



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, September 28, 2011**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 28, 2011

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### SCOTT KNOWLES

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour the life of a wonderful young man, Scott Knowles, who just recently lost his life in a very tragic accident.

Scott was a well-loved and respected man in the community of Miramichi. As a youth, he played sports and excelled at school, while at the same time dealing with a severe case of Crohn's disease. At one time he was forced to undergo four surgeries in nine days. While these types of odds would have stopped others, Scott persevered through it all. He then went on to follow in his dad's footsteps and became a pharmacist. Miramichiers were delighted to have him return to our community and work with his dad, Stan, in managing their businesses. He was a caring and excellent pharmacist. In his private life, he was always an active community member, a treasured friend and a devoted son.

Today our community mourns the loss of a great role model for our children and a leading man in our community. Stan, Jean, Tara and family and friends are in my thoughts and prayers.

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### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will rise later today to table a bill that seeks to amend the Canada Labour Code.

As we all know, illness or injury can strike anyone at any time. This year alone, hundreds of thousands of hard-working Canadians will be struck with catastrophic illness or serious physical injuries that prevent them from making a contribution in the workplace and providing for them and their family.

They will need time off, in some cases a lot of time off, to recover, but today they have just 12 weeks to recover before they must be back on the clock or risk losing their jobs. For many, this will not be enough time, and the suffering will intensify.

The amendment proposed in the bill will extend the eligible period from 12 weeks to 52 weeks during which workers suffering from serious injury or illness are able to return to their job, without fear of losing their position.

If passed or adopted by the government, the bill will ensure that Canadians suffering from serious injury or illness have some peace of mind during their recovery period and will increase the likelihood that they will be able to rejoin the workforce in the same capacity and in the position that they held before they were forced to leave.

This is fair and right and I hope my colleagues would agree and support the legislation.

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### BAY OF FUNDY

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bay of Fundy is a Canadian icon that boasts the highest tides in the world. It stretches 270 kilometres between the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and is home to over 12 species of whales. It is also home to the world's oldest reptile fossils and Canada's oldest dinosaur remains.

I am proud to say that the Bay of Fundy is the only Canadian entry left in the New 7 Wonders of Nature competition. This global competition allows individuals to vote for their seven favourite wonders. At the end of the voting process, the seven entries that receive the highest number of votes will be named to the New 7 Wonders of Nature.

The contest deadline is November 11 of this year. I encourage all Canadians to vote for the Bay of Fundy at [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com) and ensure that this Canadian icon gets the international recognition it deserves.

*Statements by Members***DAYS OF AWE**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tonight will mark the beginning of what are called the “Days of Awe” in the Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, are observed by Jewish families around the world.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, I extend our best wishes to those observing these important days. For myself, I shall be spending time celebrating and reflecting with my own family.

May this be a year of sweetness and harmony, a year of peace and justice.

*Shana Tova.*

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to offer my sincerest gratitude to the people of Richmond Hill, one of Canada's most diverse communities, nestled in the heart of the GTA. I am deeply humbled that the good people of Richmond Hill have given me their confidence to represent them here in Canada's Parliament.

Since being elected, I have spoken with many residents, businesses and volunteer organizations, listening to their concerns and conveying our government's resolve to work tirelessly to fulfill our promise to maintain a stable economy with a greater emphasis on Canadian families. With much conviction, we will strive to ensure that every citizen feels included and that the concerns of today are addressed so that they do not become the worries of tomorrow.

We know that the prosperity of our great nation as a whole depends upon its regional strengths and successes. Our strong, stable, national Conservative majority government will ensure the future prosperity of Canada, a country anyone would be proud to call home.

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• (1410)

**SALMON RESTORATION SOCIETY**

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Juan de Fuca Salmon Restoration Society is a group of extremely dedicated volunteers working in the area from the Sooke Basin to the San Juan River in my riding. Twelve creeks and rivers stand to benefit from their work in rehabilitating and restoring the all-important salmon habitat.

The Salmon Restoration Society and wild salmon advocates like Alexandra Morton have been working hard to protect Pacific salmon habit so that local streams will once again produce the salmon that are so important for first nations, sport fishing, recreation and tourism.

The Salmon Restoration Society is a very successful partnership of community volunteers, small businesses, local government, Royal Roads University and the T'Sou-ke and Pacheedaht First Nations.

On September 25, the society opened its Charters Creek Salmon Habitat Restoration and Interpretive Centre.

I would like to congratulate the dedicated volunteers and also those who donated equipment and supplies in order to help restore salmon habitat on the west coast of Vancouver Island in my riding.

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**UNASHAMED: JOURNEY TO HOPE**

**Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at 7 p.m. next Tuesday, October 4 at the National Library and Archives on Wellington Street, the member for Kildonan—St. Paul and I, together with Samaritan's Purse, will be hosting a special screening of Listen UP TV's new documentary *Unashamed: Journey to Hope*.

The documentary is the story of Sara, from the heart of Addis Ababa, a young girl who was exploited, trafficked and robbed of her self-worth. The documentary tells of her journey out of darkness and back to dignity and hope as she experiences God's unconditional love and builds a new life for herself and her young daughter.

I invite all members to this event so that we all can be aware of our work ahead to help women who are being abused and exploited in Canada and abroad.

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**ROSH HASHANAH**

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins tonight. Jewish families in York Centre and across Canada will be gathering to celebrate this important holiday, reflecting on our past and praying for a brighter future.

This is indeed a new year and a new era for relations between Canadians and the Jewish people. I thank the Prime Minister, the Minister of Immigration and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for standing with the Jewish community.

In combatting anti-Semitism, our government is leading the world. Canada refused to participate in the Durban II and III conferences. We have taken a principled stand against this growing form of anti-Semitism.

From standing up for a negotiated two-party resolution between Israel and Palestine, to announcing support of a three-year national task force on holocaust research, remembrance and education, to creating the communities at risk security fund to provide grants for synagogues and Jewish schools, to becoming the first country to sign the Ottawa protocol, our government has demonstrated unwavering support for Israel, the Jewish people and for human rights around the world.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and sweet New Year.

*Shana Tova.*

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**WOMEN OF L'ANSE-À-VALLEAU**

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the extraordinary work done by women in L'Anse-à-Valleau, in the Gaspé, who for 20 years have fought tirelessly for recognition of the important role played by Pointe-à-la-Renommée in Canada's maritime history.

Blandine and Priscilla Poirier, as well as Marianne Côté from the local development committee in L'Anse-à-Valleau, worked hard to finally get recognition for the creation of Canada's maritime telegraphy service.

Thanks to these women, the 1904 construction by Marconi himself of the first maritime radio station in North America at Pointe-à-la-Renommée was recognized as a national historic event by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

Thank you and congratulations to Blandine and Priscilla Poirier and to the entire local development team in L'Anse-à-Valleau.

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[English]

**TERRY FOX NATIONAL SCHOOL DAY RUN**

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is the Terry Fox National School Day Run. On this day, school kids across Canada will honour the memory of Terry Fox by running to raise money for cancer research. Through their actions, they are demonstrating the power of Terry's legacy and proving that cancer can be beaten.

I am proud to note that through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, our government is funding \$171 million for cancer research this year alone. This funding is supporting initiatives such as the Terry Fox new frontiers program in Canada, a partnership between the Terry Fox Research Institute and the Institute of Cancer Research. Thirteen million dollars has been invested in this program to support Canadian research programs in cancer that explore new frontiers in cure-oriented research, just as Terry Fox pushed through new frontiers.

It is with pride that I can say that our government's investment in research programs is helping us make headway in the fight against cancer. By investing in health research today, all Canadians will benefit tomorrow.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[Translation]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 90 years ago, Canadian women obtained the right to vote. Close to 80 years ago, they were legally recognized as persons.

The last election marked another achievement: the NDP ran a record number of female candidates. Thanks to the support of the Canadian public, women make up 40% of the NDP caucus. I am very proud to have been a part of this historic moment. I am also very proud of these women, whom I admire and respect, and who

elected me chair of the NDP's women's caucus. I thank them for their support.

The evolution of the status of women in the western world has created a domino effect that can still be seen today around the world. The fact that Saudi Arabian women obtained the right to vote in municipal elections shows that the path forged by Canadian women is still guiding the evolution of many societies.

We must continue on this path and not downplay the importance of our actions today for the future of billions of women around the world.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been given a strong mandate by Canadians to deliver on our election promises. Earlier today, the agriculture minister welcomed the report of the industry working group on marketing freedom. The report included input from over 50 individuals or organizations representing virtually all aspects of the grain value chain.

Unlike the opposition's fearmongering, the industry experts confirmed that the sky would not fall in an open market but that the sky is the limit. The report will help the government fulfill our long-standing promise to allow western Canadian grain farmers to decide how they market their grain, whether that is individually or through a voluntary Canadian Wheat Board.

I ask that all members follow the leadership of the government and support our farmers. Regardless of how few votes it received in the west, the opposition should stop treating western Canadian grain farmers like second-class citizens and work with us to give farmers the right to choose how they market their grains. It is a right that farmers want and deserve.

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**GREATER VANCOUVER FOOD BANK SOCIETY**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the House how a seed planted by passion can grow and spur corporate social responsibility. Today is the third annual Compassion into Action food bank fundraiser benefiting the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society.

### Oral Questions

This event began in 2009, when Nature's Path Foods founder Arran Stephens was inspired after hearing the Dalai Lama speak in Vancouver. His family began Compassion into Action, which has raised more than \$300,000 in the last two years. It is supported by local companies such as Vancity, Ethical Bean Coffee and Olympic Dairy. Together they have been able to help feed more than 12,000 families in need through the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society.

I have supported this initiative from the beginning. Now I want to congratulate all of the businesses involved and the Stephens family for their investments in those less fortunate in our community. I hope for the day when we will no longer have a need for food banks.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's top priority is the completion of the economic recovery. With a still fragile global economy, Canadians have given us a strong mandate to implement our low-tax plan to create jobs and economic growth. It is a plan that is working.

The Bank of Montreal deputy chief economist told the finance committee yesterday that "compared to policy-making in the rest of the world, Canada's economic policy-making has been exemplary".

While the NDP does what it can to oppose jobs and growth with still too many Canadians out of work, the government continues to remain focused on Canada's top priority.

People in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville want to get back to work. The government is supporting their efforts with initiatives such as the hiring credit for small businesses. The government will continue to keep Canada on the right path.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PATRIATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago, the Supreme Court of Canada rendered its decision on patriating the Constitution. This new Constitution brought positive changes, such as a charter of rights that puts peoples' individual rights before those of the state, yet Quebecers, now recognized as a nation, are the only Canadians to have had this Constitution forced on them against their will.

The NDP is proposing a third option for reconciling the hopes of the Quebec nation with our place in Canada. Falling in between the perpetual refusal of the sovereignists who want a total breakup and the liberal conservatives who do not even want to try, the proposed NDP alternative for the future would recognize and protect Quebec's specificity, notably by preserving the proportion of Quebec's seats in the House of Commons and by protecting linguistic rights in federal workplaces in the province.

In a series of other measures, we will prove that we do not need to relive Meech Lake and Charlottetown to give the Quebec nation concrete and real recognition. That is how we will build the Canada of the future. That is the path set out by Jack Layton and the NDP.

### LIBYA

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Monday, a crushing majority of members voted in favour of extending Canada's involvement in Libya. A total of 198 members stood in support, and their votes sent a clear message to the Libyan people: they can count on Canada during this post-Gadhafi transition.

At that time, the members of the official opposition refused to support the Libyan people, they refused to support the excellent work of the members of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal Canadian Navy. They believe that the job is finished.

[English]

They are wrong. The job is not done and Canada does not cut and run. We do not shirk our responsibilities. We will continue to protect and promote Canadian values around the world. We will support the Libyan people as they build a brighter future for themselves.

The NDP members of this place should be ashamed of their vote on Monday. They are wrong on the issues and incoherent on foreign policy. The NDP proves yet again it is just not fit to govern.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister met with the Minister of Finance and the Governor of the Bank of Canada.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what was discussed at that meeting and whether he now has an action plan to deal with the economic crisis?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, we have an economic action plan. That is why we received a mandate from Canadians. Clearly, we are concerned about the developments in Europe and elsewhere, but at the same time, over 600,000 jobs have been created in Canada. That is one of the best records in the industrialized world. That is the path we will continue to take.

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at the Standing Committee on Finance, economists said that the Prime Minister's fiscal approach is missing the mark. Doug Porter of BMO said that the Prime Minister's prescription for the economy, namely, more restraint, is the wrong approach.

The Prime Minister needs to realize this. He needs to realize that his economic strategy has created a structural deficit, the worst deficit in the history of the country. We are now facing a second recession under his watch.

Why does the Prime Minister insist on pursuing this course of action?

*Oral Questions*

●(1425)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this question does not make sense. The hon. member is advocating that we increase the deficit. We want to reduce the deficit. The government's position is clear. We have a major deficit but it is still much smaller than that of other countries, and we will ensure that the budget is balanced while the economy continues to grow.

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[English]

**POVERTY**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the National Council of Welfare said today that poverty costs Canada more than \$24 billion a year, double what it would cost to lift every Canadian out of poverty. Tolerating poverty is bad economics.

The council calls for an investment approach toward poverty, for example, by investing in housing, early childhood education and aboriginal employment. Why not have a strategy to end poverty, save money and help the economy?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, how we tackle poverty first and foremost is by ensuring the economy is growing, creating jobs, making investments in such things as housing and education, as well as providing tax breaks for people entering the workforce, as the Minister of Finance has done. These are things this government has done and is proud to have done. What is a mystery to everyone is why the NDP consistently votes against these policies.

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**G8 SUMMIT**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is now 111 days since the Muskoka minister was put in the doghouse, and his handlers still cannot get their stories straight. They keep telling us that all the projects came in under budget, so let us talk about the Gravenhurst arena.

The minister personally intervened and moved it out of the Muskoka slush fund and said he would get the funding elsewhere. Now the documents show that this gave the three amigos—the mayor, the hotel manager and the minister—a much larger pot of goodies.

Will the minister explain why he personally intervened? Will he explain why this project is now the subject of a police investigation?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the facts on this issue have not changed. This has been thoroughly aired.

I say to my friend opposite that of the 32 projects I approved under this initiative, not one involved an arena in Gravenhurst.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, who was approving the money then? This is about a minister who misused the taxpayers' dollars, used his BlackBerry to get a friend a job, used his office to run a slush fund, and relied on the Prime Minister to grease the wheels.

The Gravenhurst project blew the budget. People were fired. The cops were called in. Does the minister think that is an appropriate way to abuse the public trust? It has been 111 days. Will he please stand and take accountability for his actions?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. Not one G8 project involved the construction of a hockey arena in the town of Gravenhurst, not one of the 32 projects. I cannot be any clearer than that. The member opposite has the right to his own opinion, but he certainly does not have the right to create his own facts.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, speaking in Lima, Peru, in November 2009, the Prime Minister told that gathering that Canada was not going to make the mistake of balancing the books at all costs, even if it meant raising taxes and slashing public spending. These were the mistakes that led to the Great Depression, he told the gathering.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, if those words are correct, and I think most economists around the world would say that they are correct, does he not now recognize that circumstances have changed once again? The world is on the brink of a major recession, and slowdown is all around us.

What will it take for the government to change course once again?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government continues to run a significant deficit, as is appropriate at these times, but we are taking steps to ensure the budget will balance as the economy grows.

The difference between our position and the position of the hon. member, especially when he had premier responsibilities, was that no matter what circumstances we have, his position was we always increase the deficit. If times are good, we increase the deficit. If times are bad, we increase the deficit, and in the times in between, we increase the deficit.

Obviously, we use a steadier and more prudent judgment in managing the economy.

●(1430)

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the last five years, the government raised spending, on average, by 18%, by \$70 billion. The Prime Minister is in absolutely no position to lecture anyone in Canada on the subject of finances or anything else.

The question the Prime Minister has to answer is this. What is he going to do when the circumstances change? A payroll tax increase of \$1.2 billion is now planned for January 2012. Would he at the very least cancel that payroll tax?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member gets on his feet to say, “You’re spending too much money. Why don’t you spend more?” That is the kind of position we have come to anticipate from the member. Of course, this government’s economic record has been mandated by the Canadian people and praised by analysts around the world.

Frankly, everybody in this country has the right to lecture the hon. member about how he managed the Ontario economy.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board admitted publicly to the press that he was willing to appear before a committee of this House to answer some questions.

I have a very simple question for the Prime Minister. If the minister would rather answer questions before a committee, why does he still refuse to provide any information or answers to the very clear questions asked in this House during question period?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has already responded to all of these questions here in the House of Commons. I am surprised to see the Liberal Party continuing on this path, after the election results. The Auditor General examined this issue. The government accepted her recommendations, and we have answered all of the questions.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this government, which is out of touch with reality, continues to boast about its record, but its failure to act speaks volumes. The job situation is worse than it is letting on. Since the recession, 200,000 more Canadians do not have jobs.

When will this minister stop twisting the figures? When will this out-of-touch government take action and start creating jobs?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the figure is very clear. The figure is 600,000 net new jobs. Those are the jobs that have been created in the Canadian economy since the end of the recession in July 2009.

It is also clear, if the member opposite wants to look at the figures in the G7, that is the best job creation rate in the G7 since the end of the recession.

Can we do more? Yes. Are we doing more? Yes.

There is a hiring credit for small business. It will be in the budget bill next week. I hope the member opposite votes for it.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government likes to talk about its job creation record, but the numbers just do not add up, so here are the facts. There are 500,000 more people available for work since the recession. Only half that number of jobs have been recovered. That is one job for every two unemployed people, nothing to brag about.

Unemployment is rising. Canadians are tired of talk. When will the government stop spinning the numbers and start taking some real action on job creation?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member can speak louder, but it is still wrong. There are 600,000 net new jobs, 80% of them full-time jobs in Canada, the best job creation record in the G7.

We anticipate having the strongest growth in the G7 in the next two years. That is what the IMF says and that is what the OECD said, and Moody’s has just renewed Canada’s top credit rating in the world, triple A.

• (1435)

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is bad enough that the finance minister is out of touch with everyday Canadians, but it seems that he is out of touch with his Ontario buddies too. The finance minister claims jobs are being created in Ontario, but at last night’s debate, the Ontario Conservative leader said that over 300,000 good manufacturing jobs have been lost in Ontario alone.

Could the finance minister tell us whose math is wrong, the federal Conservative or the Ontario Conservative?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will not get involved in provincial politics. I will get into trouble at home.

We have had substantial job creation across the country, 600,000 net new jobs, and that includes participation of the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is good manufacturing jobs are being lost and the government refuses to act. Mill closures, boarded-up factories, more and more jobs flying overseas. That is the reality for working families in Ontario.

New Democrats have long been calling for action. Now even the Ontario Conservative leader sees it is a problem. When will this out-of-touch government finally take real action and create jobs? Where is the jobs plan?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are following an expansionary economic policy. If we look now at what we are doing in terms of transfers, they continue to increase. Transfers are very important for the provinces for health, education and social services. That is just the opposite of what was done in the mid-90s by the previous Liberal government that cut transfers unilaterally to the provinces.

We are following an expansionary fiscal policy. We are going to return to a balanced budget. We think that is important, and I am sure the member opposite would agree, looking at the trouble that some other countries in the world have gotten into by accumulating substantial deficits over time and building up large public debt.



*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**SERVICE CANADA**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the scandals involving the President of the Treasury Board keep piling up, while services for Canadians are being cut. People do not understand why there are some rules for his friends and other rules for ordinary people. There is going to be less help available at Service Canada centres, and some are going to close altogether. I am talking about services that directly affect the public and not just his friends.

In the meantime, the minister responsible for the cuts is refusing to answer questions in the House and refusing to talk to journalists. Am I going to have to send my questions to him on Twitter to get him to respond?

[English]

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there will be no Service Canada offices closing and no impact on in-person services offered. Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to complete Canada's economic recovery, create jobs, and return to balanced budgets. Improving the way we deliver EI services to Canadians by modernizing the way we accomplish this is one of our goals.

Our government is committed to effective and efficient use of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**G8 SUMMIT**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for that brilliant response.

Every day we learn about new projects in which the minister was personally involved with the help of his constituency office staffers. He told his friends not to worry, that whatever could not be included in the G8 budget would be included in the economic action plan. That is serious.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs keeps telling us that the Auditor General had access to all the information in order to conduct her investigation. Now that we know that is not true, are we going to start getting real answers?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General presented a report.

