming to me and to many Canadians. Why does the government continue to spend this kind of money during these difficult times?

The Conservative government provided \$20 billion in corporate tax cuts that we cannot afford at the present time. Again, we are giving money away to large corporations when we should be investing in Canadian families. I will speak to this a bit later as well.

Those are some examples of how the government has spent recklessly and how much money it has borrowed.

When I ask Canadians if they think they are better off today compared to when the Conservatives came in to power in 2006, they say no. The reason they say no is because of government mismanagement. Through the various examples that we bring up in the House of Commons, through what they read in the media and see on TV, what they see in public, Canadians are beginning to realize that the government has really mismanaged taxpayer money.

*Government Orders*

Last week I had the opportunity to highlight two examples of where the government has really misspent and they highlight a bigger problem. The government outsourced the VIA Rail press releases at a cost of \$3,400 for approximately 1,300 words. That was completely unnecessary. This reflected the bigger problem.

I want to highlight the fact that the most recent public accounts show that the Conservatives spent \$9.4 billion on external contracts for professional and special services, a \$2.2 billion increase over the previous Liberal government. That is just another example of mismanagement at a time when people are worried about the bottom line.

This budget is not in line with the priorities of Canadian. Canadians are worried about jobs, and this budget does not address that issue in a real significant way, specifically, with regard to the restructuring that is taking place in our economy. A lot of full-time jobs have been lost and those jobs are now being replaced by part-time jobs.

The government is borrowing and spending money at a reckless pace and that is going to leave a difficult legacy for future generations. It is mismanaging taxpayer dollars at a time when Canadian families are going through difficult times.

Families in my riding care about health care, education, their pensions. This budget is a clear example of the difference between what the current government is planning versus what we are proposing. Most recently we came out with a family care plan. That clearly outlines how we care about our families and our communities.

My colleagues and I will be voting against this bill because it is not in line with Canadian families. It is unfortunate that we are worse off today than we were in 2006, but I hope that changes in the near future.

• (1710)

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the hon. member that perhaps he might like to take a look at the Public Accounts of Canada 2010, volume 1, where earlier his colleague talked about the debt that Canada has taken on, and I would like to read this into the record. It says:

With reductions in the stock of interest-bearing debt and a decline in interest rates over the 1997-1998 to 2007-2008 period, the share of public debt charges in total expenses fell over 15 percentage points from a high of nearly 30% of total expenses in 1996-1997.

The hon. member said that people were concerned about their jobs and I sincerely agree. We have been through a global downturn in the economy and many of our businesses have struggled to keep up. Since businesses and corporations are the only entities in our economy that create real jobs, how does the member suggest that they do this if they are continually taxed by government? We want to reduce those corporate taxes because we know that corporations and businesses are going to create real, well-paying jobs in our economy and that is what we want to see.

**Hon. Navdeep Bains:** Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify one point; 8 out of every 10 new jobs are created by small and medium-sized enterprises, and that is absolutely important to note. That is why the corporate tax reduction applies to large corporations, not to SMEs. The Liberal Party understands that we will need to support small and

medium-sized enterprises. That is why we put forward a comprehensive list of initiatives to help small and medium-sized enterprises.

More importantly, when the member talks about the government's track record on deficit and debt, and I want to take this opportunity to highlight that, if we look at the public accounts textbook, as the member alluded to, the most recent public accounts showed that the Conservatives spent \$9.4 billion on external contracts for professional and special services. That is a \$2.2 billion increase over the previous Liberal government.

If we look at Conservatives' projections going forward, we see that they plan to increase deficit and our debt by \$156 billion, which would amount to a \$10 billion increase in interest payments. Again, this is living beyond our means obligating future generations because the government is mismanaging the public fund.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned that, since 2005, Canadians are worse off today. I would suggest that he take that timeline and go back to 1995 and he will find a StatsCan report. Albeit we are going to lose some of that great data when it comes to the census being eliminated by the Conservative government, but nonetheless, it is there today and it shows that the majority of working Canadians are no better off and in some cases are worse off in 2010 than they were in 1995. We cannot blame the Conservatives for the entire piece, but we can talk about where we lost jobs and how we lost jobs and how budgets have an effect on that.

I wonder if my colleague would like to comment on the fact that the continual two-party alliance of blue and red has decided to continue with free trade. As we lose those jobs, and we see that at an accelerated pace this past recession, how does the member intend to make sure that those good jobs come back so Canadians can actually prosper as we head to 2011, 2012, 2013 and on?

• (1715)

**Hon. Navdeep Bains:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member talked about free trade, because I want to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that I very much support free and fair trade. We are a trading nation. It is absolutely critical that we look to foreign markets, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises that have the opportunity to penetrate into those markets, to get market access, to create jobs. Many businesses in my riding rely on free and fair trade to be able to expand and to grow. This is something that the Liberal Party very much supports. This is something we tried to promote through various initiatives, in particular with SMEs as I have indicated.

I am actually shocked that the NDP is against free trade, because when we talk about free and fair trade its members say they support it. Any time we have discussions around that on any bills, they tend to go against those positions without any hesitation. In this particular matter I want to go on the record by saying we support free and fair trade.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-47, sustaining Canada's economic recovery act.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of my party today because I strongly oppose the government's vision and I think Canadians deserve to know the truth about how it is rapidly destroying our social infrastructure, which was once strong and proud. Budgets are about making choices. Time and time again, we have seen the government make choices that are not in Canadians' best interests.

[English]

Borrowing billions to give corporate tax cuts, building more prisons, sole source contracting for fighter jet planes, the government's choices have led to a proven track record of poor economic choices.

Canadians want their money to be spent wisely on things that improve the quality of life of their families. I even find the title of the bill, that the current government is making the choice to do everything possible to help our country recover from a tough economic time. In reality this budget bill is doing exactly the opposite.

It is a typical game of the government, smoke and mirrors, clouded by wasteful spending and irrational choices and shattered by mistruths.

I am deeply concerned that the choices that the current government is making are not to the benefit of Canadians. On Friday I listened to *Power and Politics* and heard the Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages telling the CBC about how the government has undertaken significant consultations with Canadians across the country and that these consultations had been meaningful. That means having a real substantive impact on public policy.

I find this disconcerting because a few weeks ago I had the opportunity, in my role as critic for democratic renewal, to travel across our great country to talk to Canadians about issues that matter to them. What I heard during this "Canadians Make the Rules Tour", as it was called, was that Canadians across the country felt shut out and disengaged from the decision making that goes on here in Ottawa.

I heard about how Canadians are tired of the government's top-down, paternalistic, father-knows-best style of governing. They want change. They want another option to choose from.

At every round table across Canada, I heard about the importance of having a strong independent media holding the government of the day to account. Canadians believe that a Prime Minister should be accessible and take unfiltered questions.

I was shocked at the overwhelming ground swell of concern that the CBC has no longer sufficient funding to do its job properly.