The government has fully accepted the advice that she provided on ways we can improve the reporting to Parliament in the years to come. We thank her for her work. We have aired all of the responses to the questions that have been brought up on this issue.

What Canadians expect their members of Parliament to be doing is to be focusing on their priorities: the creation of jobs, economic growth, hope and opportunity. That is what the government is doing, focusing like a laser on the priority of Canadian families, the economy.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we need investments urgently to reduce congestion and avoid further thickening of our border. Our prosperity and our economy depend on this, things like a modern rail tunnel, improved Nexus, and border infrastructure that will reduce wait times.

The Prime Minister's own guidelines say that Treasury Board should "provide oversight of the government's financial management and spending".

Could the President of the Treasury Board explain why money was siphoned from important border infrastructure projects to get himself re-elected? Why is he more important?

● (1440)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has made unprecedented financial commitments to support border infrastructure, nowhere more anywhere in Canada than in Windsor, Ontario, apparent where the government has a strong partnership with the provincial government, a strong partnership with the State of Michigan and a strong partnership with the Obama administration in Washington.

We are working tremendously hard to ensure that trade can flow better across that border. What we need is for New Democrats to stand in their place and say that they support free trade, that they support free trade with the United States, and that they support NAFTA.

Will the member opposite do that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is tolerating ministers who fail to understand their role or why they are entrusted with money. A \$50 million fund was set up for projects that supposedly were related to the G8 summit. I want to remind the ministers and the government that this money was meant to be used to improve border infrastructure, including what is in my riding.

Will our government finally allow the truth to come out on this waste of public money?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the member that this government under this Prime Minister brought forward an \$8 billion building Canada infrastructure program to support economic growth, to support the expansion of the Canadian economy, and all \$8 billion of that fund were voted against.

New Democrats voted against every single dollar of that fund. Shame on the member. Shame on the New Democratic Party.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week Canada's first nations kicked off national efforts for first nations education. Their message is simple every first nation child must have equal access to quality education under control of first nations. This was Shannen Koostachin's dream. Evidence shows education is crucial to breaking cycles of poverty and hopelessness.

*Oral Questions*

Will the government commit today to end the 2% cap on funding, and provide full and adequate support for first nations education?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are working with our willing partners to improve the educational outcomes of first nations across the country.

That is why the national chief and myself announced the national panel. It is doing good work across the country. It is totally independent. The government has not constrained the panel in any way. Its recommendations should be coming forward in December or January. In the meantime, we will wait to see the good work that it will produce.

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**PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD**

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, most Canadians were profoundly disturbed to learn that the President of the Treasury Board spent \$50 million of their hard-earned money the way he did. They are even more disturbed by the fact that he will not get up and explain himself.

I do not know how he can look Canadians in the eyes and tell them that he is behaving responsibly. How can the President of the Treasury Board of all people think that he is beyond the scrutiny of this House when it comes to accountability of public funds?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Infrastructure Canada approved 32 projects to support the G8 infrastructure under the three categories provided. I approved all 32 of those projects. There was a contribution agreement written up for each of those 32 projects.

The Auditor General has made some helpful comments about what we can do to be more transparent to the House of Commons in the future. We fully accept those recommendations and will follow them in the future.

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**MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence made a public declaration that, while a guest at a luxury fishing lodge, neither his host nor his companions had any business dealings with the Government of Canada, and yet the facts speak very differently.

Mr. Rob Crosbie is a political appointee in control of a federal crown corporation that receives \$200 million in annual subsidies from which he draws a personal salary. How does the minister square this contradiction and, while I am on my feet, was the fish this big or just this big?

•(1445)

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said a number of times, I was on personal time in Gander, Newfoundland, with some friends on a trip I paid for myself. As a result of work, I made the decision to go back to work early.

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 2002 the current Prime Minister criticized a minister for staying at a cottage owned by a client of his department. At the time, the current Prime

Minister said that he had either acted extraordinarily unethically or extraordinarily stupidly.

My question is for the Prime Minister. When a minister accepts a vacation at a luxury fishing lodge owned by the chair of Marine Atlantic, would he say that minister was acting extraordinarily unethically or extraordinarily stupidly?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as has been made clear, the minister paid for his own vacation, so obviously the facts are different. If anyone in the Liberal Party actually has any evidence that the minister or anyone else acted improperly, he or she can say so outside the House.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister continues to keep Canadians in the dark about the price tag of his crime bill. It is all about transparency. Yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that this bill will cost billions of dollars, yet this government still will not explain its impact on the country's future.

How can this government be so irresponsible as to force the passage of a bill without disclosing how much it will cost?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we tabled hundreds of pages for the member's edification before the standing committee just before the last election.

However, if he is worried about the costs, I hope that he could just spend a bit of time worrying about the cost to victims in this country, because this is who the bill targets. It gets those violent individuals, those individuals who sexually exploit others and the people in the drug trafficking business off the street, and that should have the support of the hon. member and his party for a change.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is shocking that the government is ramming the bill through the House and yet refusing to tell Canadians anything about what it costs.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer told us yesterday that it was unprecedented, in his 30-year career, to have such a major piece of legislation that we know will cost billions of dollars. The cost is not turning up in a single government document. There are no budget items on this whatsoever, not a single line anywhere.

When will the government come clean on what it will cost the Canadian taxpayer?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we report to Parliament about the costs of the individual pieces of legislation.

*Oral Questions*

The NDP says that it knows it will cost billions. I would ask the member to table all those documents that he has. That would be very interesting, because they are completely out of line with what we have been saying and what we have laid before Parliament.

We should try to agree on something. I think we can all agree that if we spent \$1 fighting crime in this country, it would be opposed by the NDP.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see that, for all the government's crime rhetoric, one of its top priorities is to roll back the clock on legal protections against extremist hate speech.

Will the minister tell Canadians why the government is moving to make it easier for racist, sexist and anti-Semitic commentary to flourish online?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the member is referring to. The bill before Parliament targets drug dealers, the people who traffic in narcotics, the people who bring drugs into this country and the people who sexually exploit children. That is the government legislation. What is she referring to?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister may wish to listen to what some of his colleagues are saying in press conferences or in what they are tabling before this House.

We learned this morning that a number of Conservative MPs believe that hate speech laws are futile. In our communities, hate speech all too often results in acts of violence. It is irresponsible for the government to repeal these laws and it shows that the government is out of touch with reality and Canadian values.

Can the minister prove that he is committed to protecting Canadians from hate speech?

[*English*]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we protect all victims in this country. We consult with victims across this country. We sit down with them. We hear what they have to say. The bill that is before Parliament right now, Bill C-10, reflects those concerns.

What I will do for the hon. member, because she should hear from those victims' groups as well, is ask those groups that when they come to Ottawa again to please spend a bit of time with the NDP and the Liberals so they will know the things that we know that we are legislating on.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians were justifiably shocked to learn that in Saudi Arabia a woman can face a punishment of 10 lashes for the simple act of driving a car, a routine act for most women in any democracy.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs contemplate bringing issues such as this one to the attention of his counterparts around the world?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has enjoyed good diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for many years, but reports of a Saudi woman being sentenced to 10 lashes for the crime of driving her own car are deeply disturbing.

Although we have heard some positive signs of reform announced in recent weeks, I think I speak on behalf of all members of the House when I condemn, in the sharpest terms, this deeply offensive court decision.

\* \* \*

**SEARCH AND RESCUE**

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we now know that the Minister of National Defence was visiting a fishing lodge so that he could meet with some of his well-connected friends. The chair of Marine Atlantic, Mr. Crosbie, obtained his job from his Conservative connections and now he is hosting the minister at his fishing lodge.

Does the minister really think it is appropriate for him to use valuable military search and rescue resources to visit Conservative appointees?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member has it wrong again. He has been wrong all week. He has made misleading statements in the House before.

I was there on a trip that I paid for myself. I spent some time with my friends in beautiful Newfoundland and Labrador. I made the decision to leave the trip early to come back to work.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister had been warned there were barely enough helicopters to meet basic search and rescue requirements.

Our search and rescue response standard of two hours is the worst in the world. Replacing our 50-year-old fixed-wing SAR aircraft is stalled because of government mismanagement. The government is closing down rescue centres in Quebec and St. John's, and the closest SAR helicopter to the Arctic is in Ontario.

Why will the minister not fix search and rescue in Canada instead of using SAR assets as personal transportation?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all search and rescue assets that are involved in exercises or demonstrations would immediately divert if they were called upon. The member knows that because he has participated in these as well.

When it comes to the issue of military procurement, support for the military, support for economic measures, the record of the New Democratic Party is a train wreck on the economy and heretics on military procurements.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian search and rescue helicopter fleet can barely meet demand. The situation is so serious that parts are taken from one helicopter and used on another. Nevertheless, one of just three helicopters based in Gander, one of the regions with the greatest need, was used by the minister for a pleasure trip.

How many helicopters will have to be grounded before the minister stops using them as his personal taxis?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I left the trip early to go back and do some work.

With respect to the search and rescue assets, as a result of pressing needs, the Department of National Defence has purchased a large number of spares from the United States, at a very reasonable price I might add, that came about as a result of a project cancellation. With that purchase and those new parts, we will be able to significantly increase the availability and yearly flying time of the Cormorant fleet.

It was the cancellation of this important contract replacement by a previous Liberal government that left us in the situation where we are flying 50-year-old helicopters.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister misused DND resources when our search and rescue helicopters can barely meet needs. If the minister is so interested in search and rescue operations, we again wonder why the St. John's and Quebec City search and rescue centres are being closed.

What is this government's priority—fishing trips or providing services to the public and the tools to which the military is entitled?

● (1455)

[English]

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the consolidation of the sub-centres into the existing Joint Rescue Coordination Centres will have no negative impacts on the current level of service provided by the Canadian Coast Guard. This does not in any way affect the availability of Coast Guard ships, the Coast Guard auxiliary or the Canadian Forces aircraft. The consolidation represents a positive change by locating all Maritime air search and rescue coordinators into the same centres working side by side.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt attacked his own Conservative government today over the decision to provide \$6 million to the International Planned Parenthood Federation. He said:

The battle over the IPPF continues. ... The government only responds to Pro-Life issues and concerns when we take an aggressive stance. We will apply this lesson.

Would the government categorically state that it will not yield to such threats and will ensure that women around the globe have

access to evidence-based programs that include safe abortion and family planning services?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question because it gives me a chance to say what Canada, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, has done to save the lives of women and children.

It was reported last week at the United Nations that more progress is being made to reduce the rate of maternal mortality in the last year than over the past decade. Canada focused its Muskoka initiative on improving the health of mothers and children and taking real action, such as preventing malaria, better nutrition and training more midwives. We were clear on our criteria and we will fund projects—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for St. Paul's.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Auditor General, the quality of life gap between our first nations and other Canadians continues to grow, and the government has not managed to work with the first nations to resolve the problem.

Will the government commit, through a new partnership among governments, to provide equal funding for services of equal quality, as called for by the National Chief, Mr. Atleo?

[English]

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has a responsibility to treat taxpayer money prudently. I had a meeting yesterday with 20 chiefs from the province of Quebec—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The member has asked a question. I would hope that her colleagues want to hear the answer.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has a responsibility to deal with budgetary items in a prudent way. We are doing that. We are sensitive to the needs of our first nations and aboriginal people.

I have had meetings in this regard and will continue to behave in a responsible manner.

*Oral Questions***ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the Conservative government has threatened to pull the plug on the RCMP in British Columbia if the province does not accept a new policing contract by November.

The Conservatives are callously willing to jeopardize public safety in order to ram through a new contract with the province. Instead of being tough on crime, they are being tough on our front-line officers and tough on provinces.

Is pulling police off the streets in British Columbia part of the government's so-called crime agenda?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is willing to renew contract policing agreements with the provinces. After four intensive years of negotiations, it is now up to the provinces to decide whether to come on board.

The same fundamental terms and conditions will apply to all provinces. Saskatchewan and Alberta have accepted the agreement. British Columbia will have to decide whether to accept the agreement.

• (1500)

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government likes to talk tough on crime, but when it comes to front-line police, it continues to fall down on the job. It is telling the government in British Columbia to take it or leave it on the contract offer.

British Columbians need to know that the result of these negotiations will not be a threat to the safety of their communities. Will the minister stand in the House right now and commit that the RCMP is staying put in British Columbia? Will the government stop playing fast and loose with the safety of British Columbians in these negotiations by telling British Columbia to take it or leave it?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is not up to the federal government to determine how the province wishes to carry out its provincial responsibilities in respect of policing. We have been negotiating now for four years. There have been intensive negotiations for four years. Some of the provinces have accepted the agreement and some have not yet decided. It is up to the provinces to make that decision. We do not force provinces to accept the RCMP. We think it is a good deal, but it is up to the provinces to do it.

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**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled in the House my private member's bill, an act respecting the national flag of Canada. The purpose of this enactment is to ensure that all Canadians have the right to fly the national flag of Canada.

The Canadian flag represents all Canadian citizens. It represents pride in our great nation and support for those who have sacrificed their lives for the principles which it embodies: freedom, democracy, courage, and the justice upon which our great nation was built.

Could the minister tell the House how important the Canadian flag is to our heritage?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the member for Don Valley West for his incredible leadership early in this Parliament. Our flag is indeed loved by all Canadians and respected all around the world. It is a symbol of our freedom, a symbol of our democracy and a symbol of our unity.

I applaud and support the member's bill so that we can have absolute clarity with federal law. Any Canadian who wishes to fly the Canadian flag should be able to do so, free from bullying, free from intimidation, and to do so proudly as a Canadian from coast to coast to coast.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**VETERANS**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day is just around the corner. That day gives us an opportunity to remember the tremendous sacrifices made by Canadians and to pay tribute to those who died for our country.

Why does the government pay up to \$13,000 for Canadian Forces members' funerals, but only \$3,600 for veterans' funerals? Why does this government care more about gazebos than veterans?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. This allows me to highlight the excellent work of the funeral and burial program, which is managed by the last post fund, with which we work closely. Assistance for funerals and burials is offered to veterans who have suffered injuries related to their service, regardless of their rank or the medals they have received. We will continue working with the last post fund and exploring other ways to provide quality services to our veterans.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to leaked U.S. diplomatic cables, Khaled Samy Abdallah Ismail was arrested and sent to a secret U.S. detention facility in Afghanistan because of suspicious behaviour. It turns out he has a mental illness and was deemed low risk. It took eight months for a consular official to visit him, and nine months more for him to get home.

Why the delay in providing basic consular services to a Canadian citizen in need?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my hon. friend for her question and also to welcome her to this important file. I am going to enjoy working with her.

*Points of Order*

I have to inform the hon. member that we do not comment on the contents of leaks. I would also point out that the document she is referring to is not a Canadian diplomatic cable.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

**UKRAINE**

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Ukraine has undergone a considerable transformation since the beginning of the Orange Revolution. However, what originally seemed an unstoppable wave of democratic freedom has since gone sour with the news that former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko is being politically persecuted.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs please make crystal clear for the House Canada's concerns with Ukraine's political situation?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has expressed to the Ukrainian government our serious concern about the apparent bias in the ongoing judicial proceedings against former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Political persecution is completely unacceptable. The appearance of political bias in judicial proceedings undermines the rule of law.

We urge, here today, the Ukrainian government to strengthen judiciary independence. We will continue to support efforts to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society in Ukraine.

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**CANADIAN AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM**

**Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 1959 the Diefenbaker government scrapped the Avro Arrow, and much of the Canadian aviation industry along with it, throwing 30,000 Canadians out of work. Now this Conservative government has done it again. Last week it evicted the world's only replica of the Avro Arrow, along with hundreds of veteran volunteers.

Canadian veterans have asked their minister to reverse this disdainful decision. Will the Conservatives listen to Canadian veterans and allow their museum to continue?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member more than likely knows that this museum is on the land of Downsview Park, which is a crown corporation. This was a business decision made by Downsview.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is claiming that Canadians approve of his omnibus justice bill. That is certainly not the case in Quebec, as we can see by the reactions of the National Assembly, the Quebec bar association and the youth centres. By imposing a gag order, the government is showing that it will stop at nothing to impose measures that have been formally rejected by Quebec.

What will it take before the Minister of Justice understands that Quebec is saying no to counterproductive measures that do not leave room for rehabilitation and increase imprisonment of young people?

[*English*]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the bill targets those who are involved with organized crime, the people who traffic in drugs, the people who bring drugs into this country, and the people who sexually exploit children. Canadians have not rejected that, but I know Quebec rejected the Bloc. We know that for sure.

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**PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Jakup Krasniqi, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

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**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of question period because of inaccuracies made by the government side regarding my questions in terms of the Gravenhurst centre.

I have the documents here. The government might not be aware of this project that it supported. I would like to table these documents, as well as the *Toronto Star* article of April 21, 2011, which refers to the police investigation that is ongoing. The documents are here.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to table the documents?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to respond to my friend opposite.

The taxpayers of Canada provide a lot of money to the official opposition for research. We encourage the opposition to use it for that and not simply to get a subscription to the *Toronto Star*.

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite should stand in his place and apologize. The project in Gravenhurst was funded by FedDev Ontario. It is a conflict between the municipality and the contractor. It is before the courts. This government had nothing—

• (1510)

**The Speaker:** Order. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, question period has concluded for today. Members may wish to pursue these matters at a later date, but certainly not on a point of order.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM**

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Global Centre for Pluralism's annual report for 2010 and its corporate plan summary for 2011.

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**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly, OSCE PA, respecting its participation at the Trans-Asian Parliamentary Forum held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from May 14 to 16, 2010, and at the fall meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held in Palermo, Italy, from October 8 to 11, 2010.

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**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-289, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (nanotechnology).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, nanotechnology presents real opportunities for innovations across all economic sectors that could bring benefits to Canadians, including better health care, a cleaner environment and safer products. Along with these opportunities come potential risks. Nanotechnology creates real health and safety concerns, both for Canadian consumers and workers, as well as important environmental safety concerns.

We have been working for the last few months with grassroots groups and science and environmental experts to address this regulatory gap in Canadian legislation. This bill is a step toward addressing some of these critical shortfalls and ensuring the safe and responsible development of nanotechnology. If passed, the bill would amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to include nanotechnology. The bill lays out consistent risk assessment processes, prioritizes research on the safety of nanotechnology, and establishes a much needed national inventory of nanotechnologies.

I certainly hope that this legislation will receive broad support in the House of Commons, both on the opposition side and on the government side.

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

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-290, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sports betting).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple bill, matching the personality and character of the person moving it.

It is simply a repeal of one very small section of the Criminal Code. Its effect would be to allow for sports betting on single sporting events in this country.

This is a very important bill from this perspective. That industry is very big, and it is entirely controlled by organized crime at the present time, both here and in the United States, because it is generally illegal in the United States to bet on one sporting event.

The estimate in the United States is that \$30 billion a year is bet on that, all going into the pockets of organized crime and some of it offshore. It is estimated that as much as \$2 billion is spent in Canada annually, with all of that money going out of the country to organized crime syndicates in the U.S. and the Caribbean, so it is quite important that we move on this.

The other thing is that there is a national gaming association in Canada. It just completed a study that shows the employment that would be created by making this into a legal business. For instance, in Windsor there will be another 150 jobs either saved or added to the current employment in the Windsor casino. In the riding of the Minister of Justice there is a casino, and a similar number of jobs would either be saved or added. It is job creation.

The Province of Ontario has signalled that it is very interested in placing this operation in the casinos in that province. Other provinces are taking different perspectives on it, but there is widespread support for this bill, and I am seeking support from all members of Parliament when it comes up for second reading.

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

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● (1515)

*[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT**

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (waiting period and maximum special benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, we all have family members or close friends who unfortunately have cancer or serious injuries that prevent them from earning an income to support their children or who are in very difficult social situations.

I have presented petitions in this House with thousands of signatures. In response to those petitions and the tireless work of Marie-Hélène Dubé, it is time to make two changes to the Employment Insurance Act.

The bill would extend the maximum period for which special benefits for illness, injury or quarantine may be paid from 15 weeks to 50 weeks. More importantly, it would also change the infamous waiting period, which forces individuals to wait two weeks before receiving money.

*Routine Proceedings*

By resolving this situation, we can provide some relief for these individuals. They are already suffering from their illness; they are already suffering serious social and family problems. It is time for us to fix this for them. Our role as legislators is to improve the quality of life of our constituents.

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT**

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-292, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (victims' restitution and monetary awards for offenders).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce an amendment to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. This amendment will ensure that any monetary amount awarded to an offender pursuant to a legal action or proceeding would be paid to the victims and other designated beneficiaries.

This amendment ensures that victims of crime come first and that criminals do not profit from their crimes. It is another example of this government putting the rights of victims ahead of the rights of criminals.

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

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**CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT**

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-293, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (vexatious complainants).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise in the House today to introduce Bill C-293, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (vexatious complainants).

Correctional Service Canada, CSC, receives thousands of complaints per year from offenders. A small group of convicts accounts for about 15% of the complaints that are filed. My bill seeks to address those inmates who have made a hobby of issuing complaints, who have abused the grievance process and who waste correctional institution resources by filing numerous complaints that are vexatious or frivolous in nature.

The changes contained within this bill transcend all political parties in this House, and I sincerely hope that all members will support it.

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

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• (1520)

**CANADA LABOUR CODE**

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-294, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (illness or injury).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as we all know, illness and injury can strike anyone at any time. This year alone, hundreds of thousands of hard-

working Canadians will be struck with catastrophic illness or serious physical injuries that prevent them from making a contribution in the workplace and providing for themselves and their families.

The amendment proposed in this bill would extend the eligible period during which workers suffering from serious injury or illness would be able to return to their jobs without fear of losing their positions from 12 weeks to 52 weeks. If passed or adopted by the government, this bill would ensure that Canadians suffering from serious illness or injury would have some peace of mind during their recovery period. It will increase the likelihood that they would be able to rejoin the workforce in the same capacities and positions they held before being forced to leave.

This is the fair and right thing to do. I hope the minister will agree and support this legislation.

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**WAYS AND MEANS**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I would ask for unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, on Monday, October 3, 2011, following the tabling of a notice of ways and means motion relating to the second Budget Implementation Bill, the said ways and means motion be deemed moved and a recorded division be deemed demanded and deferred to the expiry of time provided for Government Orders that day.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have unanimous consent to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[English]

**LOBBYING ACT**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics be the committee designated for the purpose of section 14.1 of the Lobbying Act.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House for this motion as well?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.



*Routine Proceedings*

## SICKLE CELL DISEASE

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to propose the following motion: That the provisions of Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts respecting the transfer of prisoners and consisting of clause 135 do compose Bill C-10B; that the remaining provisions in Bill C-10 do compose Bill C-10A; that the law clerk and parliamentary counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary; that Bill C-10A and Bill C-10B be reprinted; and that Bill C-10B be deemed to have been read the first time and printed, deemed read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment and deemed read the third time and passed.

[Translation]

We are moving this motion because we can take practical measures for the aspects of the bill that are supported by Canadians.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Ottawa Centre have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** There is no consent.

\* \* \*

● (1525)

## PETITIONS

### GEORGETOWN SOUTH CORRIDOR

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, diesel exhaust is a known danger to public health and is linked to cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancers and premature death. Diesel exhaust poses an especially potent danger to children and the elderly. Diesel is harmful to the environment and contributes to climate change.

Metrolinx is planning an eightfold expansion in diesel rail traffic from 50 trains per day to upwards of 400 trains per day in the Georgetown south corridor, which cuts through the west end neighbourhoods of Toronto, including my riding of Davenport. This expansion would make this the busiest diesel rail corridor on the planet.

There are 250,000 people who live within one kilometre of this line and 30,000 children who attend one or more of the 200 schools near the tracks. Therefore, the undersigned call upon the Government of Canada to act now to ensure that the rail expansion in the Georgetown south corridor, including the airport rail link, be electrified from the outset, and that there be no further expenditure on diesel technology.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition regarding sickle cell disease and thalassemic disorders.

Sickle cell disease affects blood cells, which carry oxygen throughout our bodies. In sickle cell disease, red blood cells harden into long slivers that block veins and arteries, causing injury to blood vessels of organs, including the brain and the lungs. About 10% of children develop strokes. Children with sickle cell are also extremely vulnerable to infection and have periodic health crises that cause terrible pain and difficulty in breathing. The lifespan of persons with sickle cell disease can be reduced by as much as 30 years.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to adopt Bill C-221, An Act respecting a Comprehensive National Strategy for Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassemic Disorders.

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition for a number of residents in my riding of Langley.

There are a number of severe, potentially life-threatening conditions that do not qualify for disability programs because they are not necessarily permanent or because of waiting lists for surgeries, which lengthen the recovery time.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to adopt legislation to provide additional medical EI benefits for people who find themselves in such conditions, benefits at least equal to maternity EI benefits.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present.

First, petitioners say that child care is often not accessible or affordable for Canadian families and is often of uncertain quality. Child care creates jobs, makes Canada more competitive, helps achieve women's equality, builds local economies and is recognized as a human right.

The petitioners call on the House to legislate the right to universal access to child care and to provide multi-year funding to provincial and territorial governments to build a national system of affordable, high-quality, public and not-for-profit early childhood education and care that is accessible to all children.

The federal government must establish funding criteria and reporting mechanisms that ensure accountability for how the provinces and territories use federal funding to ensure quality, accessibility, universality and accountability and that acknowledge Quebec's right to develop social programs with adequate compensation from the federal government.

*Speaker's Ruling*

## CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with the CBC.

The petitioners say they love the CBC and call on the Prime Minister to reaffirm the importance of the national public broadcaster.

Further, they call on the Prime Minister to provide the CBC with adequate financing by raising the CBC's parliamentary grant from the current levels to \$40 for every citizen, in keeping with the recent recommendations of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

## SISTERS IN SPIRIT

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the last petition is about the Stolen Sisters.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to ensure that the Native Women's Association of Canada receives sufficient funding to continue its important work of protecting women through its Sisters in Spirit initiative and to invest in the initiatives recommended by NWAC to help prevent more women from disappearing.

That is especially useful in light of the Walk for Justice that happened on Parliament Hill last week.

## CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I bring forward a petition from prairie farmers. It asks for support for farmers in western Canada by allowing them to determine themselves the future need and role of the Canadian Wheat Board and allow for a plebiscite on the future of the CWB.

As we all know, there was a plebiscite in which in excess of tens of thousands of prairie grain wheat farmers gave a very strong message that they tried to get to the Government of Canada to retain the Canadian Wheat Board. The petitioners are challenging the government to respect the will of the tens of thousands of prairie grain farmers and allow the Canadian Wheat Board to stay in place as is. They are requesting, in essence, that the government to respect those wishes.

I share in those concerns and would ask the government to do likewise.

● (1530)

**The Speaker:** I see the hon. member for Davenport is rising. He has already presented a petition. It is the custom of the House that if a member has more than one petition, they should be done at the same time.

Is there unanimous consent of the House to allow the member for Davenport to present an additional petition?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the undersigned of this petition call upon the government to maintain the integrity of Canada Post as a public corporation and to affirm its

commitment to the creation and protection of good jobs for all Canadians, young and old.

\* \* \*

## 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.

\* \* \*

## PRIVILEGE

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROCUREMENT CONCERNING CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 19, 2011, by the member for Malpeque concerning a notice of proposed procurement in respect of the Canadian Wheat Board.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the member for having raised this matter, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the members for Winnipeg Centre and Winnipeg North, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board for their interventions.

[*English*]

Before reviewing the arguments in the case before us, it might be useful to offer members a short explanation of what constitutes a contempt of the House. Whereas the privileges that extend to members individually and to the House as a collectivity are finite and can be categorized, contempts cannot be enumerated or categorized.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, at pages 82 and 83, notes that the House claims the right to punish, as a contempt, actions which are not specific breaches of privilege, but which tend to impede the House or its members in the performance of their functions or are offences against the authority or dignity of the House. While all breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege and the House of Commons enjoys a very wide latitude in maintaining its dignity and authority through the exercise of its contempt power.

[*Translation*]

As noted on page 85 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*:

By far, most of the cases of privilege raised in the House relate to matters of contempt challenging the perceived authority and dignity of Parliament and its members.

*Government Orders**[English]*

In the present case, the member for Malpeque has alleged that a contempt of the House has arisen from “the presumption that the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, a procedure which can only be sanctioned by an act of Parliament, will in fact occur”. This presumption, he maintains, is evidenced by a direct reference in the notice of proposed procurement for a contract posted on the MERX Canadian Public Tenders website on August 11, 2011. To support his contention, the member for Malpeque has pointed to a statement in the notice that reads as follows:

The purpose of the audit is to provide reasonable assurance of the total financial impact of the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the dissolution or winding up of the CWB after the final pooling periods (expected to be July 31, 2012).

In his view, the posting of this notice constitutes contempt since no legislation has been tabled, let alone passed, regarding the winding up of the Canadian Wheat Board.

*[Translation]*

The parliamentary secretary pointed out that contrary to the assertion of the member for Malpeque, the very fact that no legislation had yet been introduced concerning the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, and that there had not been any public advertising stating when such legislation would be introduced or passed was proof enough that the government was not presuming that Parliament would take a particular decision in relation to the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

*[English]*

Rather, he explained, the government had simply issued a notice of procurement asking interested and qualified suppliers to provide the government with audit information regarding the financial impact of the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, if that were to occur based on certain assumptions.

In his submission, the member for Malpeque quoted from a number of rulings by my predecessors, Speakers Fraser, Parent and Milliken, pertaining to the issuance of government advertisements containing language that was seen to presume on decisions that Parliament had yet to make. The Chair has reviewed those rulings and understands why the member for Malpeque has used them in his arguments before the House. There is no doubt that they deal with the principle the member feels has been offended in this case. A close reading of the circumstances in each of the cases cited shows, however, that this particular case is not quite as analogous as the member has suggested. For example, in the case of the decision by Mr. Speaker Fraser, much of the controversy surrounded government advertisements that clearly stated a date when the then proposed new GST would come into effect. In addition, it should be noted that the MERX document now at issue was not publicized widely in the same manner as the 1989 GST advertisements.

In this case, the Chair has closely examined the wording of the notice of proposed procurement and has found no reference at all to a date by which the Canadian Wheat Board Act will be repealed. Instead, as the parliamentary secretary has pointed out, the notice requests specific audit information regarding the financial impact of the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, if such a repeal occurs, and proposes certain assumptions on which to base the calculation of that impact. One of these assumptions is that the final pool period is

expected to be July 31, 2012. In the opinion of the Chair, the language is not absolute. The member for Malpeque has also quoted from the terms of reference of a task force the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has established. Although the Chair has not seen this document, the parts quoted by the member for Malpeque appear to use similar language.

The notice itself presents a hypothetical scenario. It does not foresee a specific timetable for legislative action, let alone presume the outcome of such action. As I see it, the notice and task force terms of reference form part of a planning process that might be expected in contemplating the possibility of the repeal of the Canadian Wheat Board Act. I know the member for Malpeque does not expect the Chair to monitor all internal processes undertaken by the government as part of its preparatory work in advance of proposing legislative measures to the House. Accordingly, I cannot agree with the hon. member for Malpeque's statement that “The government presumes that the act has been repealed, which in fact it has not”. I see no evidence of such a presumption.

● (1535)

*[Translation]*

In the present instance, I do not believe that the wording of the text of the notice of procurement posted on the MERX site is ambiguous: rather, in my view, it presents a hypothetical case and seeks information on the impact of such a scenario. The Chair cannot find therein a challenge to the authority or dignity of the House or its members, or the primacy of Parliament.

*[English]*

Therefore, I must conclude that the case does not constitute a contempt of the House and there is no prima facie case of privilege.

*[Translation]*

I thank all members for their attention.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

*[Translation]*

### SAFE STREETS AND COMMUNITIES ACT

The House resumed from September 27 consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to add a few more comments.

Yesterday, I closed by asking about a nonsensical contradiction: how do we show respect for victims, by creating the necessary conditions to produce more victims in the coming years? I would like to explain a few other things that do not make sense before leaving the House today—

*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. It seems that there are problems with the interpretation. Is it fixed now? Okay.

The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup may resume.

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to address the communities that may be tempted to support this bill thinking that a prison expansion in their area would be a good thing. The expansion of our prisons should never be considered anything other than a collective failure. Let us not forget that. Having more citizens in prison must be considered a definite sign of the failure of our training programs and the failure of our economic system to create jobs. Prisoners are not a natural resource that help the development of a region in which there is a prison. Let us always keep this perspective in mind when making these collective choices.

Another thing related to this bill that does not make sense is the fact that it affects the right of judges to simply do their work, exercising their right to judge. This is an ideological blunder. It is something that leads us to a sort of limitation on what the law should be and deprives judges of their opportunity to think. What will happen if we tell a judge that the theft of an apple is punishable by a minimum sentence of one day in prison? A judge's job is to determine whether the apple was stolen simply as mischief or whether it was stolen to feed a starving child. Any judge who does his or her work properly would not impose the same sentence in these two cases.

The government's ideological leaning is a very bad thing and it is depriving judges of their right to simply do their job. That is why the Canadian Bar Association and the Barreau du Québec are concerned about this bill and even blatantly opposed to it.

There is an important point here. This bill does not make any sense. How can judges work with a law that would lead them to impose sentences on small-time drug dealers that are twice as long as the sentences imposed on those who sexually abuse minors? That is what the bill before us is proposing.

Another thing that does not make sense is how Canadians' right to debate is being affected. By combining all these bills, the government is manipulating the public debate. The members opposite can be sure that Canadians will not be fooled. The right to a pardon is being questioned. If someone says that it is important to retain the right to a pardon, it does not mean that they support pedophilia. The two things are unrelated. The government is manipulating the debate and should apologize for insulting Canadians' intelligence.

Therefore, we have a very simple choice to make. The government is moving towards a very repressive system. I will go back to the example I began giving yesterday of the movie, *A Clockwork Orange*. In this very popular movie, young people who are discovering their leadership qualities live in such a repressive society that, to be noticed, they have no other choice but to become delinquents. The more repressive the society becomes, the more that is the choice facing these future potential young leaders: to be noticed, they must be delinquents in a repressive system.

At the other end of the spectrum, another very popular movie, *Mr. Holland's Opus*, is about a high school music teacher who fights

cuts to his budget for clarinets, saxophones and drums, and helps young future leaders to develop.

This government is ramming a choice about our society down our throats. It does not want to use any part of the \$5 billion of public money to ensure that a talented young 13-year-old girl somewhere in Canada has the clarinet that will help her to develop as a citizen, or that young people who are members of a theatre group have the money to go on a provincial tour. It has decided to invest such a huge amount in repression that there will not be enough money for education, extracurricular activities or rehabilitation that would simply lead to a lower crime rate this year, next year and for decades to come. This is a social choice that is being rammed down our throats. Canadians are not fooled and it is really a very bad choice.

• (1540)

[*English*]

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in listening to the member, I wonder if he had an opportunity to read part of the legislation. It would appear that he would have Canadians believe that an innocent 13 year old is growing five pot plants in his basement for his buddies whose parents will not let them smoke dope.

Has he read the parts in there where the aggravating circumstances actually kick in such as where violence has been used in selling drugs, where it is used in prisons, where it is used by abusive positions in authority, where weapons are involved? These are serious drug offences. Did the member read those aggravating circumstances?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Madam Speaker, our colleagues from the government keep bringing up these extreme examples. Yet the bill sets out minimum sentences for minor crimes. In Quebec in particular, efforts are very focused on rehabilitating youth. In the 1980s, I had the misfortune of living in an area with a relatively high crime rate. The crime rate has dropped; rehabilitation works.

They always talk about horrific crimes like sexual abuse against a minor that involves a weapon. We completely agree that the law needs to crack down on serious crimes and sexual offences against children. We are not questioning that. It is the other part of Bill C-10, which sets out minimum sentences for minor crimes, that we do not agree with.

• (1545)

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as my colleague will know, the inclusion of so many new mandatory minimum sentences in the act removes the incentive for defendants in our court systems to reach a plea of guilty.

Has my colleague seen anything in Bill C-10 that will relieve or even mitigate the added congestion and delays in our court system that will be caused by forcing so many defendants to trial?

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Madam Speaker, I have seen nothing in the bill that would relieve the congestion for those involved in the legal process. This is an important aspect to consider and it would be respectful of everyone, including victims. As long as this is not resolved, and the legal system cannot handle the overload, the victims also suffer as they wait for the outcome of legal proceedings. My colleague brought up an excellent point. The bill tabled by our colleagues on the other side makes absolutely no mention of this.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Conservative member of Parliament posed a question, asking “Have you read?”

I have a similar “have you read” question. This came from the *Winnipeg Free Press*. It was actually a columnist from Vancouver who had written it. The headline reads: “The Prime Minister gets tougher on pot growers than child rapists”.

I would ask if the member has read this in the article:

A pedophile who gets a child to watch pornography with him, or a pervert exposing himself to kids at a playground, would receive a minimum 90-day sentence, half the term of a man convicted of growing six pot plants in his own home.

I am not sure if the member read it. I believe it to be true. Would the member agree that this is a true assessment that was written not by a member of Parliament but a columnist from Vancouver?

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, I did not completely follow. I was asked to comment on this journalist's column. We are talking about a bill that sets out more severe penalties for certain minor drug production cases than some other cases. I want to make something clear. I am the father of three young children, and I would immediately agree to crack down more severely on any crime related to pedophilia. The rest of the bill is not balanced. The fact that a small producer would have a sentence twice that of someone who sexually abused a minor is simply unacceptable. I hope that is what my colleague was asking.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Madam Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion: That the provisions of Bill C-10, An Act to enact the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other Acts with respect to the youth criminal justice system, and consisting of clauses 169, 174 and 186, do compose Bill C-10B; that the remaining provisions of Bill C-10 do compose Bill C-10A; that the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary. That Bill C-10A and Bill C-10B be reprinted; and that Bill C-10B be deemed to have been read the first time and be printed, deemed read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment and deemed read the third time and passed.

• (1550)

[English]

There are two parts to the bill. One is with regard to the young offenders part of the bill. It implements recommendations that we received from a number of the provinces as well as prohibiting the housing of young offenders with adults. That is one part.

The second part is with regard to the former Pardons Act, which would allow for the extension of the length of time that a person would have to wait to get a pardon. It is a principled stance on our part. It is a practical approach to resolving issues that are of unanimous consent, I believe, within the House.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to table this motion?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is no unanimous consent.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Brampton West.

[English]

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Brampton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the second reading debate on Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act.

The bill would fulfill the government's commitment in the June 2011 Speech from the Throne to bundle and quickly reintroduce crime bills that died on the order paper when Parliament was dissolved for the general election.

Integral to this commitment, as articulated in the Speech from the Throne, are two key statements that I want to quote because I think they give voice to what all Canadians firmly believe.

First:

The Government of Canada has no more fundamental duty than to protect the personal safety of our citizens and defend against threats to our national security.

Second:

Our government has always believed the interests of law-abiding citizens should be placed ahead of those of criminals. Canadians who are victimized or threatened by crime deserve their government's support and protection—

In my view, this precisely characterizes Bill C-10. It packages nine former bills that, collectively, recognize and seek to protect our vulnerabilities; for example, children's vulnerability to being preyed upon by adult sexual predators, foreign workers' vulnerability to being exploited by unscrupulous Canadian employers, and our collective vulnerability to suffering the harms that go hand in hand with serious drug crimes, such as drug trafficking, production and acts of terrorism.

Knowing this, and knowing as well that many of these reforms have been previously debated, studied and passed by at least one chamber, there is no reason not to support Bill C-10 in this Parliament.

Bill C-10 is divided into five parts.

*Government Orders*

Part 1 proposes to deter terrorism by supporting victims. It would create a new cause of action for victims of terrorism to enable them to sue not only the perpetrators of terrorism but all those who support terrorism, including listed foreign states, for loss or damage that occurred as a result of an act of terrorism or omission committed anywhere in the world on or after January 1, 1985.

The State Immunity Act would be amended to remove immunity from those states that the government has listed as supporters of terrorism. These amendments were previously proposed and passed by the Senate in the form of Bill S-7, justice for victims of terrorism act, in the previous session of Parliament. They are reintroduced in Bill C-10, with technical changes to correct grammatical and cross-reference errors.

Part 2 proposes to strengthen our existing responses to child exploitation and serious drug crimes, as well as serious violent and property crimes. It would better protect children against sexual abuse in several ways, including by uniformly and strongly condemning all forms of child sex abuse through the imposition of newer and higher mandatory minimum penalties, as well as creating new core powers to impose conditions to prevent suspected or convicted child sex offenders from engaging in conduct that could facilitate or further their sexual offences against children.

These reforms are the same as they were in former Bill C-54, protecting children from sexual predators act, with the addition of proposed increases to the maximum penalty for four offences and corresponding increases in their mandatory minimum penalties to better reflect the particularly heinous nature of these offences.