This is a choice, a strategy on the part of the current government to limit the democratic discourse in Canadian public life by silencing any dissenting voices. Instead the government has made the choice to bloat the PMO communications budget in order to sell its bad choices to Canadians.

[Translation]

In Vancouver, people expressed concern about the government's failure to listen to the people and about how stakeholders are basically being left out of the decision-making process.

In Calgary, people expressed concern about the concentration of power in the Prime Minister's Office and talked about how the government should be accountable to Parliament.

In Fredericton, people talked about the importance of Parliament's role as a place for dialogue and developing policies that are in the interests of the Canadian people. Unfortunately, the government does not share that vision of parliamentary supremacy.

Rather, the government seems to think that Parliament is a kind of suggestion box and a good place to put up Christmas lights once a year.

It is a terrible shame that Canadians have to watch our democratic institutions go downhill over time. Those are the facts. Canadians have spoken. When will the government finally choose to listen to what Canadians have to say?

• (1720)

[English]

Scholar Ursula Franklin has said that good governance is fair, transparent and takes people seriously. This government has not been fair, funding only Conservative ridings. It has not been transparent in terms of the redacted documents that are now the joke of a government elected on transparency. With sleight-of-hand announcements of the re-announcements of the re-announcements, this is a government that does not take people seriously. It bullies and silences civil society, choosing only to listen to the small number of Canadians who actually agree with it.

The government has made choices to eliminate the Canadian Council on Learning and to cut government funding to organizations like KAIROS, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation and women's groups across the country that represent the voices of social justice. This does not even mention the government's ideological bungling of maternal and child health, which is both failing Canadians and ruining what was once a sterling international reputation.

Time and time again, we bear witness to the shell game of this government. We have seen funding announcements recycled. The theme here, though, is consistent: never any new money.

The chill in the NGO community in Canada must come to an end. Within civil society is real expertise that could and should be tapped in order to get the best possible public policy for Canada and Canadian families.

As Liberals, we do not adhere to the same principles as the current government. We know that there are tough choices to be made. That is what governing and democracy are all about. We believe we should be investing in people and bringing about transformative change with the dollars that government spends.

*Government Orders*

However, time and time again this government has made the choice to abdicate governing in favour of never-ending campaigning and trying to convince Canadians that its draconian actions are not as bad as the dissenters make them out to be.

The leader of the official opposition has indicated a three-pronged approach to the return of a fair, open and compassionate Canada. It would put the emphasis on learning, care and a renewed sense of Canadian leadership in the world.

We have listened and made our intentions clear to take care of Canadians who devote a good portion of their lives to supporting their ailing loved ones.

We listened to the ideas that came out of the May 2010 public consultation on the digital economy and have announced a strategy to make our government more open, with free access to government data, a policy that the U.K. estimates has created an economic benefit of over six billion pounds.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

With that in mind, we in the Liberal Party are committed to maintaining a government strategy.

As we have demonstrated with my private member's bill to bring back the long form census, we believe it is crucial to provide Canadians with evidence-based data so they can make informed decisions.

Contrary to what the Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages said last Friday, we want to conduct real consultations with Canadians in order to draw on the knowledge and expertise of a strong civil society.

[*English*]

As former chief statistician, Munir Sheikh, was quoted in the *Toronto Star* on Sunday:

With the government's decision to abolish the long-form census, it is not clear how one would get reliable answers to these important questions.

...in the absence of high quality census data, it may become considerably more difficult to deal with some of the fundamental economic and social issues we face.

In fact, I would like to note that the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories last week passed a motion to urge the Government of Canada to reverse its decision to eliminate the mandatory long form census.

[*Translation*]

We believe that without the empirical evidence needed to create policies, ideology will inevitably become the default foundation for debate and discussion in Canada, something that truly frightens me.

[*English*]

This government will spend \$30 million more to get less reliable information.

[*Translation*]

I do not believe that public money should be used to finance projects like the construction of prisons for hypothetical prisoners who, strangely, cannot even be counted.

[*English*]

It has just been pure ideology and fear mongering. Speculation and hearsay is not sufficient evidence. It is crucial that we have the best possible information on which to make proper decisions with public money.

Choices governments make can be transformative or hold a country back. Progressive governments invest in their people, invest in science and invest in the future. Borrowing money for prisons, fighter planes and corporate tax cuts are on one side; care, learning and earning back Canada's place in the world are on the other.

This bill demonstrates the priorities of this government. It refuses to invest in our people and those people who share our tiny planet with us. Canadians deserve a government that listens and understands the reality of their daily lives. Young entrepreneurs keen to conquer the digital economy, single mothers who want to go back to school and women trying to take care of a loved one at home know this government could and should be helpful. This government has not heard their needs. The budget bill has let them down terribly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. We will have to move on to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I sometimes think the members across the way have selective memories. They talk about re-announcements. I remember in 1993 when the Liberal government promised in the election campaign to get rid of the GST and we were still waiting in 2005. They promised a national day care program, which never came to fruition. They cut \$25 billion to the provinces in health and social transfers, and they were responsible for the sponsorship scandal and Canadians are still waiting to get their money back.

I have been privileged to make many announcements on behalf of our government in Toronto ridings for infrastructure programs. None of them are yet Conservative-held ridings.

I would also like to refer back to the public accounts books, which talk about major transfers to other levels of government increasing by \$10.5 billion over the previous year. That is money going into the provinces for health care, education and social programs.

My question to the hon. member is this. When her party was in government, why did it not get these things done?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that the 6% increase in the health transfer is because of the 2004 accord that was signed. The member should realize that it is an annual increase that the Minister of Health stands up virtually every day taking credit for. It was signed by all levels of government, and therefore, the Conservative government did not have the opportunity to cut it as it probably would have.

*Government Orders*

I would ask the hon. member to listen to the answer to the question posed. It is absolutely ridiculous for her to declare that there was nothing done on early learning and child care. The deals signed by the provinces with the minister of human resources and skills development at the time have created thousands of child care spaces across this country. In fact, the number of child care spaces has actually doubled in this country from the time that the Liberals formed government in 1993.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague talked about controlling government with regard to how democracy gets eroded and people having the sense that somehow they do not play a role and are not listened to. I could not agree with her more. That is absolutely true. I used to be in municipal government when the budget process was opened up after looking at the example of Pôrto Alegre in Brazil, which has an open and transformative budget process in which citizen engagement is the primary piece.

It is not just this PMO that tries to put a straitjacket around the House and all the other things that happen inside government. I hate to say it to my hon. colleague, because we have worked very closely in other areas, especially in the CFIA, and worked very well, but her government indeed did something similar. This has been an ongoing problem for a number of years, where the PMO has talked about control and exerted it from the top down.

I wonder where she has suggestions, because I know she always has good suggestions, about how we can democratize that process and open it up so that Canadians will re-engage themselves and indeed feel not only comfortable, but assured that their voices are heard, listened to and eventually acted upon.

• (1730)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, before Paul Martin became finance minister, there was a very close process in which a few elite people would whisper in the ear of the finance minister, and voilà, there would be a budget. In 1993, Liberals began the process of prebudget consultation, which became a best practice in the world.

The member would have to admit that after going across the country in prebudget consultations a number of Liberal budgets were no surprise. People knew and citizens were onside with what needed to be done. A lot of the good ideas came out of those consultations and many members of Parliament did prebudget consultations in their ridings that actually became part of the finance committee report.

People need now to not feel that it is some sort of occupational therapy that they come and submit their papers or speak and the government has already decided what it is going to do. We have to move forward—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Resuming debate. The hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-47 and address a couple of issues in the bill, both hearkening back to the original budget bill, which this is just apart of, and also some specifics in this bill.

In that regard, the budget, last time, was a classic of opportunities missed, and even where issues were addressed, government having gone offside.

I want to address in particular the funding that was promised, first, in the throne speech back in late February or early March of this year, then the actual dollars put into the budget, and then an announcement made just this past weekend on the issue. It was with regard to the horrendous issue of the number of aboriginal women who have gone missing in this country over the last decade or longer.

The sad part about this is not just the tragedy of all those women going missing and presumably, in a lot of cases, having been killed, but the fact of both the current government and the prior government not paying any attention to the issue at all. The dimension of the problem was raised by groups coming out of the first nations and having to do work that should have been done by our police forces, our justice system and our governments, which was ignored in large part by all of those sectors of our country.

It is inevitable, I think, to conclude that had the issue been treated seriously from the very beginning as these women went missing, a great deal of the loss of these women to our society could have been prevented. The current government in particular, but the prior government as well, spent way too much time on prosecuting crimes, on punishing criminals, as opposed to spending much more effort as is needed to prevent those crimes from ever happening.

Again, the announcement that we saw on Friday is just typical of that.

What was promised in the throne speech was that \$10 million would be spent on what in effect I thought, from reading the speech and hearing the speech, would be mostly on prevention and assisting aboriginal groups in particular in identifying the loss of these women and trying to use methodologies that would teach us what happened to them and ways to prevent that from happening in the future.

One group in particular, the Sisters in Spirit, had done tremendous work. I was totally amazed when they brought it forward both to this House in a standing committee and to various members of Parliament who have responsibility in these areas. What was clear was that they had done very effective work in identifying how severe the problem was, but they were also literally begging the government to provide them with additional resources. That is what I thought part of that \$10 million was going to be used for.

Did that happen? No, it did not.

The announcement on Friday by the minister responsible for women's issues made it very clear. When we look through the individual areas where these funds are going to get spent, it is not focused, certainly, on first nations people, aboriginal people, Métis or Inuit women. It is much more broadly dispersed among the whole population.

In spite of that promise in the Speech from the Throne that it was going to be dedicated to first nations, the aboriginal population, in fact it is not. If we do any kind of apportionment of the dollars, less than 10%, or maybe 15%, would end up aiding those communities. The rest is going to be spent on the general population.

*Government Orders*

●(1735)

In addition, this is not an issue that was new this past weekend. We have known about it for some time because of the work, over the last couple of years, done by the Sisters in Spirit and other groups like that from the first nations.

However, what has happened? The government says that it is going to spend the money. It is only \$5 million per year for two years. That is all it has committed to. We get the announcement of how it is going to spend it, more than six months after the promise, when in fact Sisters in Spirit in particular were ready to go immediately. They had an outstanding application for funds. The government could have given them a portion of the \$10 million back in March, quite frankly, when the budget first got passed. It did not do that. It spent all this time, I am not sure doing what, because when we see what it is proposing to do, it did not take six or seven months to plan that out.

In any event, we are now here, again too late, unfocused, for the \$10 million. Some of that money is supposed to be spent this year on aiding some of the groups that would be providing some preventative work. It is very small amounts of money, maybe as little as \$1 million per year for the next two years. I cannot see how any of that money is going to get spent this year, given how late the government has come down with it. We are going to have to wait for proposals to come forward. With the year-end break, very little of the \$5 million for this year is going to get spent this year, and of course, with the risk of an election next year, it may not get spent at all.

However, it is typical of the government's attitude towards this problem, that it is not taking it seriously. Nothing could make that clearer than the way it has handled this money. There have been lots of photo ops, lots of press conferences and press releases about how it was going to do something, but the reality is that it is too little, not nearly enough money, for sure, for the problem that the aboriginal community is faced with. It is too late and what little it is doing is going in the wrong direction.

We look at this and ask why we are bothering with the government even doing this. The answer, of course, is that it gives the government the opportunity to do those press releases and have the photo ops.

The other reality with regard to this particular money is that it is quite clear from our discussions with first nations people and aboriginal communities generally that they are not at all happy, but we are not hearing any negatives from them because they are intimidated by the government. So often with so many other groups, it has intimidated them into silence by not renewing contracts and cutting off funding, KAIROS being a classic example of that and any number of other groups that it has cut funding to because they did not toe the government line, and this is again another example of that. The \$10 million is really of questionable value, and whether it is going to get spent or not is questionable as well.

Let me switch to the other point that I want to raise in this brief speech, which is with regard to the pension issue.

We have in Bill C-47 one paragraph on pensions. We have had the finance minister running around the country, as well as in this House, making all these forecasts that the government is going to do

something about reform of the Canada pension plan. We are promised repeatedly that it is coming, and again what we see in this bill is one paragraph that really has nothing to do with reform of the Canada pension plan.

We had been promised repeatedly, and even some dates were put on this. We were supposed to have something by the spring. Then we were supposed to have something this fall when we came back from the mid-term break. There is nothing in regard to pensions. We know, and I say this from a really negative personal experience as a member of Parliament, how traumatizing this is to a large number of our constituents.

●(1740)

I come from a city that is heavily dependent upon the auto industry. When it looked as though both General Motors and Chrysler were going to go into bankruptcy, and that the pensions were going to be in serious jeopardy, we expected more from the government. We expected them to deal with it. We expected them to deal with reforming Canada pension plan.

Let me conclude by saying that paragraph 70 in this bill does nothing for any of those issues.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed to hear comments regarding the comprehensive strategy to deal with the horrific incidents and missing aboriginal women across this country, particularly in the riding and the province where I live.

The strategy is comprehensive. On one hand, he says there is not enough money; on the other, he says they will never even be able to spend it this year. He cannot have it both ways.

Can the member actually say that it is not important for the policemen to have the tools to find these women? Is the funding not important, the funding that is going to the groups, for the awareness materials, and for pilot projects in the communities?

Again, it is a comprehensive strategy, and I think he needs to speak to the good work it will do for the missing aboriginal women and their families.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that it does not do it.

Is this not a serious problem? Yes, it is. I have been the justice critic for my party for nearly seven years now. I understand how serious this is. I also understand that the proposals and the so-called programming that were put out on Friday go nowhere near meeting the requirements.