Part 2 also proposes to specify that conditional sentences of imprisonment, often referred to as house arrest, are never available for offences punishable by a maximum of 14 years or life, for offences prosecuted by indictment and punishable by a maximum penalty of 10 years that result in bodily harm, trafficking and production of drugs or that involve the use of a weapon, or for listed serious property and violent offences punishable by a maximum penalty of 10 years that are prosecuted by indictment.

These reforms were previously proposed in former Bill C-16, ending house arrest for property and other serious crimes by serious violent offenders act which had received second reading in this House and was referred to the justice committee when it died on the order paper.

It is in the same form as before with, again, a few technical changes that are consistent with the objectives of the bill as was originally introduced.

Part 2 also proposes to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to impose mandatory minimum sentences for serious offences involving production and/or possession for the purposes of trafficking and/or importing and exporting and/or possession for the purpose of exporting Schedule I drugs, such as heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine, and Schedule II drugs, such as marijuana.

• (1555)

These mandatory minimum penalties would be imposed where there is an aggravating factor, including where the production of the drug constituted a potential security, health or safety hazard, or the offence was committed in or near a school.

This is the fourth time that these amendments have been introduced. They are in the same form as they were the last time when they were passed by the Senate as former Bill S-10, Penalties for Organized Drug Crime Act, in the previous Parliament.

Part 3 proposes numerous post-sentencing reforms to better support victims and to increase offender accountability and management. Specifically, it reintroduces reforms previously contained in three bills from the previous Parliament: Bill C-39, Ending Early Release for Criminals and Increasing Offender Accountability Act; Bill C-5, Keeping Canadians Safe (International Transfer of Offenders) Act; and Bill C-23B, An Act to amend the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Bill C-10 reintroduces these reforms with some technical changes.

Part 4 reintroduces much needed reforms to the Youth Criminal Justice Act to better deal with violent and repeat young offenders. Part 4 includes reforms that would ensure the protection of the public is always considered a principle in dealing with young offenders and that will make it easier to detain youth charged with serious offences pending trial.

These reforms were also previously proposed in former Bill C-4, Sébastien's Law (Protecting the Public from Violent Young Offenders).

Part 5 proposes amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to better protect foreign workers against abuse and exploitation. Their reintroduction in Bill C-10 reflects the fifth time that these reforms have been before Parliament, with the last version being former Bill C-56, Preventing the Trafficking, Abuse and Exploitation of Vulnerable Immigrants Act.

In short, Bill C-10 proposes many needed and welcome reforms to safeguard Canadians. Many have already been supported in the previous Parliament and Canadians are again expecting us to support them in this Parliament.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Mr. Peter Blaikie, who is a very distinguished Canadian lawyer and founder of the law firm Heenan Blaikie in Montreal and a former president of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, wrote an article earlier this year in August. He said:

More specifically, mandatory minimum sentences, by imposing a straitjacket on judges, limit their ability to differentiate as regards the same offence with respect to what might be completely different circumstances. Judges are human and might on occasion err; however, they are highly educated and highly trained, far better equipped to determine appropriate sentences than our members of Parliament.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he feels that he knows better than people who are trained in that way or better than Peter Blaikie.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, I fundamentally disagree with the premise that our justice initiatives are not in the best interests of Canadians. My friend can quote whoever he wants to quote but I will quote from people who matter. These are victims of crime. It reads:

The Prime Minister is to be lauded for following through on his 2008 and 2011 election platform promises to bring this measure forward. Having just marked the tenth anniversary of that terrible day, I believe this decennial year is a truly appropriate time to enact this measure which will help frame this government's legacy as an unyielding foe to terror and a stalwart advocate of its victims.

This was said by C-CAT co-founder Maureen Basnicki, whose husband was murdered on 9/11. These are the people for whom we are enacting this legislation. We will stand up for victims of crime. I do not understand why the members opposite want to stand and quote people who have no interest in talking about this crime agenda.

• (1600)

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, that is an interesting comment. I wonder if the member could actually speak up for the disproportionate numbers of aboriginal peoples who are incarcerated.

An article in the *Toronto Star* on February 20, indicated that there was a bleak link between poverty and incarceration. While aboriginals, many mired in poverty, represent 4% of Canada's population, they make up almost 20% of those in federal prisons.

I could, of course, quote from any number of articles that talk about the importance of preventive programs and working to keep people out of the prison population, and that includes adequate housing, health care, education, drinking water and the list goes on and on.

I wonder if the member could comment about his government's plans to do something about prevention.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague's question was not particularly what I was talking about. We are talking about introducing legislation to protect Canadians from crime and to support victims of crime.

We do have an aboriginal justice strategy in place that we are working on and working very hard to implement.

However, I want to talk to the people who support this legislation. I will give the House another quote:

Whether it is by keeping dealers and producers off the streets and out of business, or by serving as a deterrent to potential dealers, this proposed legislation will help our members in doing their jobs and keeping our communities safe. In simple terms, keep these criminals in jail longer, and you take away their opportunity to traffic in drugs.

Who said that? It was President Tom Stamatakis of the Canadian Police Association. That is who we are standing up for and we are thrilled to have his support.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the hon. member's thoughts on the war on drugs. In the United States, cracking down on the traffickers is a total failure: there have never been more drugs around.

How can the hon. member claim that the way to deal with the traffickers is to impose harsher sentences, when that approach has failed everywhere else? I do not understand his logic.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, my friend is talking about what has happened in the United States. It is interesting that whenever members opposite want to talk about our legislation, they just blindly suggest that we are following the American model.

I have another quote for the House:

Mandatory minimum sentences for serious drug crimes will help in our fight against organized crime in the trafficking and production of drugs.

...keep these criminals in jail longer, and you take away their opportunity to traffic in drugs.

Who said that? That was said Charles Morny, president of the Canadian Police Association October, 2010.

Those are the kinds of people whose support we are happy to have. The members opposite can quote whoever they want but we are standing up for Canadians and police forces.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to today's debate on Bill C-10, which deals with crime.

[*English*]

I will first look at the context in which this bill is being introduced.

I will look at the crime rates. What is happening with the crime rates? They are dropping, and they have been dropping for a long time, as a matter of fact.

What is happening with the violent crime rates? They are also dropping and they have been dropping for a long time.

What about the intensity of crime? That has also been dropping.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner :** Unemployment rates are going up.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Meanwhile unemployment rates, as my colleague, the member for Cape Breton—Canso, points out, have been going up.

On July 21 of this year, Statistics Canada released this information stating:

The national crime rate has been falling steadily for the past 20 years and is now at its lowest level since 1973.

In that circumstance, what might the government invest in? What would it decide to put its resources into? It could put its resources into health, but it is not doing that. It could put the money into education, but we are not seeing that. It could put an emphasis on putting funds into innovation to make our economy strong, but we do not see it. It could put funding into crime prevention.

However, what the government does instead is it puts a number in the window on a budget and says that it will spend this much on crime prevention and ends up spending far less in reality. That is where the government's priorities are.

*Government Orders*

We know the government is not interested in the crime rates in the same way that it is not interested in data or scientific information when it comes to the census, which we all saw what happened there, when it comes to climate change and in so many other areas. In fact, the government's attitude is that it wants Canadians to be very afraid and to believe they need this kind of an agenda.

Of course we should be striving to lower crime rates because that is a good thing, and it is good that it has been happening, but is building more prisons the answer? The government is already spending a lot more money on programs that do not work and a lot more money on prisons.

In fact, let us compare what has happened in the last few years. In 2005-06, the last year of the Liberal government, \$1.6 billion were spent on the correctional service. By 2011-12, this year, that number has gone up from \$1.6 billion to \$2.98 billion, an increase of 86%. The forecast that we have already seen, and there is more coming because of this bill, is that by 2013-14, it will be \$3.15 billion, an increase of over 100%. That is just based on the changes that have been made so far, not including what is in this bill.

This bill is an amalgamation of nine previous bills, many of which this party previously offered to fast-track and move forward. However, the government did not want to do that. It wanted to play games. In fact, some of the bills were brought in and then it prorogued Parliament and tried to blame the other parties for not moving the bills forward. What a ridiculous strategy.

Meanwhile, we have the work of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, a person who was hand-picked by the Prime Minister, chosen by the government, selected to do the job, an important job, of assisting members of Parliament in assessing bills being brought forward, assessing what the government is telling us about finances, and telling us whether it is accurate or not.

The fact is that the Parliamentary Budget Officer told us that just one of the government bills would add \$5 billion to the taxpayers' burden. That is the one bill that he could information from the government about. It would not give him information about the other bills.

We need to remember that we are talking about this bill amalgamating nine bills entirely, not just one. We are hearing that will cost, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, somewhere between \$10 billion and \$15 billion, although it is difficult to say since the government will not share information.

This is, after all, the biggest spending government in Canadian history. This is the government that has increased spending since it came into office by 35%. It increased spending by 18% in its first three years. That was before the recession began.

Members on this side will recall that the recession did not start until the fall of 2008. However, in April and May 2008, the government was already in deficit because of its high spending.

• (1605)

That is an important point. The money was spent for gazeboes, steamboats and \$90,000 a day consultants to do the jobs of highly paid, highly skilled civil servants.

**Mr. Ryan Leef:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, this debate is on Bill C-10. We have now had about four minutes on the state of our economy and what a great job the Liberal government was doing years ago. Could we get this back on track?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sure the hon. member will be making his point.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, that is very timely. I have finished the part of my speech regarding the context of this legislation, the finances of the country, and where the Conservative government chooses to spend money.

Yesterday, an article in the *Globe and Mail* stated:

Correctional Services Canada's overall budget for the current fiscal year of 2011-12 is projected to be \$514.2-million, or 20.8 per cent, higher than the year before.

It is clearly higher than the minister's estimates.

What do we have after six years of this kind of agenda from the government? We have overcrowded prisons. What is the result? The result is more crime in prisons. Corrections Canada officials who appeared before the government operations committee on which I was sitting last spring told us about the problems caused by double-bunking in their facilities and how it is creating a more dangerous work environment for them. We see this in places like the Dartmouth jail in my province of Nova Scotia. As we have seen in other places, the result of this is more reoffending.

The bills the government has already passed are imposing costs on the provinces as well. That is an important point. They have to build more correctional centres. They are seeing fewer plea bargains because of mandatory minimum sentences. Defence lawyers are not willing to bargain because there is nothing to bargain for. They cannot bargain down a minimum sentence. We are seeing more trials as a result, more backlogs and longer pretrial remands. Most of these costs are falling on the provinces.

For example, there is a section in Bill C-10 that would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. In that part of the bill, 16 minimum mandatory sentences have been created, and the maximum of two years less a day or less is left alone. In other words, that person stays in provincial custody. The cost of these additional sentences and the additional number of people who will be imprisoned is on the province.

Those are the facts. That is important data. However, the government is not interested in that kind of information.

Under this legislation, if a young person at university has a prescription for Tylenol 3 and he or she passes one of those pills to a sick friend, that young person could go to jail for two years.



*Government Orders*

Where is the evidence to show that shovelling billions of dollars into the prison system would make us safer? Safer streets are mentioned in the bill's title. Therefore, that should be the number one question. Would this legislation make our streets safer? All the evidence indicates no.

The philosopher George Santayana once said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to fulfill it.

Let us look at what has happened elsewhere in the past.

The U.S. is the best example of a place with high incarceration rates. These methods have been tried and have proven to be disastrous there. Its prisons are collapsing under their own weight. The U.S. incarceration rate is now 700% higher per capita than Canada's. Its violent crime rates are far higher than Canada's. For every 100,000 Canadians, Canada has had two murders, whereas the U.S. has had five. For every 100,000 Canadians, Canada has had 89 robberies and the U.S. has had 145.

As my time is running out, I will wind up by urging members to vote against this legislation.

• (1610)

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened to my friend with interest. The members on that side put a lot of stock on the Parliamentary Budget Officer. That is fine.

However, a study came out today showing that out of 15 particular cases where the PBO had rendered an opinion, he was right four times. When the Minister of Finance or someone on this side of the House rendered an opinion they were right nine times. They agreed on two of them. I throw that out as an observation.

There was a lot of rhetoric from those members stating that anyone who grows six pot plants would be thrown into jail when in fact that is not what the legislation says. Would the member not admit that who we are really after are the people who grow it to traffic and export it? Would the member at least admit that is actually the intent of the bill?

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, first let me speak about the challenges the Parliamentary Budget Officer faces. He was appointed by the government and given the job of reporting to Parliament and advising us as parliamentarians so we can do our constitutional job of voting on spending. However, the government refuses to give that person the tools and information he needs to do his job.

Now government members are complaining that he is not doing a good enough job when they will not give him the information to do it. I think it was Yeltsin who said that he wished he had just one economist instead of 10,000 because they all have different views. Because economists have different views, they will have different outcomes. However, I think we can recognize that when it comes to the cost of the bills the government has been wrong. The numbers show that already. The numbers are out to lunch. They are way over what had been projected.

When it comes to the government's intention, the fact is that members on this side of the House have offered a number of times to fast track the parts of the bill that we agree with. However, there are

other parts that are very problematic and the government fails to recognize that.

• (1615)

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Madam Speaker, at the beginning of my colleague's speech he spoke about the declining statistical trends in the crime rate. I take the point about the absurdity of this bill in the context of declining crime rates. However, it seems to me too that good policy is good policy and good legislation is good legislation.

I wonder if the member would feel any differently about the contents of this bill were crime rates actually rising.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, it is important to examine the context of what the government is doing in the situation and where it is putting its priorities. The member makes an excellent point as to whether we would feel differently if crime rates were rising. It makes sense to focus on and choose to invest particular attention in this area. We want to see a reduction in crime rates. However, that is happening already.

The question is not so much whether one would use these measures. One could invest in other ways. In fact, the measures in this bill are not well calculated toward reducing crime. In the U.S. it has resulted in an increase in crime and more victims. How do we improve the situation for victims if there are more of them due to more crime and a silly agenda that does not work?

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, earlier the member for Halifax West put a question relating to Peter Blaikie in reference to Maureen Basnicki's gratitude for the bill. As a member of Parliament, I would also vote for the portion of this bill relating to terrorism if it were made separate. I wonder if the member for Halifax West feels the same way. Maureen Basnicki's quote had nothing to do with the question raised.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, I do not recall quoting Madam Basnicki. It is not a name that I have read. Perhaps someone else did. I gather the Conservative side quoted her. I would have to review her words to determine whether I would agree. It sounds as though I might, but I would have to look at that.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the second reading debate on Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act

Bill C-10 is a comprehensive bill that brings together reforms proposed from nine bills that were before the previous Parliament. The short title of the bill, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, reflects the overall intent of this comprehensive legislation. It seeks to safeguard Canadians and Canadian communities from coast to coast to coast. This is such a fundamental principle and objective. To my mind, this objective should be unanimously supported by all parliamentarians in all instances and in all cases. While I appreciate there are many issues on which we as lawmakers may reasonably disagree the safety and security of Canadians, including that of vulnerable children, should never be one such issue.

Let us consider this comprehensive bill is. It proposes amendments that generally seek to do the following:

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First, Bill C-10, through part 2, proposes to better protect children and youth from sexual predators. These reforms were previously proposed in former Bill C-54 in the last Parliament, the Protecting Children from Sexual Predators Act.

Specifically, these amendments would propose new and higher mandatory minimum penalties to ensure that all sexual offences involving child victims are consistently and strongly condemned. They would create two new offences to target preparatory conduct to the commission of a sexual offence against a child. They would also enable courts to impose conditions on suspected or convicted child sex offenders to prevent them from engaging in conduct that could lead to their committing another sexual offence against a child.

Second, through part 2, Bill C-10 proposes to increase penalties by imposing mandatory minimum penalties when specified aggravated factors are present for serious drug offences. Those offences would be the production, trafficking, possession for the purpose of trafficking, importing and exporting, possession for the purpose of exporting of schedule 1 drugs such as heroine, cocaine, methamphetamine, and schedule 2 drugs such as marijuana.

These offences often involve organized crime, including gang warfare over turf, which in turn brings its own disastrous impact on Canadian communities. They also enable and feed drug abuse, the negative impact of which is not only felt by the addicted individual but also by the family of that addict, as well as by the Canadian health system and the economy.

These reforms were previously proposed and passed by the Senate in former Bill S-10, the Penalties for Organized Drug Crime Act.

Third, part 2 of the bill includes what was previously proposed in former Bill C-16, the Ending House Arrest for Property and Other Serious Crimes by Serious and Violent Offenders Act to end house arrest for serious crimes.

Under these reforms offences carrying a maximum penalty of 14 years, as well as serious offences that are punishable by 10 years or more and prosecuted by indictment, that result in bodily harm, or the import or export, trafficking and production of drugs, or that involve the use of a weapon, or that is specifically identified, would never be eligible to receive a conditional sentence of imprisonment.

Fourth, Bill C-10, through part 4, proposes to protect the public from violent and repeat young offenders. These amendments include: recognizing the protection of society as a principle in the Youth Criminal Justice Act; making it easier to detain youths charged with serious offences pending trial; requiring the courts to consider adult sentences for the most serious and violent cases; and, requiring the police to keep records of extrajudicial measures.

These reforms were previously proposed in former Bill C-4, Sébastien's law and respond to the Supreme Court of Canada 2008 judgment in *Regina v. D.B.*, and the 2006 Nova Scotia report of the Nunn commission of inquiry "Spiralling Out of Control, Lessons Learned From a Boy in Trouble".

Fifth, Bill C-10, through part 3, includes proposals to replace the word "pardons" with "record suspensions". It would expand the period of ineligibility to apply for a record suspension and proposes to make record suspensions unavailable for certain offences,

including child sexual offences, and for persons who have been convicted of more than three offences prosecuted by indictment and for each of which the individual received a sentence of two years or more.

These reforms were previously proposed in former Bill C-23B, the Eliminating Pardons for Serious Crimes Act.

Sixth, Bill C-10, also through part 3, proposes to codify some additional key factors in deciding whether a Canadian who has been convicted abroad would be granted a transfer back to Canada. These reforms were previously proposed in former Bill C-5, the Keeping Canadians Safe (International Transfer of Offenders) Act.

• (1620)

Seventh, Bill C-10, through part 3, proposes to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to recognize the rights of victims, increase offender accountability and responsibility, and modernize the disciplinary system for inmates. These proposals were previously proposed in former Bill C-39, the Ending Early Release for Criminals and Increasing Offender Accountability Act.

Eighth, Bill C-10, through part 1, seeks to deter terrorism by supporting victims of terrorism. Specifically, these reforms would enable victims of terrorism to sue perpetrators and supporters of terrorism, including listed foreign states, for loss or damage that is incurred as a result of an act of terrorism committed anywhere in the world on or after January 1, 1985. These amendments were previously proposed and passed by the Senate in former Bill S-7, the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act.

Last, Bill C-10, through part 5, proposes amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to protect vulnerable foreign nationals against abuse and exploitation. These amendments were previously proposed in former Bill C-56, the Preventing the Trafficking, Abuse and Exploitation of Vulnerable Immigrants Act.

I have briefly summarized the nine core elements of Bill C-10. All of these proposed amendments seek to better protect Canadians. That is something on which we should all be able to agree. Certainly, we know it is something on which Canadians agree. I call on all members to support the bill at second reading so it can be quickly referred to and studied by the justice committee.

• (1625)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as I listen to the debate on Bill C-10, I am trying to understand the motivation.

*Government Orders*

I listened to the member speak and a question came to my mind regarding the protection of potential refugees against the smugglers. Human smuggling already has the highest penalty. The highest punishment is a life sentence. This bill does not increase that. How will this bill punish smugglers who are engaged in human smuggling?

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Madam Speaker, the bill brings forward a lot of matters. Certainly the human smuggling issue has been troubling this country for a long time. It takes different forms in the exploitation of people smuggled into the country. In many cases it directly affects women who are then forced into the sex trade in Canada. There is a whole raft of issues that certainly dehumanize individuals who are brought here by smugglers. This bill is part of the package to improve the quality of life for people in this country and for those who legitimately come to this country.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, obviously, the government's approach in this bill is similar to its approach if a roof is leaking: it would just put out more buckets. If there is crime in the streets, it will just build more jails. That is the government's approach, rather than trying to fix the roof or trying to address social problems. I certainly think that is a wrong-minded approach.

There are components of this bill that we absolutely agree with and we could support them and unanimously pass them through this House. I am sure they would get support from the NDP as well. Why would the government not allow breaking out from the bill those components that could receive unanimous support?

The contentious aspects, the ones that have not been costed, are the ones that scare the heck out of us. Let us go forward and see a fulsome debate on those particular aspects.