It is not focused. A good deal of this money is not being spent on the aboriginal community or the missing women. It is being dispersed in various programs throughout the Canadian community.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was going to comment on the stimulus plan and its deadline.

Would the member care to comment? Right now many of the communities in my riding are suffering as a result of this hard deadline. Perhaps the member could talk about a possible extension.

*Government Orders*

The member did talk about the pension situation, which I raised in the House several times today. He mentioned the auto sector. In my riding, a plant that had been shut down in the last two years belonged to AbitibiBowater. The pensioners throughout the community, and there are a lot of them, are facing uncertain times because of the uncertainty of the company. It has since made great gains in getting out of bankruptcy, but it was touch and go there for a while. We had an uncertain pension plan that created defined benefits for a large swath of the population in my riding.

Can the member comment on the future debate on security for these plans? They are held by large corporations or even smaller businesses. Just how much trouble they are in, and where will this debate be going in the near future?

• (1745)

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the government, I do not see any programming coming in at all.

This is not radical thinking. This is not radical planning. Most of the states in the United States, which are much more conservative than we are, much more oriented to a free market, have provisions at the state level for guaranteeing pensions. They are backed by the state governments. That is not a radical plan. It is quite common throughout most of western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, all societies that have markets similar to ours.

In the case of insolvency or insufficiencies in the pension plan, we need for those to be backstopped by a reserve fund, and that reserve fund needs to be backstopped by government, at both the federal and provincial levels.

We are probably 40, 50 years beyond where we should be in providing this in our social safety net. It is not so difficult to do it. We know how to structure it. But we need the political will to put that legislation in place.

With regard to the stimulus program, my community is somewhat unusual. I am in the southernmost part of the country, and so weather has not been a problem for construction. My community was in such bad economic shape that they had a number of programs ready to go as soon as the funding became available.

We think we are going to meet our deadlines, but we are pretty unusual. There are other parts of this country that are going to need extensions.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak before the House regarding this bill. On September 30, 2010, the Minister of Finance introduced Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, Sustaining Canada's Economic Recovery Act.

A lot of it is smaller plugs filling the holes on the back end of the budgetary process. Nonetheless, in the spirit of fair and balanced debate, I would like to congratulate the government on some of the measures.

Part 1 implements a number of income tax measures. It allows for the sharing of the Canada child tax benefit, the universal child care benefit. That is a different debate. The universal child care benefit, through which parents get \$100 a month, is being passed off as a

child care program. I have misgivings about it. It does not give enough attention to the policy of early childhood education, and it does not address the fact that we have early childhood educators who are not given the right tools.

The problem with this type of thinking, just mailing out a \$100 cheque every month, is that no one knows where it ends. Where is the broad vision for what we want to do, which is to allow accessible, universal child care? Under this thinking, we might as well mail \$50 to everybody and call it a pharmacare program. It might work, but members will see what I am getting at.

I do not want to sound facetious, but I want to get to a positive aspect: allowing registered retirement savings plan proceeds to be transferred to a registered disability savings plan on a tax-deferred basis. I was considering doing a private member's bill on that, but the government introduced it in its budget, and here we have it, so I would like to congratulate the government. That is a positive step for people with disabilities. RRSPs are much more prevalent now than they were previously, and this provides a bit of flexibility for caregivers to pass it on to people in their families who suffer from disabilities. There we have one positive step.

In the spirit of raising the bar, there are also other issues we could look at with respect to the flexibility of registered retirement savings plans, whether to bequeath them to another person in the family after a death. This should be looked at. It is a positive first step to take the unused part of an RRSP, after a death, and pass it on to someone who is invested in an RDSP, a registered disability savings plan.

The other issues in part 1 amend the Canada Pension Plan, the Employment Insurance Act, and the Income Tax Act to provide legislative authority for the Canada Revenue Agency to issue online notices if the taxpayer so requests. In the digital age, online notices are more prevalent, more available. As a member of Parliament, I get a lot of calls regarding the Canada Revenue Agency. A lot of people are in arrears, owe money, fines, interest, and so forth. These things can be quite crippling, and the financial forgiveness that is available is always hard to get. Sometimes there is a lack of information, not just for individuals, but also for small and medium-sized businesses. This could be a positive step toward a free flow of information.

The only other issue is that the government has to commit to 100% penetration on broadband Internet. During the economic stimulus plan, part of the budget announced the penetration of broadband Internet to rural and northern areas. In all of Atlantic Canada, despite all the money that was talked about, only one project was approved.

• (1750)

I do not want to take away from the rest of the country, and I wish them all the best in their projects. But there was only one in Atlantic Canada. This leads me to believe that we did not put enough emphasis on the availability of broadband Internet. It would have allowed far more communities, small groups, and educational institutions to be connected.

*Government Orders*

We ask people to sign up for Service Canada, EI, and the Canada pension plan, and we create a flow of communications so that people can receive their benefits that much quicker. But without a commitment to 100% penetration, our attempts to promote on-line interactive government services will fall short.

In light of how much the government has gone from paper to on-line services, and how much we interact with the government, whether municipal, provincial, or even federal, it should be a right for people to be connected on the broadband Internet.

In the beginning, we had a railway service that connected our country. Then we had the Trans-Canada Highway, and now everyone would consider it a right to have highways and roads that connect even small communities.

I have 191 communities in my riding. That is a lot of pavement, a lot of asphalt. But of the 191 communities, 31 do not have access to broadband Internet. Put aside the issue of affordability. It is just not there.

On an individual basis, that is bad enough. But how do we attract industry? How do we say to a company that our plant has closed down, but we have a well-trained talent pool within this community, and we want the company to come in and set up a business?

Do I have vital services? Yes. Water hook-up? Yes. Asphalt to the back of the business? Yes. Do I have broadband Internet? No, we do not. We have dial-up.

How can a company bidding on major contracts do this when it is already at a terrible disadvantage? That is part of the issue.

I applaud the government for moving toward more on-line services, but I think the debate has to continue beyond this. We have to talk about the fact that not everyone is hooked up under broadband services.

Part 7 amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act to implement the total transfer protection for 2010-11, to set out the treatment of the one-time transfer protection payment under the fiscal stabilization program. That is pretty straightforward.

Let us talk about equalization and transfer payments. We joined Canada in 1949, and today I can stand in the House and say that I live in and represent a “have” province. That was a long time coming. There were certain sacrifices along the way, but we have become a “have” province.

We are not doing things just for the sake of making more money out of revenues from oil and natural gas development. My province now has one of the best poverty-reduction strategies in this country. I congratulate the provincial government for doing it. It is well managed and it is going to make a big difference.

Recently, a program for a home heating rebate for seniors was announced. It is a fantastic program. This was done federally in 2005. It was the energy rebate. As far as I can gather, energy prices have not decreased, so I think that is something we should look at.

It also mentions the Pension Benefit Standards Act. It is almost as if we do pension reform on the margins. I discussed this earlier.