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Madam Speaker, the very first thing I would say to my good friend from Cape Breton—Canso is that his premise is dead wrong.

We believe that if the roof is leaking, we better fix it. His approach might very well be to analyze each drop of water as it comes through the roof.

With all due respect, this is about protecting Canadians. I do not know why members on the other side want to put a price on protecting victims. I recall talking with a victim of a serious crime. That victim was not concerned about the cost. That victim wanted to see justice.

Justice is not done through an open door. When I listen to members on the other side, their solution is to open the doors of all the prisons and that somehow will fix things. The other problem is they want to blame society for the acts of criminals. Quite frankly, there are criminal acts that should be dealt with.

We should move forward on the bill.

• (1630)

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened very carefully to the member opposite. It seems to us on this side of the House that the way to get at crime is to find the roots of crime. We should try to stop crime from happening on the ground floor so that the roof the hon. member mentioned does not leak.

Why does the government not want to look at the fundamental roots of crime: poverty, mental illness and addiction?

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Madam Speaker, quite frankly, part of the member's equation is to blame society. In my involvement in these areas, I have seen families where one child chooses a life of crime and the others do not. It is easy to blame society for these things, but at some point those who commit crimes are going to have to suffer the consequences. Many of them feel they should not suffer those consequences.

We should pass this bill. It is about protecting victims.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. 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 Vancouver Quadra, Veterans; the hon. member for Windsor West, Windsor-Detroit Border Crossing; the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Fisheries and Oceans.

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-10, the government's so-called Safe Streets and Communities Act.

Indeed, of the many ways in which the Conservative government is moving Canada backward, few initiatives do more to achieve this than Bill C-10.

In my riding of Davenport over the last two years, this is one of the issues that has come up most often. There is concern over the government's obsession with spending billions of dollars, and by the way, compelling the provinces to do the same, on a crime bill that will largely not make our streets any safer and will not contribute to building stronger communities.

I live in a riding where in the last two years we have seen schools close, recreation centres close, daycare centres close. Programs to help settle new immigrants have been gutted. Bus routes, used primarily by folks doing shift work, have been cut. Senior services are in dire need of new investments. I live in a city where 70,000 people are on a waiting list for affordable housing.

While the essential services that are needed to create strong, vibrant, safe streets and communities are being choked, the government can find billions upon billions of dollars for an experiment on crime prevention which has failed in every jurisdiction where it has been attempted. It utterly failed, as we know, in the United States.

*Government Orders*

Members should not get me wrong. It is not that people in my riding are not concerned about crime. They are concerned about crime. Indeed they are, but I am reminded of a conversation I had with some residents who were concerned about drug dealers taking over the local park. I am concerned about that too. It was not that they were just concerned about the dealers. To a person, these residents complained not so much that there are not enough prisons to lock the dealers up, but that there are not enough programs for young people to get involved in. With nothing to do and few local job prospects, young people are vulnerable to falling into gang culture and criminal elements. Bill C-10 does not address this fundamental foundational issue around crime prevention.

While I listed all the closures in my riding, and I could list more, there are things that are being built and opened in my riding. In the riding of Davenport there are two brand new police stations being built as we speak. Many are hopeful, as am I, that these new police stations in our neighbourhoods will help with some of the crime issues that people are dealing with, but the problem underlined in my riding is writ large in Bill C-10: there is no balance.

In communities across the country investment in social infrastructure is desperately needed, yet we are told that we are heading into a period of austerity and that there is no money. Well, there is money for some things, but when ideology trumps common sense, we get nasty pieces of legislation like Bill C-10.

Instead of a national affordable housing strategy that would provide a framework to provide stable affordable housing, a key determinant to health and a primary building block for safe communities, the government will spend over \$500 million this year alone on new prison construction. That is the housing strategy for Canada.

While the government squeezes middle and working class families and small businesses, it is happy to spend over \$162,000 on average annually for each new prison cell in this country, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Instead of investing in getting at the roots of poverty, mental illness and addiction, instead of focusing on a comprehensive pan-Canadian job strategy—and rolling over for the oil and gas industry is not a cross-Canada jobs program—the government wants to spend close to \$3 billion a year locking up more people, providing fewer programs to rehabilitate them, all the while draining our public coffers, our precious resources, that could truly create safer streets. Indeed, prison costs are up 86% since the Conservatives took power while the crime rate continues to fall to its lowest level since the 1970s.

• (1635)

The government has racked up the biggest fiscal deficit in the history of Canada. Instead of being smart with taxpayer money, it plays politics and lets its dated right-wing ideology continue to craft bad public policy.

For example, a single new low security cell is going to cost \$260,000 to build. A medium security cell is going to cost \$400,000. A maximum security cell is going to cost \$600,000. For goodness sake, even the annual cost of an inmate in a community correctional centre is now over \$85,000 a year. Does this make fiscal sense?

As the income gap gets wider and wider in our country, the government hectors Canadians about belt-tightening, while it spends and spends on a prison expansion scheme about which both the Canadian Bar Association and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, among many others, have serious concerns.

The government does not actually want to hear what Canadians think about this omnibus bill. If it did, it would not have limited debate on the bill. Bill C-10 packages up nine government bills from the previous Parliament and presents them to the House and to Canadians as one whopping bill. Then it says that it wants us to accept it all without any conversation or debate.

With the motion that passed yesterday morning, Canadians in the House will only be able to debate for a period of less than two hours for each of the nine bills. For a government that was elected to bring more transparency and more accountability to this place, it is in fact bringing less. The action of limiting debate on this huge and outrageously expensive bill is one more example of its lack of transparency.

It is too bad. Canadians deserve to have Bill C-10 aired to its fullest. Experts say that mandatory minimum sentences do not work for reducing drug use, tackling organized crime or making our communities safer. The measures contained in the bill, for example, will not make it easier for law enforcement agencies to get to the organized crime bosses who run the drug trade, who we need to bring in and incarcerate.

One of the most effective ways to promote public safety is the successful rehabilitation and reintegration back into society of offenders. Our federal prison system lacks the programs to deal with this effectively. This legislation does not deal with this issue in any kind of real way.

We do not oppose everything in the bill. As we saw yesterday in the House, my hon. colleague from Windsor—Tecumseh tabled a motion that would have expedited the passing of elements of the bill that were in the last Parliament, known as Bill C-54. This section seeks to protect children from exploitation and sexual abuse. In fact, the government has adopted measures in this section of Bill C-10 put forward by the NDP in private member's bills.

It is too bad that the government would rather play politics than move quickly on parts of the bill that could get unanimous support in this House, like those measures to protect our children. In fact, immediately after voting down the motion that would have sent that part of the bill to the Senate within 48 hours, government members proceeded with statements on the importance of the very measure they had just voted against putting on the fast track.

As I said, there are things in the bill which we do agree with and which we could find common ground with the government on, but it is not really interested in doing that. The government's decision to limit debate heaps a measure of ideological cynicism on to what should be a very thorough, serious examination.

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The bill is too costly and it will not make our streets and communities safer. We on the NDP side of the House have come prepared to work with the government to quickly pass the measures that will protect children and to fix measures that will not work. It is too bad the government wants to play politics and games with the safety of some of the most vulnerable in our society.

• (1640)

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague very carefully. This is what I heard in Calgary Northeast. I directly asked a couple of offenders who had been in jail a couple of times, for a few months each time, one specific question. When I asked them if they had to spend a minimum of two years in jail for the same offence instead of only two months, they both said that they would not have done it. That is the deterrence.

The member talked about the costs and about the debate. First, these bills have been debated in the House extensively in the past. It is so unfortunate that I have not heard a line about supporting the victims.

Why can those members not stop playing politics and do the right thing by standing up for the victims, supporting the bill and making a change for once?

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Madam Speaker, the fact is that 77,000 fewer crimes were reported in 2010 than in 2009. The 2010 crime rates are the lowest since the 1970s, yet the cost of prisons are up 86% since the conservative government took over. This is the new math of this Parliament. Canadians are scratching their heads. We wonder why the government seeks to spend money in such a fashion without fulsome debate in the House on the bill before us.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada's prisons are home to an increasing number of offenders with mental health disorders, ranging from anti-social personality disorder through to schizophrenia, and offenders who may also be addicted to alcohol or drugs. We are seeing criminalization of the mentally ill.

A recent report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator shows that the number of people in federal prisons with mental illnesses has nearly doubled in the past decade, while the incarceration rate has barely budged.

What solutions would the hon. member suggest to treat people with mental illness who run into difficulty with the law, often because of a lack of a national mental health strategy and poorly-funded, disorganized and fragmented community mental health services?

• (1645)

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question and it is true. Law enforcement agencies across Canada have been saying for years that they need the resources to properly deal with the issue of mental health. We see this time and time again, anecdotally across Canada, that when law enforcement have that training, many situations that previously resulted in tragic outcomes now do not.

It is incumbent on us to provide law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to learn more about mental health, to understand

the issue and to understand that this is an illness and not criminal behaviour.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as a father, it is completely unacceptable to me to watch a government that claims to be responsible hide behind pedophilia to say that some aspects of the bill are commendable and that we do not want to support it. That does not work.

Is it acceptable to hide behind one item in order to try to get others passed in such an irresponsible manner?

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Cash:** Madam Speaker, in fact, this is one of the problems we have with the bill. It is a cynical move on the part of the government to hide the problematic parts of the bill inside an omnibus bill so we cannot, as parliamentarians, as representatives of the Canadian public, properly debate them. We all think this is a very serious problem.

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I come from northern Alberta, a very beautiful part of Canada with lush wilderness and five rivers flowing into my community. It is a beautiful place. I have lived there 45 years. During that time I have seen a move from 1,500 people to approximately 100,000 today. That is quite a growth for any community, but during that period of time I also had the opportunity to practise law. I practised several different types of law, including criminal law.

My family has lived in that community in the centre of town for 45 years and during that time period we have seen a tremendous growth in one particular trade. That trade is obvious and seen daily on the streets of downtown Fort McMurray as the drug trade.

I get many calls from constituents in relation to this activity, which carries on during the day. That is why I am so pleased today to rise to speak in support of Bill C-10, which would help those beautiful communities across Canada that have turned into places where drugs are sold openly in public at all times of the day.

This must stop. This is Canada. This is not some third world country. This is Canada where we believe in the rule of law, where we believe in obeying the laws. I am glad to say that Bill C-10 is not just in relation to punishing drug dealers, but also to protect our youth, to protect our country and enact the justice for victims of terrorism act and to amend the State Immunity Act, the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and other acts. We are getting a lot of work done here notwithstanding the NDP's position on the bill.

*Government Orders*

I have received tremendous support, not just from Fort McMurray but from small communities like Slave Lake and High Prairie, which are nestled in a different area of Alberta about five hours by vehicle further south. However, these communities have seen a tremendous increase in plain and obvious drug trafficking as well. They have spoken loudly and clearly that they want this off their streets.

The bill, the safe streets and communities act, responds to and reflects our commitment to reintroduce our law and order agenda legislation to combat crime and terrorism. We hear members on the other side say that we should study it some more. We have studied it and many of the positions that are found in these bills have been Conservative Party policy for many years. They have been thoroughly debated in the House before. Maybe some of the members are new, we understand that, but they have been debated. The people of Canada spoke in the last election. They gave us a clear mandate to move forward with this agenda because they knew that the Liberal Party, which is now pretty much gone except for a few members, had blocked our agenda.

I can hear those members over there talking about standing up—

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

• (1650)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I ask members who do not have the floor to wait until questions and comments.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, just like the Conservatives stand up for victims, you are standing up for me and I appreciate that.

As noted by the Minister of Justice in his speech to the House last week, this bill reflects the strong mandate that Canadians have given us to protect society and ultimately hold criminals responsible for their actions. That does not mean a slap on the wrist. It means time away for the crimes they have committed, proportional, of course, to the crimes they have committed.

Bringing these nine bills together, that died on the order paper in the last Parliament, sends a clear signal to Canadians that we have listened to them, that we are following the mandate they have given us, and we are following through with our commitment. Canadians know that they can count on this government to do exactly that.

We have, through a series of bills and legislative moves, sought to improve public safety and strengthen our justice system since we formed government in 2006. While we have enacted significant criminal law reforms, there is much more to be done. Moving forward on this particular piece of legislation will certainly be a step in the right direction.

However, our work is not done and we look forward to constructive criticism from the opposition. We are sure it will be constructive and we know there will be criticism, but we look for suggestions from them because nothing is perfect. We know that we have to go further to better reflect what Canadians want. That is clearly safety on their streets, to take drug dealers off the streets, and ensure their children can play on the streets.

The suggestion by the opposition that we should somehow cherry pick parts of the bill and fast-track them is not listening to what Canadians said in the last election. They clearly support our law and

order agenda, and the NDP and Liberals should get on board and do exactly that, not just with this bill, as I know the Liberals have said they will support some parts of it, but other bills because clearly Canadians should be the final boss of this place and of us.

As I said, this debate is welcome because we have an opportunity to put in the forefront what we are trying to do for Canadians and that we are listening to them. It is also important to recognize that we have continued this debate time and time again with many of the same people across the way now complaining that we are not having proper discussion.

Clearly, we know that moving forward with this bill would ensure public safety. It would ensure offenders are held more accountable. There are minimum sentences to ensure that happens and so that judges have clear knowledge. I remember when I practised law that I would stand before judges who would say they did not have a clear indication from Parliament here or there, that they did not know which sentence to give, that an offender in a certain case went away for two years and in another case an offender got two months for the same offence, maybe drug trafficking in Vancouver versus Edmonton. That happens. I can assure everyone that happens.

This sends a clear message to judges that the minimal sentences we are passing, with the help of the Liberals, hopefully, and convincing some NDP members about what Canadians want, will actually happen. We are sending clear direction to judges across this country. We want to see this stopped. Judges have asked for direction and I hope they are listening today. They should recognize that Canadians speak to us by electing us and we speak to them through putting laws in place that judges will interpret. Judges will impose the sentences we ask them to because Canadians have clearly told us they want that.

I have heard a good overview of Bill C-10 by many members in the House. I know many have complained it is a bit too large and complicated. I have had an opportunity to sit in on special legislative committees, passing 15 bills in this place through committees, and I do not see any complication. It is plain language and is very clear. It has been before the House in some cases for years and years.

I would suggest it is not too large nor complex. However, if members on the other side have difficulties with particular clauses, I would be happy to go through them with them. I am sure many members in this place, at least on the Conservative side, would be happy to sit down and explain some of the more complex details. Clearly, we have to listen to Canadians and pass these laws, and I am looking for support from the opposition side to do exactly that.

*Government Orders*

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I find the government member's comments to the effect that new members may not be familiar with this omnibus bill somewhat condescending. On the contrary, we are very familiar with it; we are informed. We know that bills of this nature have been introduced in the past, although certain provisions were a little different and several minimum sentences have been added.

Accordingly, when we talk about offender accountability and responsibility regarding drugs, can the member across the floor explain to us on what basis they can say that measures are in place to help offenders? We know that only one in five offenders receives any help in terms of mental health and rehabilitation, and that few of these people get any meaningful help.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question regarding provincial jurisdiction.

I have seen in this place some constructive work by Liberal, Bloc and NDP members on some of our legislation. I can assure the member that we do not believe that this is perfect legislation. It is large and it has been around for a while, but it is not perfect. That is why there have been some changes over the summer. We would ask for her input, and the input of all members, to make it even more perfect. If they see places where we should impose minimum sentences or increase sentences for particularly violent offences or offences against children, I would suggest that the Minister of Justice would be more than happy to have that input and implement those changes.

If the member does have that, please come across and explain exactly why the punishment is not severe enough; how we could utilize it to rehabilitate or actually change the justice system; and, as to what has happened in this country over the last 20 or 30 years, how to make the streets safer for Canadians and respond better to what they want.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and I am delighted to know that he has practised criminal law. He would likely know that jurisdictions around the world, including jurisdictions here in North America, our own federal government and five provincial governments, are seeking ways to relieve congestion and delay in our court systems.

One of my many concerns about the bill is that it is, in fact, going to overwhelm our court system. It would do quite the opposite of its purported intention, which is to provide justice for victims and safer communities.

I wonder if the member could advise us as to what the bill does, or what the government is prepared to do, to relieve congestion and delays in our provincial and federal court systems.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Madam Speaker, the member is correct. It is a concern of mine as well having practised law in Fort McMurray, and it was a very busy criminal practice.

I would note some other statistics. I do not have them in front of me, but from memory I think only 6% to 8% of crimes are actually solved in this country. I also understand that somewhere around 70% or 80% of the offences committed in this country are done by someone who has committed them before and has been in jail before. These are startling and troubling statistics.

I have represented people who had 10 or 12 previous impaired driving convictions and those with four or five assaults. There were some people who had three or four pages to their record, which does not mean four or five assaults but probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of 30 or 40 previous convictions, and it is difficult to get the convictions.

We clearly need to send a message, but to save a dime, the cost to taxpayers, the cost to the citizens of Canada, for not making sure people pay for the crimes they commit I would suggest far outweighs the opposite.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when the Minister of Justice told us that he would not govern on the basis of the most recent statistics, he was basically saying that he would not use facts or evidence to guide his decisions. That is very worrisome.

Are we going to be subject to governance without logic or reason for the next four years? Should we also expect the Conservative government to rule by fiat without recognizing that 61% of Canadians did not vote for them? The day after the May 2 election, when the Conservatives had only 39% of the votes, the Prime Minister admitted that the results of the election showed that Canadians wanted the parties to work together. Was this a false promise? I think that the whole government and, more specifically, all members of Parliament who are paid by taxpayers and represent the people in their ridings, have the duty to govern in a reasonable and thoughtful manner.

When the government stubbornly insists on passing a bill when it does not know the actual costs of that bill but does know that certain extremely costly measures will not address the actual problems and, worse, could very well create more problems, it is not logical, responsible or thoughtful. I would even go so far as to say that the government is acting in bad faith.

I find it hard to believe that all the Conservative members agree that the government should put the provinces further in debt when they do not have the slightest bit of evidence that the proposed measures will actually make our streets and communities safer. In fact, by taking just 15 minutes to read the news or the press releases issued by experts such as the Canadian Bar Association, we quickly learn that minimum sentences do not reduce crime rates; this could save us \$90,000 a day. Minimum sentencing does not work and costs a fortune.

*Government Orders*

The government needs to tell taxpayers the truth by revealing the costs and by explaining the basis for its proposals, particularly those related to minimum sentencing. The government needs to ask taxpayers directly whether they would like it to pass a bill of unknown costs that threatens health and education or whether they would rather the government take the time to ensure that their money is invested responsibly and adopt measures that would truly make their streets and communities safer. Clearly, Canadians would chose the second option.

We all agree, even the members of the opposition, that criminals must be punished. I do not want to dwell too long on what has already been said, but there are measures that we are prepared to support right now, namely, all those related to violent crimes and sexual offences against children.

However, the government seems to forget that 95% of prisoners will eventually be released and that the correctional system is a dangerous environment, rife with drug trafficking and violence, which can lead to other kinds of crimes. Thus, it is possible that increasing the number of prisoners and taxing the prison system even further, without investing more judiciously in preventive measures that tackle the source of the problem, could have very negative, or even dangerous, consequences.

If the purpose of Bill C-10 really is to make our streets and communities safer, why does it not include more investment in rehabilitation and prevention programs? I know the government does not like statistics, but 80% of incarcerated women are in prison for crimes related to poverty, including 39% for unpaid fines. These figures released this morning by the National Council of Welfare point to a real problem. The council also noted that the cost to incarcerate a woman who fails to pay a \$150 fine is \$1,400.

I am sure the Minister of Finance will be pleased to hear—and free of charge too—that for every dollar invested in prevention and rehabilitation, the government would save far more in incarceration costs, addiction costs and the cost of crimes committed in prisons themselves. Front-line workers such as social workers, street outreach workers, school psychologists and counsellors are looking for an opportunity to become more involved on the ground to prevent crime by targeting at-risk groups—young people in distress, people with mental illness or substance abuse problems, and marginalized people. Their work allows would-be offenders to get help and referrals to the services they need. All studies and examples from elsewhere demonstrate that prevention is more effective than incarceration and punishment.

Prevention not only stops the crimes from being committed, but also contributes to the well-being of Canadian society. Therefore, fewer crimes mean fewer victims and less incarceration. Is that not a nicer social and economic picture? It appears that we are not all on the same page.

● (1705)

As members of Parliament, we are all paid to make difficult decisions, but we are also paid to make logical decisions and to undertake the necessary research to ensure that taxpayers' money is not being wasted but is being spent effectively.