Pension reform is going to be part of this debate. I understand first ministers are currently discussing it. I hope that they come up with a plan that allows more flexibility in the Canada pension plan.

● (1755)

I do like the fact that we could have a supplementary Canada pension plan. That is one element and a visionary element that could bring a greater amount of benefit and income for our most vulnerable seniors.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to convey greetings from the sisters and brothers of the AbitibiBowater workers local to our fellow sisters and brothers in Grand Falls. I know the work the member has done on behalf of those workers.

We know what it is like. There were five paper mills in my riding not that long ago and we now have one. We know what it is like to watch the Domtars and Abitibis leave and then become the Gallahers. We understand what it is like to see pension plans wound up. We understand, like the Atlas workers in Welland, what happened to them when they received a registered letter on a Friday that said, “As of 12 p.m. on Sunday night your benefits are terminated” and this was to retirees, “and your pension will be cut in half”.

We understand the need for pension reform in this country that not only talks about an enhancement to CPP. This is where my friend and I have a slight disagreement about what we should do with CPP, whether it be a voluntary piece or a mandatory piece as we expand that program. However, I think we would agree upon this one aspect. When workers work all their life and contribute to a defined contribution plan, their expectation is to get it out. I would ask my friend to comment on that and on how we should ensure they get what they deserve when they retire.

● (1800)

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I had one mill that closed down. The member had five mills and there is now one. I did not know that before. If there is not a better illustration of how we need to look after people who relied so heavily on their defined benefit plans, that gave them that chunk of security for the rest of their lives, and not just them but most of these people raised entire families on this defined benefit plan that now finds itself at half value and no benefits. Five plants and now one. If there is not one hallmark, one sign, one beacon of distress out there that is it.

If it is AbitibiBowater or Domtar, to back these pensions up for security is so necessary and yet so vacant from a debate in the House. It is absolutely incredible.



*Government Orders*

The member for Windsor—Tecumseh had a good point when he mentioned that many American states have gone further than we have on pension security. What do people do if they are in their mid-seventies? They know they are going to live for another 10 or 15 years and they need to rely on this defined benefit plan that is no longer is backed up, is half the value and is out the door. How do we pick up that slack? Through what, social welfare? This is something that they have invested in all their lives.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, to understand what we are talking about today, I would like to understand what the member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor is saying regarding his position on the budget. We are discussing the implementation of the budget today because when it was time to vote on the budget in the spring, the Liberals abstained.

Based on what I just heard, it sounds as though he thinks we should throw everything out, even though there may be some worthwhile measures in this budget. The budget before us today was supported by the Liberals, but it contains some amendments or applications that could be worthwhile today. It is a bit too late, in a way.

I would like to know how the member could say what he did today, in light of his past actions.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to my personal actions, I have never wavered from the fact that pension security in this country was never an issue or something that just came about over the last two or three years. We knew this. Unfunded pension liabilities have been around for the last 20 or 30 years, particularly when it comes to DB plans.

The mindset is now beginning to change. Due to the recent downturn, people are now realizing that these pensions are not as bedrock solid as they used to be. Now, all of a sudden, we find ourselves in a situation where we need to educate ourselves, educate the public and make legislation that would help these people decide on how to live the rest of their lives.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to speak to Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the other budget tabled in Parliament, blah, blah, blah. The short title is “sustaining Canada's economic recovery” and the blah, blah, blah is about sustaining Canada's economic recovery because, although I will speak specifically to the universal child care benefit and pensions, I want to highlight for people that this so-called economic recovery has not reached from coast to coast to coast in our beautiful country.

I want to refer to a Statistics Canada study that was in *The Globe and Mail* article entitled, “Natives bore brunt of job losses, study shows”.

When this recession was rolling out across this country, first nations, Métis and Inuit said very clearly, I am sure to many members of this House, that they did not want to be left behind in this recession and that we should not forget that they are already the poorest of the poor.

In Canada's economic recovery act, we see that first nations, Métis and Inuit are absolutely left behind.

According to Statistics Canada, this article reads:

Aboriginals have long struggled with higher unemployment than the rest of Canadians, but the recent economic downturn saw the trouble mount, widening the gap between natives and non-natives.

...in communities across Canada, aboriginal people not living on reserves were hit by bigger drops in employment rates from 2008 to 2009 than the rest of the population.

It mentioned that Statistics Canada did not measure employment on reserves.

The article goes on to state:

The unemployment rate among aboriginal people aged 15 and over rose to 13.9% in 2009 from 10.4% the previous year. At the same time, the unemployment rate for non-aboriginals rose to just over 8% in 2009 from 6 per cent in 2008.

We can see that clearly highlights the starting point difference between aboriginal people working off reserve versus the non-aboriginal population.

The article goes on to give a couple of numbers in a couple of different sectors. It states:

There was a 30% employment decline for natives in manufacturing, compared to just 8% among non-native manufacturing workers. A similar decline was noted in construction, with a 16% drop for native workers compared to 5% for non-natives.

The reason I raise this today is that the legislation before us would do nothing to change those numbers for first nations, Métis and Inuit. We had fair warning before we entered into this recession. We simply have not seen the kind of action that would alleviate the poverty in some of these communities from coast to coast to coast.

I want to speak very briefly to the part of the legislation that deals with the universal child care benefit.

When the Conservatives introduced the child care benefit, the New Democrats stood and said that it would not provide quality, affordable, regulated, licensed, publicly-delivered child care for families in this country.

Despite the fact that people receive \$100 a month per child, which is partially clawed back through the tax system, we are now seeing, just as we predicted, the disappearance of child care spaces. The government talks about having a choice in child care. How is \$100 a month a choice in child care when the child care bills can run up to \$1,000 a month or more, depending upon the city in which one lives? Mothers and fathers are left struggling to figure out how they can continue to work. I must point out that work is often not a choice for people. It often takes two working family members to pay the bills and keep a roof over their children's head. These families are struggling with the fact that they must work and are concerned about what happens with their children when they drop them off at a child care centre. There are many fine family-run child care centres in this country, but that is not the point. The \$100 a month is not a choice in child care.

*Government Orders*

● (1805)

In my riding, an article recently said “Childcare shortfall reaches five hundred kids”. In an article in the *Cowichan News Leader*, on July 30, it said, “There are 538 fewer childcare spaces in Cowichan compared to 2007”. I happen to know that it is not because we have 538 fewer children in the Cowichan valley. It is because these child care centres are being forced to close.

An organization called Social Planning Cowichan is doing a lot of work around examining the reasons why these child care spaces are disappearing and what the options are for families. It says:

According to [Social Planning Cowichan] numbers, about half of Cowichan's 10,000 kids under age 12 need care—a percentage and total virtually unchanged from three years ago.

There are 10,000 children just in the Cowichan Valley who are requiring care. These are children under the age of 12. It goes on to say:

In 2007, childcare support was available for 48 per cent of those needing it, and now that figure is just 37 per cent.