Why is the government so anxious to pass a bill that includes measures that have failed in other countries?

With a government that so often takes a page from the United States government when developing new policies, it should learn from one of the United States' concrete examples, which shows that minimum sentences do not decrease drug trafficking crimes. Not only that, minimum sentences are expensive and can exacerbate a large number of issues such as overcrowded prisons and negative effects of repression on society.

Logic tells me that if the Conservatives truly want to improve public safety—and I have no doubt that that is what they want, as do the rest of us—why not ensure that the proposed measures truly target the root of the problem?

To do that, we simply need more time to do the necessary research and base the measures on facts, on concrete examples from other countries and on responsible reasoning.

With this very uncertain economic climate, it is not the time to act like reckless cowboys and pass laws with unknown price tags, which could be detrimental to the economic health of the country and the provinces, as well as public safety.

To justify the bill and evade our questions, the Minister of Justice, who says he does not rely on figures and statistics, often cites the price paid by victims, which runs to \$99 billion. I hope that this is not an arbitrary amount.

But where is the evidence that this cost will decrease with implementation of this legislation? Taxpayers deserve answers. If there is clear and objective evidence that minimum sentences do not reduce drug-related crimes in the U.S., how will they lead to a reduction in the price paid by victims?

Why not vote for measures that are unanimously accepted in the House, continue a healthy and democratic debate on the contentious issues and find the right, intelligent and effective solutions to ensure the safety of Canadians?

And above all, why not show Canadians that the Conservatives are prepared to work with the opposition parties, which represent 61% of the population, and make considered decisions by splitting the bill and debating the laws one by one?

I can confirm—and this is more free advice—that the majority of Canadians will be pleased to see that the government is prepared to make good decisions and consult experts rather than hastily proposing repressive laws with unknown social, economic and legal consequences. This would bode well for the next four years.

Therefore, I do not support passage of this amalgamation of repressive and unjustified bills in Bill C-10. I invite the Conservatives to review this bill and allow a debate that is healthier and more democratic for everyone.



*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is important to understand that the member who just spoke is quite new to this place and maybe does not know what has happened with this legislation in past years. Some parts of it have been debated in the House for many years. If she had looked at the record, she would have seen that there were actually 51 days of debate on this legislation in the Canadian Parliament. There has already been 85 hours of debate and 223 speeches on this legislation. The bill was in committee for 58 days, or 123 hours and it heard from 295 witnesses.

Maybe the member did not know that because, if she had, she would not be complaining that we grouped this legislation and are trying to get it through before Christmas. The member needs to look at what happened before in terms of debate.

If the member had been in the House longer, she would have known that getting unanimous support in this place is virtually impossible, rarely happens and, when it does, it is on a very narrow issue. It is simply not realistic.

• (1710)

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Madam Speaker, I realize that there have been lengthy debates on a number of the bills included in Bill C-10, which is an omnibus bill. However, with all due respect to the member opposite, a number of provisions have been added, particularly those regarding minimum sentences, to which we are opposed given that a number of studies show that such sentences are ineffective in preventing crime. In fact, we are in favour of more prevention.

Earlier we were asked to make some suggestions for improving the bills. All we have been doing for the past few days is suggesting preventive measures, more help to prevent crimes from being committed and positive and effective help for people with mental health problems, the disadvantaged, the poor and those coping with unemployment and housing problems.

Those are all proposals we have made, but it seems that half the people in this room have a mental block and are not listening. Many things have been proposed. Just because we are new MPs or young, that does not mean we are not informed. We are here in good faith. We read the documents and try to find common ground. If we fundamentally disagree with the values being proposed to us, then we will obviously take an opposing stand and ask the other side to make changes.

*[English]*

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member talked a lot about prevention. I will share a story with her about some of the beautiful children with whom I have worked. They can be verbally and physically aggressive. They find it difficult to understand what people are saying to them. They have problems managing their money. It is all through no fault of their own. They are victims of fetal alcohol syndrome disorder.

As members know, exposure to too much alcohol can damage a developing baby's brain. The resulting symptoms including learning difficulties, problems processing information, poor judgment and a

lack of emotional control. Many of these victims end up in difficulty with the law.

I wonder what the member thinks Canada should be doing for these children, these adults, and to address FAS in prisons.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member from the Liberal Party for her question. We have a lot in common. I used to work in the school system as a teacher.

Many children are pleased to get help at school, whether it comes from social workers or remedial teachers. With that help, they can finally manage, after several treatments, to control their anger, express in a non-violent manner what they are feeling and discuss the problems they are experiencing. They end up working through their problems in a more positive way.

• (1715)

*[English]*

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased this afternoon to participate in the second reading debate on Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act.

We all know that the safe streets and communities act proposes a wide range of reforms to strengthen the law's response to several things: child sexual abuse and exploitation, serious drug and violent property crimes, terrorism, violent young offenders, offender accountability and management, and the protection of vulnerable foreign workers against abuse and exploitation.

As many hon. members have noted, the bill brings together in one comprehensive package reforms that were included in nine bills that were put before the previous Parliament and that died on the order paper with the dissolution of Parliament for the general election.

I will itemize these. These former bills are: Bill C-4, Sébastien's Law (Protecting the Public from Violent Young Offenders); Bill C-5, Keeping Canadians Safe (International Transfer of Offenders) Act; Bill C-16, Ending House Arrest for Property and Other Serious Crimes by Serious and Violent Offenders Act; Bill C-23B, Eliminating Pardons for Serious Crimes Act; Bill C-39, Ending Early Release for Criminals and Increasing Offender Accountability Act; Bill C-54, Protecting Children from Sexual Predators Act; Bill C-56, Preventing the Trafficking, Abuse and Exploitation of Vulnerable Immigrants Act; Bill C-59, Abolition of Early Parole Act; Bill S-7, Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act; and finally Bill S-10, Penalties for Organized Drug Crime Act.

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Many hon. members have participated in several hours of debate today and ongoing debate from the last Parliament to now. It is clear that some do not share the same views as the government about the need to address crime in our society, the need to increase public safety, the need to better balance the role of victims in the justice system and the need to make offenders more accountable.

My remarks here today need not repeat what some of my hon. colleagues have already noted about the key features of Bill C-10 and the importance of these reforms. I propose to briefly comment on the important reforms proposed in Bill C-10 as they relate to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act came into effect in April 2003. The reforms now proposed in Bill C-10, Safe Streets and Communities Act, have been shaped by consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. After five years of experience with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, a review was launched by the Minister of Justice in 2008. This began with discussions with provincial and territorial attorneys general to identify the issues that they considered most important.

In May 2008, the Minister of Justice began a series of cross-country round tables, often co-chaired by provincial and territorial ministers, in order to hear from youth justice professionals, front-line youth justice stakeholders and others about areas of concern and possible improvements regarding the provisions and principles of the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Input from individuals and organizations was also provided through the Department of Justice website, in letters and in in-person meetings. The results showed clearly that most provinces, territories and stakeholders believe the current youth legislation works well in dealing with the majority of youth who commit crimes. However, there were concerns about the small number of youth who commit serious, violent offences or who are repeat offenders who may need a more focused approach to ensure the public is protected.

Clearly, the message was to build upon the good foundation of the law and make much needed improvements and the reforms proposed in Bill C-10 reflect this. Although the Youth Criminal Justice Act is working well for most youth, particular elements of the act need to be strengthened to ensure that youth who commit serious, violent or repeat offences are held accountable with sentences and other measures that are proportionate to the severity of the crime and the degree of the responsibility of the offender.

There have been concerns voiced from many sources and this government has responded. The reforms included in Bill C-10, previously included in Bill C-4, known as Sébastien's law, would enhance our fair and effective youth justice system and result in a system that holds youth accountable for their criminal misconduct and promotes their rehabilitation and re-integration into society in order to promote the protection of the public.

• (1720)

In addressing amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, it is important to note that the act's preamble specifically references that Canada is a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Youth Criminal Justice Act also recognizes that young persons have rights and freedoms, including those stated in

the charter and the Canadian Bill of Rights. Nothing in Bill C-10 will impair these rights of young persons.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act provides for a range of responses that relate to the seriousness of the crime. These sentences also address the needs and circumstances of the youth and promote rehabilitation.

Amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act will ensure that young people under 18 who are serving a custody sentence will serve it in a youth custody facility. It will no longer be possible to put young people in adult prisons or penitentiaries, where the correctional regime is more suited to adults and where young people could all too easily become vulnerable to older, more hardened criminals. It is in the interests of the protection of society that young people become rehabilitated, and this amendment is aimed to ensure that this takes place.

While a sound legislative base is an essential part of ensuring that Canada has a fair and effective youth justice system, it is also essential to address the conditions that underlie criminal behaviour if we are to achieve any long-term or meaningful solution to the problem. Conditions such as addiction, difficult childhoods, mental health, fetal alcohol syndrome, or longer-term marginalization will continue to pose challenges to solving the problems of youth offending.

Our government has implemented various programs to assist in addressing these issues. The national anti-drug strategy has a significant youth focus. On the prevention front, the government has launched a national public awareness program and campaign to discourage our youth from using illicit drugs. The government has made funding available under the youth justice fund for pilot treatment programs that will assist with the rehabilitation of youth who have drug problems and are in the justice system, and for programs that are working toward preventing youth from becoming involved with guns, gangs and drugs.

Partnering with health, education, employment and other service providers beyond the traditional system, we can all work together. For example, through the youth justice fund the Department of Justice provided funding to a pilot program called Career Path, which offers a comprehensive specialized service for youth in the justice system who are at risk or are involved in gang activities. The program offers youth educational training and employment opportunities by connecting them with an employer who will also act as a mentor to facilitate making smart choices, foster pro-social attitudes, build leadership skills and gain valuable employability skills as a viable option to gang membership.

The reforms to the Youth Criminal Justice Act are essential and responsive and should be supported as a key part of a broader effort on the part of the government to prevent and respond to youth involved in the justice system.

I would like to bring it a little closer to home, if I may.

This is the story of Ann Tavares, of London, who suffered a huge loss in November of 2004 when Stephan Lee stabbed her son 28 times. Steven Tavares was an innocent victim who was in the wrong place at the wrong time. His death irreparably scarred the lives of those who loved him forever. That loss is what happened.

To compound her tragedy, her son's killer was found not criminally responsible due to mental disorder and sent to an Alberta hospital the following year. He was conditionally released in May 2008 and is now living in Alberta. All of this happened without notification to the victim's family or the public at large.

Suffering such a loss might have destroyed an individual. However, this became an impetus for Ann's quest to make others aware of what happened to her son and the lack of justice for this heinous crime. She has lobbied tirelessly against the inequities of the system, a system the government is trying to fix.

Ann strongly felt that there needs to be a connection between mental illness and crime. Specifically, she felt that the insanity defence needs to be banned. She felt that to say a perpetrator is not criminally responsible is too subjective. Mental impairment is a defence that anyone can claim. If someone commits a crime, that person should be punished.

She believes mental illness should not absolve someone from the crime they committed. The punishment needs to be based on the severity of the crime, and a fixed minimum time needs to be served before they are put back into the community. However, Ann did want good to come of her tragic situation. In addition to the punishment, she felt that the perpetrator should get mental health treatment, and that to protect innocent victims like her son and the community at large, such criminals should not be released into the community until they have been certified as not a risk to others.

I would like to expand on that through the questions and answers, if I might, Madam Speaker.

● (1725)

[Translation]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

I met with workers from the Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines penitentiary, which is in my riding. They told me that sending more people to prison will make their jobs more difficult and more dangerous. I would like to know what my colleague has to say about how this bill would affect these workers. I would also like to know what the government is going to do for them.

[English]

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Speaker, I think my colleague's question is thoughtful and fair. At the same time, I think we need to always recall that this is about protecting the victims in society and I want to honour the guards and administrators in our system who are responsible for ensuring that those people who need to be kept away

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from the general public are in fact kept away. I think they do an excellent job in my colleague's riding and in all ridings across this country, and I would like to salute them, .

I would like to bring this a bit closer to home. I am very concerned about issues relating crime and the things we can do on behalf of youth. One of the things I do is a polling question every week. I send it to some 15,000 people as my question of the week. It is from people right across my community, but particularly in the great riding of London West. I would like to provide some responses in the hope they will give some clarity to why Bill C-10 is so important. I know we all care in this House, but this is critical.

When London West residents were asked if publishing the names of young offenders publicly after criminal conviction would hurt their chances of rehabilitation, 65% said it would not.

When my constituents were asked online if those convicted of sex-related crimes, including pedophilia, should be eligible to apply to have their criminal records pardoned, 95% responded "no".

This was the final question: when I asked my constituents if opposition parties should support the Conservative government's efforts to limit the ability of serious criminals and sex offenders to obtain a pardon, 94% said "no".

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my question relates to the intended or unintended consequences on the budgets of provincial jurisdictions. My colleague would know full well that his government supports money for police and for prisons, but between police and prisons there is a system under stress. Much of that system under stress is paid for by the provinces. I am referring to the prosecutors and the places in provincial institutions, which are presently full. I realize that the bulk of his speech focused on youth criminal justice; this applies both to youth criminal justice and to adults.

I would ask for his comments on what measures are going to be put in place to allow the provinces to tackle this financial burden that is being downloaded to them as a result of this legislation.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question and I think the member will be very pleased with the answer.

He may not be aware, but I certainly want to let all colleagues in the House and all Canadians know that in this past year this government put \$2.4 billion back into the system to ensure that we could provide the kind of protection and support that our provinces need. I am pleased to say we have done that.

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**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the member, but he made reference to one aspect of the bill. I think we need to recognize that the government is bringing forward a bill that is a series of bills that should have been bills on their own. As a result of doing that, the Conservatives have further complicated the matter by saying that we now have a limited amount of time to debate a bill that encompasses many other bills.

Would he not agree that what Conservatives are really doing is a disservice, and is disrespectful to the proceedings of the House in not allowing members to deal with bills on an individual basis? In essence—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

I must give the hon. member 30 seconds to respond.

**Mr. Ed Holder:** Madam Chair, it is rather interesting that when all these bills were put forward to this House, our colleagues opposite had the opportunity to support them on an individual basis and chose not to, so I find it very curious that now, when we try to pull it together as one comprehensive bill, the member takes a separate view.

My Cape Breton mom once said about politicians, “After it's all said and done, there's a lot more said than done”.

It is now going to stop.

• (1730)

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to join the debate on Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act. I have been very glad to see the vigorous debate that has taken place in this House over the past few days and, of course, over 79 hours of debate in the previous Parliament.

As we know, the safe streets and communities act is a piece of comprehensive legislation, a piece of comprehensive legislation that is made up of nine separate bills. I have heard my hon. colleagues from the opposition question the rationale of bundling this important piece of legislation together, so I would like to speak to that point.

Since taking office, our government has made no secret of the fact that we will stand up for the safety and security of Canadian families. We have been clear that we will ensure that victims are heard and that victims are respected. We have been clear that dangerous criminals belong behind bars and not in the streets, where they can harm law-abiding Canadians.

The safe streets and communities act, and every piece of legislation within it, is about fulfilling those commitments to Canadians.

This is not the first piece of comprehensive legislation that our government has introduced. We were proud to have delivered the Tackling Violent Crime Act back in 2008, an act that has now been law for some period of time.

Members will recall that the Tackling Violent Crime Act strengthened the Criminal Code in a number of ways. It delivered tougher mandatory jail time for serious gun crimes; it established new bail provisions, which require those accused of serious gun

crimes to show why they should not be kept in jail while they are waiting for trial; it protected youth from adult sexual predators by increasing the age of protection from 14 to 16 years of age; and it ensured more effective sentencing and monitoring to prevent dangerous, high-risk offenders from offending again and again and again. It also made new ways to detect and investigate drug-impaired driving, as well as stronger penalties for impaired driving.

Much like the safe streets and communities act, all of the provisions had been pieces of previous legislation that had been blocked in political games by the oppositions prior to 2008. However, our party and our government believed so strongly in this action that we did what was in the best interests of Canadians: we bundled them into a comprehensive package known as the Tackling Violent Crime Act. On top of that, we made that act an issue of confidence in this House.

Now we find ourselves, after the May 2 general election, in a similar position with Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act.

As we know, this past spring Canadians gave us a strong mandate to move forward with our law and order agenda. As part of the Conservative election platform, we made a commitment to move quickly to reintroduce legislation that had been blocked or opposed by the opposition.

It has always been a point of pride that this government delivers on the promises we make to Canadians. That is why we have done as we have promised and why we are here today debating the safe streets and communities act.

Now I would like to talk a bit about the principle of protection of society.

What exactly does that mean? In short, it means that when courts and government officials are making decisions, the first thing they would now consider is how those decisions would affect the greater society.

It may come as a surprise to many Canadians that when it comes to the transfer of offenders, the protection of society is not currently the principle of consideration. We are currently in a situation in which the Minister of Public Safety is compelled to look at a number of factors when considering whether a prisoner should be transferred back to Canada. In fact, currently, the minister is restricted in the considerations that can be taken into account when he is looking to transfer offenders.

Bill C-10 would change that. This bill provides additional factors that the Minister of Public Safety may consider when determining whether to grant an offender's request to serve his or her sentence back in Canada. In doing so, it clarifies one of the key purposes of the International Transfer of Offenders Act, which that is to protect the safety of all Canadians. This would ensure that Canadians and their families are safe and secure in their communities and that offenders are held accountable for their actions. Canadian families expect no less.

Let me give members a few additional examples of what the minister could consider when considering whether an offender should be transferred back to Canada.

As examples, he could consider whether the offender is likely to endanger public safety, he could consider whether the offender is going to keep engaging in criminal activities, and he could consider whether the criminal would endanger the safety of Canadian children.

• (1735)

This legislation would also allow the minister to consider, among other things, whether the offender was co-operating with rehabilitation and local law enforcement, and whether the offender accepted responsibility for his or her actions. This means that when a minister makes a decision as to whether an offender is transferred back to Canada, he or she has the ability to look at a broad range of factors that go beyond what is simply in the best interests of the offender to ensure that protection of Canadian society comes first.

These proposed changes to the International Transfer of Offenders Act are among important changes contained within the Safe Streets and Communities Act. Others include better protection for our children and youth from sexual predators, increasing penalties for organized drug crime, and preventing serious criminals from serving their sentences in the comfort of their own living rooms by ending house arrest for serious crimes. It also would protect the public from violent young offenders and would eliminate pardons for serious crimes. It would increase offender accountability. It would support the victims of crime and would protect vulnerable foreign nationals from abuse and exploitation.

These are all measures in which our government strongly believes. We promised Canadians we would bring them forward swiftly after the election. That is why we have introduced the Safe Streets and Communities Act. It is also why we are hopeful that members of the opposition will do the right thing and support this important legislation.

[Translation]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member addressed the part of the bill that deals with the international transfer of prisoners. However, I know that the international community, particularly the United States, has spoken out against these measures since they give the minister too much power to determine whether a prisoner can be transferred. I would like the hon. member to comment on the international community's reaction in this regard.

[English]

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Mr. Speaker, we can always listen to people across the world who comment on the laws and legislation we pass here in Canada, but the member might have noticed today that Canada was selected as the top nation in the world. People have a positive feeling about our country.

We can listen to what people around the world say, or we can listen to the victims of crime in this country. That is whom our government listens to. We are going to stand and fight to protect the families of this country.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the United States Supreme Court has declared that overcrowding in United States prisons to the extent of 137% results in conditions within the prisons that are cruel and unusual punishment. The overcrowding rate in prisons in British Columbia is now at 200%. This legislation

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is going to pack provincial institutions to a greater degree. Undoubtedly there are going to be charter challenges.

What measures does the government plan to take to deal with overcrowding in provincial institutions as a result of bringing in this law?

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember that our government is investing in the expansion of federal prisons. We are also supporting our provinces with investments in their justice systems. No previous government in this country has done as much to invest and support the provinces in the area of justice as the Conservative Party of Canada has done.

We will continue to do that. We will continue to work with our provincial partners and ministers of justice across the country to make sure our communities and our people are safe.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I recently came across a report from the Department of Justice of the Government of Canada from January 2002. This expert report pans the idea of mandatory minimum sentences and concludes that it could be “a colossal waste of justice system resources”.

I know the government members always throw back at us that they are listening to the victims of crime and not all the experts, but surely they should listen to their own Department of Justice.

• (1740)

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Mr. Speaker, we also listen to front-line law enforcement officials across this country, officials like union president Tom Stamatakis, who said:

Whether it is by keeping dealers and producers off the streets and out of business, or by serving as a deterrent to potential dealers, this proposed legislation will help our members in doing their jobs and keeping our communities safe. In simple terms, keep these criminals in jail longer, and you take away their opportunity to traffic in drugs.

We are going to continue to listen to our front-line law enforcement officers. They are the ones who are dealing with this every day. We are going to stand and support our police across the country.

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on the subject of overcrowding and double-bunking, I want to read something from Lyle Stewart of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers:

It raises the tensions in institutions where the tension levels are already very high. There's no question that it increases inmate-on-inmate violence, but it also increases the risk when correctional officers open the cell door. Often times that's when an inmate will choose to attack an officer, but now you've got two inmates in there.

Why does the government want to put correctional service officers at risk and in danger?

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Mr. Speaker, I think we all owe a great debt of gratitude to those people who work in our prisons day in and day out rehabilitating criminals who are in there and protecting our people and keeping them safe.

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I share the member's concern about making sure that we protect these very brave Canadians who work in our jail system. That is why our government is investing in an expansion of jails. I have two in my riding, one in my hometown of Truro and one in Springhill. We are investing in an expansion of both those prisons, making sure that we have enough personnel in those buildings and the physical space to make sure those people can conduct their jobs safely.

We are going to continue to invest in our prison system. We are going to continue to invest in the human resources, the people who work in the prison system.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus on a couple of aspects of Bill C-10.

Why has the government decided to bring in this bill at this time? It has a lot to do with propaganda. It has a lot to do with the government wanting to give the appearance to Canadians that it wants to be tough on crime. If the Conservatives really want to do Canadians a favour, they should get tough on the causes of crime or they should get tough on fighting crime. Bill C-10 would not result in less crime being committed on our streets or in our communities.

The government is trying to send a dated message to Canadians. It is a message that was tried many years ago in the United States. It was that right-wing conservative thinking which ultimately said that to beat crime, people had to be thrown in jail and kept there for a long period of time.

The jurisdictions that bought that argument built the jails and the jails exceeded capacity. Did it cause the crime rate to go down? No. If we compared some of the states in the deep south of the U.S. where megaprisons were built with states in the north, such as New York, we would find that the crime rate did not go down in the deep south. The jails did not help.

The Conservative government is convinced that the way to appease Canadians and to make Canadians think that their streets will be safer, is to bring in legislation that would foster more and bigger jails. The government would do far better in trying to make our streets safer so Canadians can sleep better at night by taking action to prevent crimes from taking place in the first place.

For a number of years I was the justice critic in the province of Manitoba. I have a good sense in terms of what works and what does not work. I have also served on youth justice committees as chair and as a layperson. I know there are many other things we could be doing that would have a far greater impact on preventing crime.

When I knock on doors in my constituency of Winnipeg North, I tell people that there should be consequences for crime. There is no doubt about that. If we are going to start getting tough, then let us start getting tough on fighting crime, on preventing some crimes from occurring in the first place.

How do we do that? In good part we do it by thinking outside the box. We do not even have to think outside the box; we could support some of the things that are out there right now.

How do we get young people, for example, to shy away from getting involved in gang activities? This is a serious problem in most of Canada's urban centres. It is a concern in the city of Winnipeg. Winnipeg is a beautiful city; I love it to death. There are all sorts of

wonderful opportunities in Winnipeg. A vast majority of young people in Winnipeg are outstanding, but there is a certain percentage of youth who are being lured into activities that are not what I would classify as being of benefit to the community as a whole. There are some things we could do as legislators to improve the likelihood that those youth will not fall into the trap of prostitution, selling drugs, or getting involved in gangs.

I am interested in making sure that government policy allows us to deal with the issue at hand. The issue at hand is how to prevent crimes from taking place in the first place.

• (1745)

I have no love for pedophiles who commit these heinous crimes. I believe in consequences for those severe crimes. However, I do not necessarily buy-in to what the Americans were trying back 15 or 20 years ago. We will find that many of those strong Conservatives who advocated for the big jail concept no longer do. They have tried that experiment and it did not work. Now they are talking about how to get people back into communities and trying to develop other programs in order to prevent crimes in the first place.

One could talk about some of the bizarreness of the legislation. We have members who were officers of the law on the Conservative side who talked about the teeth in the legislation. Also, earlier today I made reference to a *Winnipeg Free Press* story on September 26. It is from Ethan Baron, a Vancouver columnist. He is not a member of Parliament and would be unbiased. I believe he is someone who would not likely have a party membership. The article states:

A pedophile who gets a child to watch pornography with him, or a pervert exposing himself to kids at a playground, would receive a minimum 90-day sentence, half the term of a man convicted of growing six pot plants in his own home.

For the member who canvasses his constituents and poses questions to them, I wonder what his constituents would have to say about that quote.

I do not question the fact that some aspects of Bill C-10 are positive. However, let us look at what is being proposed. It is a piece of legislation that I have never experienced in my many years inside the Manitoba legislature. There are many bills of substance in this one omnibus bill, but the Conservatives have told this chamber that we have a limited time to debate all of the bills. Their argument is that they have a mandate.

Of the 39% of Canadians who voted for them, yes, that is a mandate, and I know the Conservatives won the most seats. However, there is a thing called respect.

It is a privilege for all of us to be in this parliamentary precinct, the House of Commons. We should be respecting the fact that there is a responsibility for us to go through legislation in a timely fashion. However, this is not as if we are just putting the word "the" or "a" into these bills. These are all bills of great substance within Bill C-10. It is a lack of respect for this chamber for the Conservatives to try to force through Bill C-10 and then put a time limit on debate.

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In this bill, the government has a grouping, but what is next? Are we going to see another bill making reference to 25 bills from the Conservative brochures in the last election? Would the Conservatives now have the support of Canadians and the mandate to have an omnibus bill that would include those 25 bills? Would they want us to pass those bills all in one omnibus bill?

The Conservative government needs to respect what is taking place today. For many of those backbenchers, this is the first time they have been elected to the House. As well, for many of the New Democrats, it is their first time as members of Parliament. To what degree have they been afforded the opportunity to speak on what should have been separate bills?

The principle of this legislature is supposed to be all about that. We are supposed to be here to thoroughly debate and ensure there is accountability from the different ministers who would be responsible for those bills. Shame on the government for not recognizing the importance of democracy and not respecting the importance of this chamber in allowing members to have dialogue on this. If members want to sit 24 hours, 7 days a week, I am game if that is what they want to do. Why put in the limits? Why force members of Parliament to speak only ten minutes, which is barely enough time to address one bill?

I suggest the government would be best advised to break up the bill. It needs to look in the mirror and wonder if it has gone too far.

• (1750)

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are two points I want to raise.

The first is the member opposite says that the government does not have a mandate to bring in this legislation because only 39% of Canadians voted for our Conservative government. When I look at the results of the last election in his riding, he got 35% of the vote in his riding. What mandate does he have to tell the House what we can or cannot bring forward?

We won 166 seats in the House specifically on a mandate to bring forward this legislation. Thirty-nine per cent of Canadians voted for this government. We have 166 seats and a majority government. Liberals have 34 seats. He got 35% of the votes in his riding. What mandate does he have to stand in the House and say that his constituents do not want this bill? He does not have that mandate. He has 35%.

There is another thing in his speech with which I take offence. He has suggested that somehow we can either be law and order, support the police, have prisons and tough laws or we can help kids on the other side and have some preventive justice. It is such a nonsensical, laughable argument that he makes, that it is a this or that proposition. The fact is we have put forward all kinds of proposals, policies and programs to support those who are at risk.

I will tell him about a project in my riding called S.U.C.C.E.S.S., which helps kids who are the most at risk, the most troubled kids in our society who live in my community and need some support and structure. These are kids who have a last opportunity to get some structure in their lives, some discipline and opportunity for growth.

We funded that program, we built that program, and those kids are now moving forward in their lives.

It is not a this or that proposition, it is both, and we are getting it done with 39% of the vote, not 35%.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is what happens when a government sits in power a little too long. Having a majority now, it believes, in an arrogant way, that it can do whatever it wants. There is a moral, if not ethical, and some would suggest legal obligation, to respect the legislature and parliamentary law. There is the need to acknowledge that. Just because the Conservative government has the most seats does not mean that it is a little dictator. There is an issue of respect in allowing legitimate debate on important issues facing Canadians. Just because it has a majority does not mean it gets to dictate everything that happens in the country over the next four years, in a dictatorship way.

He posed a question with regard to programs. Believe it or not, the government has a finite amount of money and it has a choice. It can put  $x$  number of dollars here or  $x$  number of dollars there. If it puts more money over here, it means less money over there. We are suggesting—

• (1755)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. The member for Winnipeg North will come to order. I am sure other hon. members want the opportunity to put a question or comment to the hon. member.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague on a number of issues. One of those issues is that Parliament has not had the time to have the kind of debate it requires. I heard my other colleague say that we had debated this last year, the year before and the year before that, but those bills did not pass. Those bills are before this Parliament and I believe Parliament should be given the time to debate them.

What kind of prevention programs could you see this bill addressing instead of the interrogation route, which members across the aisle seem to be pushing?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I would remind hon. members to put their comments and questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comment. I, for one, would ultimately argue that all members should have been afforded the opportunity at some point to provide comment on all nine of the bills that have been bundled together in this one bill.

With regard to programs, there is a litany of programs. Some programs are currently in place in which we could enhance programs that would prevent youth from getting involved in gangs. Members will recall one of the first questions I ever asked in Parliament dealt with programs like O.A.S.I.S. on which the government was looking at cutting back. There are programs that take youth who have a higher risk of going into gangs and preventing them from doing so. There is community policing. There are many programs we could have looked at as alternatives.

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**Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in the House to add my voice to those of my hon. colleagues who have spoken so passionately in favour of this legislation.

Bill C-10, Safe Streets and Communities Act represents sweeping change to laws that we believe are no longer acceptable as they stand. It enacts common sense measures that are long overdue.

On May 2, Canadians gave us a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe. Part of that means delivering on our promise to strengthen victims' rights, to protect our most vulnerable and to ensure serious criminals serve serious sentences. The legislation before us will go a long way to helping us fulfill our pledge to Canadians.

As we have heard during the debate, the safe streets and communities act contains many important components. These include measures that protect our children from violent sexual offenders, that restrict house arrest and conditional sentences and that target organized crime by imposing tougher sentences on drug dealers.

Today I will focus on the reforms to our correctional system. Specifically, these proposed amendments enshrine in law a victim's right to participate in parole hearings and address inmate accountability, responsibility and management under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

Allow me to give hon. members a brief background to this measure. In 2007 our government undertook an important review process of Correctional Service Canada. This was done through an independent panel, which studied the business plans, priorities and strategies of the agency.

The panel released its final report in December 2007. It was entitled, "A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety". It included no fewer than 109 recommendations that fell under five themes: offender accountability; eliminating drugs from prisons; physical infrastructure; employability/employment; and moving to earn parole.

This report represented a road map that would help us improve rehabilitation, provide a safer environment for employees and, most important, enhance public safety.

Our government has already made important progress on two key areas laid out by that independent panel, those drug use in our prison system and addressing the problems of offenders dealing with mental illness.

The legislation before us today proposes reforms in four more key areas that were proposed by that independent panel some four years ago. These areas include providing better support for victims of crime, enhancing the accountability and responsibility of offenders, strengthening the management of offender re-integration and modernizing prison discipline.

Let us start with the first item, providing better support for victims of crime. Canadians have told us that victims of crime deserve to have their interests and concerns brought to the forefront. For me, that is certainly the priority.

The amendments we have proposed are in direct response to what we have heard from victims and victims' rights groups across our country. They have asked our government to give them a stronger voice, and we are proud to deliver.

Victims often have to travel from far distances to be in attendance at parole hearings. The problem is that under the existing legislation, offenders can withdraw their participation in the hearing at the last minute, effectively cancelling the parole hearing.

We believe this is fundamentally unfair to victims of crime and we propose to fix this. The bill proposes that if an offender withdraws his or her participation 14 days or less before a hearing date, the Parole Board may still go ahead with the scheduled meeting regardless. It also gives victims the right to find out why the offender has withdrawn his or her attendance at the parole hearing.

These two measures would go a long way to ensuring victims minimize further financial and emotional hardship. Bill C-10 will also ensure that victims have a legal right to attend and make statements at parole hearings.

The safe streets and communities act will also amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to allow victims and their families to obtain more information about an offender through Correctional Service Canada and from the Parole Board of Canada. This includes information about the reasons for temporary absences from custody as well as updates on the offender's participation in his or her correctional plan.

Victims would also have the right to request information on why an offender is being transferred between institutions and particularly, whenever possible, advance notice when the offender is being transferred to a minimum security institution. They would also be allowed to obtain information on any serious disciplinary offences that offenders commit while serving their sentence.

● (1800)

Just as importantly, guardians and caregivers of dependents of victims who are deceased, ill or otherwise incapacitated, will have access to the same information that victims can receive. This is important because these guardians and caregivers play an important role in the ongoing care of victims and their dependents.

In terms of providing victims more of a voice, this legislation is an important step forward that will help put victims rights at the forefront of the corrections and parole system. I think that should be the prime concern of all members of this House.

The second change focuses on the offenders themselves. As I mentioned earlier, a key recommendation from the independent panel was to make offenders more accountable. As such, Bill C-10 contains amendments that will ensure that rehabilitation, as well as reintegration into the community, is a shared responsibility between offenders and Correctional Service Canada.



*Government Orders*

The question is, what does this mean practically? It means that offenders will be required to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of other people and their property. It means that offenders must obey the rules set out by the institution where they are serving their sentence, as well as heed all conditions that govern release.

Above all, it means restoring common sense. Offenders will simply not receive benefits for bad behaviour. Offenders will also be responsible to actively participate in their correctional plan.

As part of these amendments, the legislation allows for the establishment of incentive measures that will promote offender participation in their correctional plan. We firmly believe that with appropriate programs and active participation from both the offender and the corrections system that many individuals can become law-abiding citizens.

The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of an offender into a community is a shared responsibility. We are committed to providing appropriate programs to offenders, but it is only fair to expect offenders to do their part.

That is the message that we have heard consistently from Canadians, from victims, from advocacy groups and from our corrections officers. By enshrining in law the importance of correctional plans, we are sending a message that engaging offenders in their own reintegration into the community is an important part of our correctional system.

Both the offender and Correctional Service Canada have a part to plan in meeting that objective. These reforms will also take particular note of offenders with mental health issues, and ensure that their correctional plans are developed properly. This is reasonable and fair.

The correctional plan will play an important role in the lives of each offender, setting out the expected behaviours, the need to participate in rehabilitation programs, and also the requirement to fulfill all court-ordered financial obligations.

The third part of these reforms involves how offenders are managed in the community. For example, the amendments will give police the power to arrest an offender without a warrant if it appears that he or she is in violation of their release conditions. It will automatically suspend the parole or conditional release of an offender if that individual receives a new custodial sentence.

We come now to the final area of reform related to this component of Bill C-10. This covers amendments to modernize the system of prison discipline. Specifically, two new disciplinary offences will be created: first, knowingly making a false claim for compensation from the Crown; and second, throwing a bodily substance at another person. The reforms will also address disrespectful and abusive behaviour.

We also propose to allow the Commissioner of Correctional Service Canada to designate sub-populations. By this I mean moving beyond the traditional designations of minimum, medium and maximum. This will better reflect the diversity of the inmate population and the challenges of managing subgroups that are often incompatible.

These measures will go a long way toward our commitment to transform our corrections system and to put victims first. We believe these changes are needed, and they are needed now.

● (1805)

I urge the NDP to finally stop putting the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of law-abiding Canadians and support this legislation.

**Mr. Jean-François Larose (Repentigny, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened and I do not understand the bill on many levels. The problem that we have right now is that the hon. member seems to think that she knows what she is talking about when she talks about correctional services. I have eight and a half years under my belt and I know what I am talking about when I talk about victims and correctional services.

The question that I have is, all this being said, how will this bill impact the federal institution? What about the provinces that right now are absolutely incapable of handling what is going on with the surplus of criminals? What is her plan? Because apparently the government has said that it does not intend to give any money whatsoever to the provinces for this bill.

**Ms. Eve Adams:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, we just provided \$2.4 billion very recently. More to the point though, I think the fundamental issue here is that we are just expressing far too much sympathy for the criminals when in fact most Canadians would want us to express our sympathy for the victims. That is what this bill does.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question comes from the perspective of a new member of Parliament. I am, quite frankly, having some difficulty as a new member of Parliament wrestling with my obligation as a parliamentarian to be able to debate this bill in an abbreviated fashion when the costs to the Canadian taxpayer, both from a federal perspective and a provincial perspective, have not been made clear.

I know my colleague is also newly elected and not overly partisan. I wonder whether she shares my difficulty in fulfilling her role as a parliamentarian in debating a bill that has not been costed at either the provincial or the federal level.

● (1810)

**Ms. Eve Adams:** Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to take a question from my critic on veterans affairs, so I thank him for the opportunity to respond.

In fact, as I mentioned in my speech, an independent panel was commissioned some four years ago to look at the situation in our prisons and it came out with over a hundred individual recommendations. The bill, in its component parts, has been before the House a number of times over a number of years. It has been studied, it has been debated, it has been discussed. At some point I think Canadians want us to act in the best interests of victims.

This report has been gathering dust on bookshelves for over four years. Only two of its recommendations were implemented. We propose, through this comprehensive legislation, to finally implement many of the additional recommendations.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, is the parliamentary secretary aware that Bill C-10 is absolutely unacceptable to Quebec? I have in my hands a unanimous motion from the National Assembly of Quebec that was submitted when the Conservative government introduced these omnibus justice bills, as it is doing now. The motion states that these bills do not protect Quebec's philosophy of rehabilitation and social reintegration in matters of youth criminal justice.

Youth centres in Quebec have all also spoken out against this type of bill, as has the Barreau du Québec, of course. If the parliamentary secretary is not already aware of this, I am letting her know now and I will forward her the documents. However, if she is already aware of this, can she tell me why the government does not agree to split the bill since it does have some good measures but it also has many measures that, as I said, are not acceptable to Quebec?

**Ms. Eve Adams:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

[*English*]

I reject the premise of the question. I sincerely doubt that Quebecers as a whole would somehow not support allowing victims to show up at parole hearings. I cannot imagine that Quebecers, as an entire group and province, would not want their victims notified when a criminal decides to withdraw his or her participation in a parole hearing at the last minute. Do Quebecers truly want victims to have to show up, go to great expense to get to a parole hearing just to have nobody show up and then have to go all the way back home at great emotional and financial cost to themselves? That is ludicrous. I do not believe that for an instant.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I call on the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for resuming debate, I will inform her that we only have two minutes remaining for the time allotted for this debate.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking and this debate is closing far too soon for those of us who believe that we are on the verge of a very large, serious mistake that future parliamentarians will have to struggle to correct.

First, let me say to the hon. government benches and the members here where we agree. I would happily vote for the victim of terrorism act, and I would vote to change the Criminal Records Act to replace the word "pardon" with "record suspension". However, I will be forced to vote against this legislation if it comes packaged with sections that would cause this country nothing but grief.

I wish to say to all hon. members on the government side whose talking points have repeatedly forced them to say that those who question the flawed premise of mandatory minimum sentences have somehow sided with criminals against victims. Nothing could be further from the truth. Members of my family are involved in law enforcement. People close to me have been murdered. It is not as though we side with criminals when we recognize a piece of legislation is so egregiously flawed that this place should say no.

We look at all the evidence from criminologists, not just one or two, but all of them. We look at evidence from our own Department

of Justice that studied this matter in 2002. We look at what is happening in the U.S., not only at the fact that its prisons are full of people but its prisons are full of people who are disproportionately low-income and Black. We also look at what could happen in this country. We have seen the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the report on the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. We know that with this legislation, without many changes, we would disproportionately fill our jails with people who should not be in jail.

We also know that this legislation would cost us billions, which has not been fully costed.