One suspect is the recession, stealing families' childcare cash. An accomplice could be government cuts to childcare programs. Wages often in the \$12-\$13 an hour range have also made it hard to attract and retain qualified help.

Somebody once reminded me that we want to provide really good child care for these children because they are going to grow up and change our diapers when we are in long-term care facilities. However, what we are saying is that we are going to pay those workers \$12 to \$13 an hour, and they are raising the future generation. They are raising the future business leaders, community leaders and perhaps politicians. That is what \$100 a month in child care choice contributes to.

We should be looking toward the province of Quebec that has done a very good job in providing child care for the children in the province. It is a model for the rest of Canada and we should look to it for a program that has been very effective in terms of providing real child care choice for family members.

I want to touch briefly on pensions. Before I do that, this is relevant because it is about poverty.

HungerCount 2009, put out by Food Banks Canada, has a couple of interesting figures in its report. It says:

This year's *HungerCount* survey confirms what we all suspected: food bank use across the country has escalated as a result of the economic downturn. More than 790,000 people walked into a food bank in March 2009, 72,000 of them for the first time. Not surprisingly, food banks themselves, running on shoestring budgets and staffed largely by dedicated volunteers, are struggling to meet the demand. This year's *HungerCount* portrays a country in need of change.

Sadly, I only have 10 minutes so I cannot read all of the very good information about poverty in our country, which is resulting in increased food bank usage, but it does say who is turning to food banks. It says:

In terms of household composition, food bank use did not change significantly from 2008 to 2009. Nearly half of assisted households were families with children, split about evenly between two-parent and single-parent families. The proportion of single people turning to food banks for help edged up.

It says that 49% are families with children. It also points out that 12% of those assisted are aboriginal.

That was going to be in the context of pensions, and this economic recovery bill, Bill C-47, does have amendments to the Pension Benefits Standards Act. However, what it sadly does not do is look at increasing CPP, OAS and GIS to some of the poorest, marginalized seniors in our country. What we know is we have the capacity to do that if we only do not go ahead and implement those corporate tax cuts. The \$700 million annually that would be required to lift seniors out of poverty and protect pensions in cases of bankruptcy or insolvency could come from those corporate tax cuts, so we could afford to pay for it.

New Democrats do not support the bill and do not see it as a full-blown economic recovery bill.

● (1810)

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are two areas that I would like to ask the member about with respect to impact as a result of Bill C-47 and the budget. One is in the area of green technology and the fact that the government cancelled most of the eco-technology grants. It has suggested that in this budget there is an opportunity through the capital depreciation allowance for green technology that it will make up, but it does not really give incentives to consumers. How does the member feel about that?

The second question is about how this budget fails families. I would like the member to explore that a little, if she would not mind, for the benefit of the House. We have recent data which provides a strong rationale that the poverty gap is in fact increasing as opposed to decreasing. What does this budget do for families and could it be improved?

● (1815)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, those are two very good questions. On the green technology end of it, he is absolutely correct that there are two problems with the approach the government has taken. First, the retrofit program that was in place, which could have been converted to a longer-term sustainable environmental retrofit program for households, is gone. Those retrofit programs would have been one way of reducing our ecological footprint in the country.

I want to talk more about that, but he mentioned family poverty. We know that renters and seniors live in homes that could benefit from environmental upgrades. Oftentimes seniors are cash poor and house rich and they do not have an opportunity to do an environmental upgrade. If we want to help families reduce their heating and water bills, we should provide some funding to help them reduce those costs, which would help their bottom lines in terms of eating, for example.

The other piece with green technology is for businesses we need a long-term fund so they can make 5 and 10 year plans for the kinds of environmental upgrades they need to make their businesses more efficient.

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's remarks and was quite taken with what she had to say about the \$100 a month child care benefit. It very clearly has failed. It was a bill of goods sold to Canadians and it utterly fails.

*Government Orders*

I want to ask her about the studies done by Fraser Mustard, which show very clearly that registered regulated child care provides an important foundation that would allow children to flourish and prepare them for the future. Our kids will be competing with the kids of the world and they will need that good start. Could my colleague comment on that importance?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I had the good fortune to hear some presentations from the Women's Committee of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. It was very difficult to listen to the stories that some of these women had to tell about their struggle with raising their children and ensuring they had the kind of quality regulated licensed child care that was so important to them.

One single mom was telling me that she was the mother of two children and one child was disabled. She is in the position of trying to find two separate kinds of child care because a disabled child needs some additional care. She was talking to me about her struggle and said that the \$100 per child simply did nothing to defray the expenses of having to deal with her particular situation. Hers is just one of many stories.

The member for London—Fanshawe has ably pointed out that these children are the future of our country. We want to give them the best start possible and that kind of quality child care is an important part of the best start possible.

**Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to have a few words at this point in the debate over the budget implementation bill.

First there is the overall situation within which the budget is being considered, and then there are the issues that the budget is silent on, where it could deal with some of the confidence issues that I think Canadians are very concerned about at the present time.

The budget implementation bill is within the context of a stimulus approach that the government initiated with the support of all parties in the House, I believe, certainly of this party. The objective of the stimulus package was to look at infrastructure in particular from coast to coast to coast, with municipal levels of government, the construction industries and the future needs of the country, to invest in literally thousands of projects. These projects would add value and create confidence. Investors and those looking particularly at small business expansion would see this as a background for the confidence needed to make their decisions. The stimulus package, to some extent, has been successful in doing that.

However, there are some ominous signs. Even against the added value that has been created, there are some signs that Canadians are worried about the future. Let us look at a few of those signs. The unemployment rate today is 2% higher than it was a few years ago, but that does not really tell the full story. We have heard others speak about the erosion of full-time career-type jobs, which are being replaced with the creation of short-term contract jobs. Particularly for young people coming out of university and trades apprenticeships, this has given them a sense that there is not the same stability and continuity that would allow them the quality of life that their parents and their parents' parents had. This is creating a great deal of uncertainty within the present and future generations.

Also, in real terms the economy is seasonally adjusted, sort of like the weather used to be. In real terms, the economy in July shrank. When we think about the objective of the stimulus initiatives that were taken under the action plan, the hardest hit have been in the area of construction. Their percentage of GDP has shrunk. The overall economy has shrunk, but the percentage occupied by the construction industry has disproportionately shrunk. That has to give all of us concern.

The budget talks about adjustments to the capital tax allowance, which would allow a more rapid writeoff of capital equipment. It is a good thing, but on the other side of that, we mention the green energy plan. There are no incentives to the consumers that would be the variable in the equation that would, in fact, absorb those green products that are being created.

On the one hand, yes, those in small businesses, in green technologies, and so on are being encouraged to write off capital equipment sooner. However, on the product they produce out of that, there is no incentive to the consumer to participate in the economic activity that would create more jobs and sustainability in that field.

• (1820)

It is sort of an opportunity that is there as a result of one part of the capital plan in the budget but not offset by an operating infusion of money that would put money into consumers' pockets that they could then go out and use to purchase green technology and green equipment, be it heating, air conditioning, different automotive products or whatever.

One of the areas that I found extremely concerning in that light was that from coast to coast to coast there has been an absolute understanding of the role that rapid transit, high-speed transit and transportation systems, plays. We are a tremendous exporter of transportation technology into the rest of the world. It always befuddled me somewhat that while we are a grand exporter of the best that Bombardier can produce, we are not the highest user of those same goods.

So I link the absence in this budget of the opportunity to create, for example, electrified technology that would in turn deal with issues related to climate change, urban and inter-urban transportation, and converting the older diesel technologies into electrified technologies that would in fact add value and deal with the issues related to climate change.

I use that as an illustration because every so often we have a chance to link government policy, supported by the House, to an issue that is very top of the mind in our ridings. The whole issue of expansion of rail corridors, the use of those corridors to relieve the congestion on the roads and for the transport of goods and people is looked at as an absolute objective that we want to achieve, but on the other hand, we have not invested in the technology that grabs the confidence of the cities and commuters to be participants in a very firm strategy to create those systems.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Another thing that shows a great deal of lack of confidence is that it appears that consumer confidence has declined for the fourth or fifth straight month. Again, that has to do with the taking away of some of the incentives that people have to participate in the purchase of green goods, and so on and so forth. There is no mention of that in the budget.

Household debt has apparently climbed to all-time high levels. We have been privy to what happened with respect to the disastrous decline of the economy in the United States, the fact that because of borrowing policies laid out by the federal government and state governments, the elasticity was so great that there was actually a point where people were paying for mortgages on their debit or Visa accounts.

We have to be very careful, obviously, that we do not reach that point. As has been said, there has been government support for a strong banking and financial institutions regime. Perhaps that is a counterbalance to the kind of thing that could happen in Canada and mirror that situation that happened in the United States.

It is an ominous sign that while the budget attempts to stimulate confidence, there are some indicators that this is not happening.

• (1825)

Much has been said with respect to the area of pensions. I think we have to be very clear that while there are some mechanisms in this budget that allude to the pension issue, we have to deal with the issue of actuarial solvency.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, on the one side, there are some very positive aspects of the budget, but—

• (1830)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member will have a five-minute question and comment period the next time the bill is before the House.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*Translation*]

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to follow up on a question I asked in the House on October 22 about shale gas. Quebeckers are very concerned about this issue. The fact is, this is a very controversial issue in Quebec, where there is a significant deposit of this resource. Some have called it the resource of the future because of its lower impact in terms of greenhouse gases.

Despite the impressive economic spinoffs exploiting this resource would generate, I have to emphasize that Quebeckers are very concerned about the potential negative consequences of activities related to developing it, specifically their impact on the environment and the beauty of the landscape, because there is talk of installing a lot of drills, and on the quality and quantity of fresh water in Quebec.

Farmers and people living in the regions are not the only ones with concerns and reservations about developing this industry. Last week, Guy Laliberté entered the fray by officially expressing his concerns and reservations about developing this industry. As you probably know, Guy Laliberté is the founder of Cirque du Soleil and the One Drop foundation, which focuses on the worldwide drinking water supply.

Let us be clear. As with the tar sands, shale gas is a resource that belongs to Quebec. It is a provincial resource under the Constitution of Canada, which is why I was surprised that it was the Minister of Natural Resources who rose in the House to answer my question. As I just said, shale gas in Quebec does not fall under his jurisdiction and neither do water reserves in the water table, I should add. I mention the water table because a lot of the discussions about the issue of shale gas development have focused on the impact that this industry's development could have on the water table.

My question had more to do with the impact developing this industry could have on surface water because fish-bearing waters are a legitimate concern for the federal government under the Constitution. The federal government has authority over anything that could harm fish-bearing waters.

So I would like to know what point the government has reached in terms of drafting regulations on water removal by the shale gas industry and the impact this could have on fish-bearing waters.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to address the substance of the question from the other day. The member has changed a bit of his content, but I will go back to the question that he asked in the House the other day and I want to give him my thanks for bringing it forward.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the question to reassure Canadians that the Government of Canada is committed, as I said earlier today in question period actually, to the safe, responsible and sustainable development of Canada's natural resources.

It is also an opportunity to discuss the strength of the nation's regulatory system for the development of our natural resources sector. These regulatory standards can be easily summed up this way: they are modern, robust and constantly being improved.

As well, the policies and regulations that govern energy and other resource development in Canada are under constant scrutiny to ensure that they continue to be effective in all respects; that is, protecting the public, workers and the environment. This is done not only by the Government of Canada, but by the provinces and territories as well.

That brings me to my response to the question from the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. Simply put, resource development resides within provincial jurisdiction. Provinces own the resources within their borders. They are responsible for regulating their development.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

While provincial authorities have the majority of regulatory responsibility for shale gas drilling activities, there are potential federal responsibilities. Federal regulatory responsibilities can be triggered in certain circumstances; for example, if the drilling occurs north of the 60th parallel, the National Energy Board then, of course, regulates it. If the drilling occurs within a province but on lands owned by the Government of Canada, a federal environmental assessment may be triggered. Chemicals used in drilling activities may fall under Environment Canada's chemical management plan. And lastly, water use for shale gas development or release of liquids into water bodies may involve regulation or require authorization from the federal government.

With regard to shale gas, the development of this resource is governed by the same rules and regulations that apply to conventional natural gas development. I think that is something that people need to understand. Each aspect of shale gas activity in Canada is regulated by the jurisdiction where the activity is occurring.

While we are respectful of jurisdiction, the federal government and my department in particular does collaborate with the provinces in a number of ways to support responsible and sustainable natural resource development.

Natural Resources Canada contributes geoscience information that provinces use in making exploration, resource management and environmental decisions. For example, the department provided a technical briefing to help the public understand the geology of Quebec's Utica shale formation at the ongoing hearings in Quebec. This type of information is also helpful to other areas where shale gas discoveries are being made, such as New Brunswick, British Columbia and Ontario.

I want to assure members that the Government of Canada has taken note of the increase in activity around shale gas development and is monitoring the situation.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's efforts to answer my question, but this issue does not concern the Department of Natural Resources. What is more, according to the media, the Minister of the Environment said last week that he was developing draft regulations for the shale gas industry. This is only natural because shale gas development will require that a lot of surface water be pumped into the ground in order to bring the gas to the surface.

My question on October 22 and today is what progress has the government made on developing these draft regulations? I also raised a related question on October 22 that concerns the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. If we hope to draft regulations, then we have to know—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, as members know, the Government of Canada has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase the supply of clean energy, while we also encourage innovation and job creation.

Natural gas is an important transition fuel to a low-carbon economy because it is a cleaner burning fuel than any other fossil fuel and is in abundant supply.

Our nation's endowment of clean-burning natural gas represents an opportunity to strengthen Canada as a clean energy superpower.

While shale gas development is relatively new in Canada, technological advancements in production methods are creating great new potential growth. It is not surprising that there is this increased interest in shale gas exploration and development in Canada.

The Government of Canada will always work with the provinces to help them realize the benefits of their natural resources. The Minister of Natural Resources is already working with provincial and territorial colleagues to undertake a fundamental review of Canada's regulatory system and this work will help ensure that our system remains the best in the world.

## G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow up on a question I asked earlier in the session with regard to the costs of the G8 and G20 summits. The timing of the question that day was interesting. On the same day that the Government of Canada announced it would stop funding some lighthouses, including the famous Peggy's Cove lighthouse in Nova Scotia, it was funding fake lighthouses for the G8 and G20 summits. That unbelievably wasteful, extravagant decision contrasted so much with the historic and traditional nature of real lighthouses in coastal Canada. It was not just the \$186,000 that was spent on a fake lighthouse. There was a fake Toronto stock exchange built at a cost of \$208,000 metres away from the real stock exchange. There was the famous fake lake and fake animals as well. The Conservatives spend money like water off a fake duck's back. It is unbelievable. There was also the cost of communications around the G8 and G20 summits.

This spending has really hit a nerve among Canadians. They think at this point in time when the Conservatives have a deficit of \$56 billion, to add another \$1 billion is totally wasteful, inefficient, egregious and unnecessary, especially when we look at the cost of previous summits.

I want to bring people's minds back to 1995 when former prime minister Jean Chrétien and the regional minister, David Dingwall, announced that the G7 would take place in my home community of Halifax Dartmouth. It was big news. In fact, an article from that time states,

The Halifax Summit Office (HSO) confirmed today that its budget for this year's G7 Summit Meeting will be approximately \$28 million.

And it came in on budget. The article went on to say:

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The budget of the Halifax Summit Office encompasses all of the operational aspects of the Summit from staffing to printing and security.

The summit in Halifax was not a low-key event. People like Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin and John Major came to Halifax. It was a wonderful summit. Even at that what was very interesting is that according to a news article of April 30, 1995, a spokesperson for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation said that the federal government was wrong to put that G7 summit in Halifax because the city needed too many government funded fix-ups. The spokesperson said that the federal government “should have chosen a location which would not cost that kind of money”.

The person who said that is now sitting in the federal cabinet as the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. In 1995, \$28 million in his view was too much to spend on a summit and then his own government spent well in excess of \$1 billion. People simply do not understand how that could possibly be the case. So much could have been done with that \$1 billion.

The government cancelled programs like the Canadian Council of Learning, \$80 million over five years. There have been cuts to literacy, cuts to victims of crime initiatives. Canadians understand the government wastes money and is the biggest tax and spend government in history. However, the government is showing its incompetence by spending \$1 billion-plus on a weekend of meetings that were held in two separate locations. It could have been done a lot cheaper.

Other countries have done it cheaper. Italy, Japan, Germany, Russia held these meetings before and did it much cheaper than Canada did. It was an incredible amount of money to be spent at a time when we are reeling from the incompetence that already existed in the government's handling of the national finances. People do not accept that. It was too much. It was too rich. It was too extravagant. Canadians could not afford it and they made that known.

• (1840)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and try to set the record straight from what my hon. colleague across the floor has just gone on about.

First off I would point out that 2010 is not 1995. This is post-2001. There is a tremendous difference in security and the security needed for important world leaders who came together to Canada. It was an opportunity for Canada to showcase our people and our country.

Some of the numbers that my hon. colleague has floated out there have now been corrected and I would hope that he will take the time to have a look at some of them.

Some of the issues are certainly different from what was initially said. Even last week we heard from the RCMP that its estimated numbers for overtime and for personnel just for the RCMP are going to be considerably less than it initially anticipated.

These were two summits that brought together world leaders to discuss important issues as we go forward, including the world economy, issues that affect all of us and certainly Canadians.

We also know as Canadians that when we belong to these organizations, as others have said, when the bill comes is not the time to get up and go to the washroom.

We are mandated to host the G8 once every eight years. We have done that. The G20 included more than the G20. It included a number of other nations.

Just for the security alone for the people who came, the security for the members of the press who numbered over 3,000, the security for lawful demonstrators and to keep the people of Toronto safe and secure, all of these things took nearly 21,000 security people.

Our security partners came from across the country. It is certainly different from what would have been required in 1995.

When my friend across the way talks about what the costs are in other nations, I think it has been very clear, and other independent bodies have said that other countries are not nearly as open and transparent about their costs. They bury their costs in a variety of places. Perhaps I used the wrong term to say “bury” but their costs come from a variety of places that are not listed on sheets as is done in Canada.

Very recently we have heard numbers from Seoul, South Korea, on what it anticipates the costs would be and they were extremely low. However, when the ambassador was recently asked he indicated that a billion dollars was not an out of line figure for South Korea to expect when some of the other associated costs are included.

Canada got its value. It was an opportunity to showcase this country. The City of Toronto has attempted a couple of times to host the Olympics but it did not get them. These summits brought the world to Toronto and showcased a beautiful urban city.

Just from that perspective that part of it was worthwhile, but the issues that were discussed were of importance to Canada and Canadians, and certainly made the summits in Canada very worthwhile.

• (1845)

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, to respond to a couple of points, my colleague said that the costs are different from what they were estimated to be. It is six months later and we are still waiting for the actual costs. It is about time we had some real costs.

He talked about a post-2001 world. In 2002 we hosted the summit for \$93 million. The United States did it for \$25 million. The United Kingdom did it in 2005 for \$140 million. Germany did it for \$124 million in 2007. For Japan it was \$280 million in 2008. Italy did it for \$124 million in 2009.

He said that the costs are buried. I doubt there is a more secretive command and control government in the world now, certainly not in the democratic world, than the one we have here. I find it hard to believe that costs would be buried any more anywhere else than they would be here.

Canadians are offended, and I think rightfully so, by the egregious amount of money that was spent, particularly on what the money was spent and the results that we got were very minimal.

Since then we did not get our seat on the Security Council. Canada's place in the world has gone down. We can do a lot better and it is not by spending—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Mr. Speaker, I dare say that my friend across the aisle is wrong. Canadians did get value. There were many issues discussed, including the international bank tax and maternal health care. A whole raft of things were discussed at those meetings. Certainly Canada is a leader in all of those issues, as Canada is a leader in many other issues on the world stage.

The opportunity that Canadians had to showcase Vancouver with the Olympics and the Muskokas and Toronto with the summits was certainly worthwhile. We have heard that over and over.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The Parliamentary Budget Officer is the one who indicated that all of the numbers on the G8 were made available to him. He is looking forward to getting the final tally on the G20, but we cannot expect our security partners to all have their bills in and be paid until they have done their final auditing and submitted them.

I think they were very worthwhile summits. I would think my friend should compliment the government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:50 p.m.)

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