Yet, at the end of the day, it may actually result in weaker sentences for those who deserve higher sentences because we would ruin the opportunity for judicial discretion.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** It being 6:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, September 27, 2011, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Call in the members.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 33*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)  
Angus  
Aubin  
Bélanger

Andrews  
Ashton  
Ayala  
Bellavance

*Government Orders*

Bennett	Benskin	Calkins	Cannan
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe	Carmichael	Carrie
Boivin	Borg	Chisu	Chong
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Clarke	Clement
Brahmi	Brison	Daniel	Davidson
Brosseau	Byrne	Dechert	Del Mastro
Caron	Casey	Devolin	Dreeshen
Cash	Charlton	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Chicoine	Chisholm	Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Choquette	Chow	Flaherty	Fletcher
Christopherson	Cleary	Galipeau	Gallant
Coderre	Comartin	Gill	Glover
Côté	Crowder	Goguen	Goodyear
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Gosal	Gourde
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day	Grewal	Harper
Dewar	Dion	Hawn	Hayes
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Hiebert	Hillyer
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé	Hoback	Hoepfner
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Holder	James
Dusseauit	Easter	Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Eyking	Foote	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Fortin	Freeman	Kent	Kerr
Fry	Gameau	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Garrison	Genest	Lake	Lauzon
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	Lebel	Leaf
Godin	Goodale	Leitch	Lemieux
Gravelle	Groguhé	Leung	Lizon
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)	Lobb	Lukiwski
Hassainia	Hsu	Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Hughes	Hyer	MacKenzie	Mayes
Jacob	Julian	McColeman	McLeod
Karygiannis	Kellway	Menegakis	Menzies
Lamoureux	Larose	Merrifield	Miller
Latendresse	Laverdière	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Leslie	Liu	Nicholson	Norlock
MacAulay	Mai	O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Marston	Martin	Obhrai	Oda
Masse	Mathysen	Oliver	Opitz
May	McCallum	Paradis	Payne
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Penashue	Poilevre
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Preston	Raitt
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Rajotte	Rathgeber
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Reid	Rempel
Mulcair	Murray	Richards	Richardson
Nantel	Nash	Rickford	Ritz
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Saxton	Schellenberger
Pacetti	Papillon	Seeback	Shea
Patry	Péclet	Shiple	Shory
Perreault	Pilon	Smith	Sopuck
Quach	Rafferty	Sorenson	Stanton
Ravignat	Raynault	Storseth	Strahl
Regan	Rousseau	Sweet	Tilson
Saganash	Sandhu	Toet	Toews
Savoie	Scarpaleggia	Trost	Trottier
Sellah	Sgro	Truppe	Tweed
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)		Uppal	Valcourt
Sims (Newton—North Delta)		Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis	Vellacott	Wallace
Stewart	Stoffer	Warawa	Warkentin
Sullivan	Thibeault	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Toone	Tremblay	Sky Country)	
Trudeau	Turmel	Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Valeriote — 133		Williamson	Wong
		Woodworth	Yelich
		Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
		Zimmer — 159	

**NAYS**

## Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment lost.*[English]*

The next question is on the main motion.

● (1850)

*[Translation]*

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 34)***YEAS**

## Members

Ablonczy  
 Aglukkaq  
 Albrecht  
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
 Amblar  
 Anders  
 Armstrong  
 Aspin  
 Benoit  
 Bezan  
 Block  
 Braid  
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
 Brown (Barrie)  
 Butt  
 Calkins  
 Carmichael  
 Chisu  
 Clarke  
 Daniel  
 Dechert  
 Devolin  
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)  
 Fantino  
 Flaherty  
 Galipeau  
 Gill  
 Goguen  
 Gosal  
 Grewal  
 Hawn  
 Hiebert  
 Hoback  
 Holder  
 Jean  
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)  
 Kent  
 Komarnicki  
 Lake  
 Lebel  
 Leitch  
 Leung  
 Lobb  
 Lunney  
 MacKenzie  
 McColeman  
 Menegakis  
 Merrifield  
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
 Moore (Fundy Royal)  
 Nicholson  
 O'Connor  
 Obhrai  
 Oliver  
 Paradis  
 Penashue  
 Preston  
 Rajotte  
 Reid  
 Richards  
 Rickford  
 Saxton  
 Seeback  
 Shipley  
 Smith  
 Sorenson  
 Storseth  
 Sweet  
 Toet  
 Trost  
 Truppe  
 Uppal  
 Van Kesteren  
 Vellacott  
 Warawa  
 Watson  
 Sky Country  
 Weston (Saint John)

Adams  
 Albas  
 Alexander  
 Allison  
 Ambrose  
 Anderson  
 Ashfield  
 Bateman  
 Bernier  
 Blaney  
 Boughen  
 Breitreuz  
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
 Bruinooge  
 Calandra  
 Cannan  
 Carrie  
 Chong  
 Clement  
 Davidson  
 Del Mastro  
 Dreeshen  
 Dykstra  
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)  
 Fletcher  
 Gallant  
 Glover  
 Goodyear  
 Gourde  
 Harper  
 Hayes  
 Hillyer  
 Hoepfner  
 James  
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)  
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)  
 Kerr  
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)  
 Lauzon  
 Leef  
 Lemieux  
 Lizon  
 Lukiwski  
 MacKay (Central Nova)  
 Mayes  
 McLeod  
 Menzies  
 Miller  
 Norlock  
 O'Neill Gordon  
 Oda  
 Opitz  
 Payne  
 Poilievre  
 Raitt  
 Rathgeber  
 Rempel  
 Richardson  
 Ritz  
 Schellenberger  
 Shea  
 Shory  
 Sopuck  
 Stanton  
 Strahl  
 Tilson  
 Toews  
 Trottier  
 Tweed  
 Valcourt  
 Van Loan  
 Wallace  
 Warkentin  
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to  
 Wilks

Williamson  
 Woodworth  
 Young (Oakville)  
 Zimmer— 159

Wong  
 Yelich  
 Young (Vancouver South)

**NAYS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)  
 Angus  
 Aubin  
 Bélanger  
 Bennett  
 Blanchette  
 Boivin  
 Boulerice  
 Brahmi  
 Brosseau  
 Caron  
 Cash  
 Chicoine  
 Choquette  
 Christopherson  
 Coderre  
 Côté  
 Cuzner  
 Davies (Vancouver East)  
 Dewar  
 Dionne Labelle  
 Doré Lefebvre  
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
 Dusseault  
 Eyking  
 Fortin  
 Fry  
 Garrison  
 Genest-Jourdain  
 Godin  
 Gravelle  
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)  
 Hassania  
 Hughes  
 Jacob  
 Karygiannis  
 Lamoureux  
 Larose  
 Laverdière  
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
 Liu  
 Mai  
 Martin  
 Mathysen  
 McCallum  
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)  
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)  
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)  
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)  
 Murray  
 Nash  
 Nunez-Melo  
 Papillon  
 Péclet  
 Pilon  
 Rafferty  
 Raynault  
 Rousseau  
 Sandhu  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Sgro  
 sor)  
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)  
 St-Denis  
 Stoffler  
 Thibeault  
 Tremblay  
 Turmel

Andrews  
 Ashton  
 Ayala  
 Bellavance  
 Benskin  
 Blanchette-Lamothe  
 Borg  
 Boutin-Sweet  
 Brison  
 Byrne  
 Casey  
 Charlton  
 Chisholm  
 Chow  
 Cleary  
 Comartin  
 Crowder  
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
 Day  
 Dion  
 Donnelly  
 Dubé  
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)  
 Easter  
 Foote  
 Freeman  
 Gameau  
 Genest  
 Giguère  
 Goodale  
 Groguié  
 Harris (St. John's East)  
 Hsu  
 Hyer  
 Julian  
 Kellway  
 Lapointe  
 Latendresse  
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)  
 Leslie  
 MacAulay  
 Marston  
 Masse  
 May  
 McGuinity  
 Michaud  
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)  
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)  
 Mulcair  
 Nantel  
 Nicholls  
 Pacetti  
 Patry  
 Perreault  
 Quach  
 Ravnigat  
 Regan  
 Saganash  
 Savoie  
 Sellah  
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
 Sitsabaiesan  
 Stewart  
 Sullivan  
 Toone  
 Trudeau  
 Valeriote— 134

**PAIRED**

Nil

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

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee.)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1855)

[English]

### VETERANS

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I brought a question to the House that was really a humanitarian question. It was a question about services that were missing for veterans and were causing great problems for an individual who did not deserve that kind of neglect.

The answer I got back to a genuine concern was a pure platitude, so I will give the Conservative government opposite another opportunity to address this concern from a constituent in Vancouver Quadra.

The essence of my concern is that Veterans Affairs is failing those whom it is designed to serve and that the government's spending priorities are completely out of whack. It has allowed this problem to happen.

To recap my question, it was about retired Major Gordon MacLean Logan, a 93-year-old veteran who was wounded six times in World War II in Italy and whose entire career was spent in the military.

This gentleman has been using the veterans independence program, to which he is entitled, and that has helped maintain his independence.

His caseworker used to come to his house to meet with him when necessary, but over the past three years the Veterans Affairs Canada caseworkers have become swamped, and retired Major Logan and his family have had to pull teeth to get service.

Major Logan had been restricted to his home for more than six months due to mobility issues that were completely preventable. Veterans Affairs Canada had authorized equipment, and then it failed to complete the paperwork so that it could be installed.

Finally Major Logan's own daughter paid up front for the porch lift. She put her own money on the line in order to help her father. A complaint was filed with the Veterans Ombudsman, but the family has never heard back. That was the case that I brought to the minister.

Since I have raised this issue in the House and written a letter to the minister, I will acknowledge that the office of the veterans affairs minister attempted to reach the family. It left a message. However, when the family tried to call back, their messages were never answered.

### Adjournment Proceedings

The Veterans Ombudsman's office did call the family that had filed this complaint. It left a message. When the family made several attempts to call back, they received a message saying that the ombudsman's office could not take calls.

Unfortunately, Major Logan has been in rehabilitation in a transitional care unit because of a progressive debilitation and weakness from not having mobility. The family is optimistic that he will get home soon and that the future will be better.

My question really is this: why is the government spending \$450 million just this year on one of the parts of the Conservative crime bill while neglecting Veterans Affairs Canada and all of the invisible veterans who do not have the family or the ability to actually file a complaint and insist on help?

• (1900)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her question on behalf of Canada's decorated veterans.

While I have not personally met Major Logan, his service in the Second World War tells us everything that we need to know about this retired major's devotion to Canada and his dedication to our shared values of peace, freedom and democracy.

I am sure that all Canadians feel the same gratitude and pride knowing Mr. Logan's remarkable story of courage and sacrifice. I am sure they are also concerned, as am I, to hear that Mr. Logan is in failing health and that he may not be receiving all the help that he has earned and so much deserves.

I will reassure the House that our government is committed to ensuring that all veterans receive the services and benefits they are entitled to without fail and without exception.

I thank the member opposite for her question regarding the spending on behalf of veterans. It is an issue that seems to receive too little attention in this chamber. I welcome the chance to share the facts.

First and foremost, I believe Canadians will be reassured to know that, over the past five years, our government has invested heavily in veterans and their families. That includes investing in sweeping improvements through the new veterans charter and doubling the number of operational stress injury clinics, facilities where soldiers who return emotionally scarred by the intensity and trauma of the theatre can receive support and assistance in their recovery.

We have also established a veterans bill of rights and created the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman to strengthen the government's ability to respond quickly and fairly to the concerns of Canada's veterans. It includes extending the veterans independence program to more widows and widowers of veterans, and restoring and expanding benefits to our allied veterans.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We have done all of this for one reason and one reason only. It is because it is the right thing to do on behalf of Canada's veterans, because we owe them so much and because we intend to, in the best ways we can, repay the enormous debt of gratitude they have earned on behalf of this country.

● (1905)

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the Veterans Affairs case-workers are overworked, calls are not being answered and veterans are imprisoned in their own homes through a lack of services that they have been promised.

Could the government explain why it would rather spend \$500,000 on one crime bill rather than on supporting veterans in their time of need? Could the government explain yet another tax cut to the largest and most profitable corporations and yet Veterans Affairs will be seeing budget cuts because of the profligate spending in the past by the government?

We need to think of the inhumanity of the choices that are being made by the government and of the access to services being denied to our veterans through the shortcomings in planning and compassion on the part of the Conservative government.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that Canadians are grateful for retired Major Logan's service to our country. We understand the great debt we owe all of our veterans. That is why we have worked so hard over the last five years to make improvements in the benefits and services for these courageous men and women. That is why we continue to invest in benefits and programs that will make a real difference in the lives of our veterans. That is why new enhancements to the new veterans charter will come into force in the coming weeks. That is why new enhancements to other programs have already been implemented, whether it is the operational stress injury clinics or the improved programs for wounded soldiers who come back from theatre.

We are continuing to make the best investments in ensuring that those who serve us are treated with the utmost care and that every one of their needs, to the best of our ability, is fulfilled. We will continue to work with veterans to ensure that they are honoured and that they receive the care and love they deserve.

## WINDSOR-DETROIT BORDER CROSSING

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to talk again about the Canada-U.S. border, in particular, the Windsor-Detroit border.

On June 21, I asked a question of the minister because we have a border crossing, a brand new crossing, blocked by the State of Michigan right now. The corridor along the Windsor-Detroit gateway has 40% of Canada's daily trade and we have aging infrastructure.

I started my municipal career in 1997 with the first public meeting to get a new border crossing. Since that time, we have gone through a lot of ups and downs, pushing on several governments, to get a new border crossing capacity to deal with the challenges of the modern infrastructure necessary to be competitive with the United States. We finally had an agreement through the DRIC process, a binational planning process, to create that new infrastructure. A lot of compromise has taken place to get to that point.

However, the final decision necessary to get the bridge built has been blocked in Lansing, Michigan, for a number of months now. This crossing is very important because a lot of Canadian trade, jobs and social economy moving back and forth is dependent on it. I asked the government to intervene in June and to be more forceful, active and engaged.

There is a private American citizen, who owns the Ambassador Bridge, lobbying with millions of dollars to protect his empire and his monopoly. That is at the expense of the environment and the economy. With more delays we would see the expense of the project going up. Things do not go down. We would see a greater cost borne by citizens and the payback for the project would take longer. I wanted the minister to get more engaged in June.

Right now we still have Michigan debating this law in Lansing and we still see a vacuum of leadership from the Minister of Transport on this file. We have not seen the type of leadership necessary to get the ball over the goal line, so to speak.

It is important that this is not seen as just a local issue. This is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in Canadian history. It is one of the most important things for our economy and trade with the United States. There are 34 states that have Canada as a number one trading partner. This is a conduit and lifeline for much of that trade and affects everything.

A quick example is the auto industry. An automobile built in Windsor or Detroit, Michigan, like the Volt, will literally have parts going back and forth across the border a number of times. This is why businesses have been in favour of this and environmental groups have been in favour of this to get some of the idling trucks off the city streets.

There has been great compromise by the citizens who have to bear the result of the construction and subsequent inconvenience. We need this to be successful right now. We need better leadership from the government to ensure that Michigan knows that we need to get this across the goal line. The government also has to engage Washington to ensure it is pushing this issue as well.

● (1910)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member will be pleased to learn that I agree with him. Most of the action that he has implored of this government is already done.

We support the bridge. We have set aside the funds. We have a plan to recover the costs through a system of tolls. We are accelerating, to the best of our ability, the approvals for the entire construction to go ahead.

He correctly points out that the decision now rests with the Michigan legislature and that it is up to legislators in that body to decide whether or not they want to have the jobs, the economic opportunities, and the enormous spinoffs that this project would engender in their communities.

To date, we have worked with businesses and other stakeholders who share our interest. They include local communities, unions, trade associations, Michigan's Fortune 500 companies, the big three automakers, the chambers of commerce, Michigan agri-food industry, and neighbouring states. All the benefits of this project are accrued to them and as such, they are supporting the project and exercising their influence, accordingly.

Most significant, though, since taking office in January 2011, the Michigan governor and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario have become strong champions of the project. This government has made an effort to assist the governor with his efforts in convincing the Michigan legislators to support the building of the crossing. Our consulate general in Detroit has been promoting the project at every opportunity, even delivering speeches to business groups, chambers of commerce, and has met with individually Michigan legislators, in an effort to educate them and the citizens of the benefits of this new crossing.

We have also been working closely with the Canadian embassy in Washington in providing outreach and advocacy, to ensure that accurate information about the project is present.

Officials from Transport Canada have also been making, and will continue to make, significant efforts to advance this project. They have conducted detailed briefings on the project with state senators and other legislators to answer any questions that may remain.

As the hon. member will know, as he participated in the event staged last month by Transport Canada, we have also conducted several tours with Michigan legislators and border stakeholders.

In June, a senior official from Transport Canada, along with our consulate general in Michigan, Detroit, testified at the senate economic committee and reiterated Canada's financial commitment of \$550 million to cover the costs of project components in Michigan that would not be funded by the public-private partnership, to ensure that this project moves ahead.

We are 100% behind this project. We will continue to work toward its success.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's intervention.

What I think needs to happen next is a greater emphasis back on Washington to get Michigan moving again. There needs to be a real analysis of the current Ambassador Bridge by the government, in terms of its safety record, auditing its structure and all those things.

The International Bridges and Tunnels Act came into effect a number of years ago. New Democrats worked with minister Cannon at that time to get some amendments in the bill. So, there was compromise on both sides to ensure that the legislation was passed.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to go back to the minister and encourage him to get to Lansing himself, as well as other senior

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

officials, and to Washington. That is where we need that full-court press to get the job done.

The U.S. is having another round of elections. Matty Moroun, who owns the Ambassador Bridge, provided over \$1 million of financing to elected officials in the United States during the last session. There will probably be more of that influence happening again. That is the challenge that we face: just getting it over the last hump.

● (1915)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I have to agree with the hon. member and I thank him for his intervention on this important subject.

The latest developments in the decision-making of the Michigan government is that the senate economic development committee in that state has now resumed hearings on the crossing.

Our government remains committed to the project. We are pushing hard to convince and to inform hon. members of that chamber of the worthiness of this project. We expect that there will be a vote sometime either in the late fall or early winter. We will continue to press as hard as we can to ensure that jobs, opportunity, and growth are achieved by proceeding with this important project.

### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-  
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me these few moments to discuss an issue that I brought up in the House some time ago. In general, it is an issue of grave importance for Newfoundland and Labrador. It is an issue that certainly deals with the safety factor of Newfoundland and Labrador, and certainly deals with the entire east coast, because we are talking about two entities here.

Let me just recap. Because of the last budget we had a closure of a sub-centre, what we call a maritime rescue sub-centre, in St. John's, Newfoundland, and one also in Quebec. What these two centres provided was an extra amount of assistance to the larger centres, which are described as the JRCC, or the joint rescue coordination centres. These centres handle incoming calls from people in distress, primarily in the offshore area.

Two departments come together, Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of National Defence, to handle these situations. One is primarily the vertical lift, or lift from the air, which is a part of search and rescue through the Department of National Defence. My question answered by the fisheries minister on that day obviously dealt with the Coast Guard. Of course, the Coast Guard, even though it is its own special operating agency, is still part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

What brings on this closure? What provides the available evidence that the closure of this centre can be absorbed, not just from a financial aspect, but also from a safety aspect?

It is an incredibly busy site. It is busy in the sense that a lot of the local calls come into this one particular centre because the people who work in the centres certainly know the geography and certainly know their jobs extremely well.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

What is happening is that these positions are being absorbed at the JRCC, which is in Halifax. I wish no ill will toward this particular centre in Halifax, which does a wonderful job as well, but there are aspects of the MRSC that was in St. John's in Newfoundland and Labrador that will be closed, yet are desperately needed in this area.

I will provide one quick example: ice survey. Ice surveys are done across the country. They are headquartered here in Ottawa. It is a national ice service. It does some work in the MRSC, and the reason for doing some of it there is because of the local aspect. It is a local investigation that they must undertake; therefore, they leave Ottawa, go to St. John's, Newfoundland, and monitor the ice situation. The vast majority of ice observations take place across the eastern part of the island.

This is a good example of why this centre exists in the first place.

Therefore, I humbly ask the parliamentary secretary what constitutes the decision to say that we can close this centre down and safety will not be compromised. The evidence proves otherwise.

• (1920)

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, the member of Parliament for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, for the opportunity to comment on the consolidation of the St. John's maritime rescue sub-centre with the joint rescue coordination centres in Halifax and Trenton. I know he works hard for his constituents and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, so I understand and appreciate his interest in this matter.

Let me start with the bottom line. Maritime safety continues to be the top priority of the Canadian Coast Guard whose men and women work day in and day out to provide important and essential services, including icebreaking, aids to navigation, waterways management, marine communication and traffic services, environmental response, and search and rescue coordination and response services, which is the issue we are discussing this evening.

Currently, to provide search and rescue coordination service, the Canadian Coast Guard jointly operates with the Canadian Forces, as my colleague has said, three joint search and rescue coordination centres across Canada. In addition, the Canadian Coast Guard manages two marine rescue sub-centres in St. John's and Quebec City. These were started in 1976, but many factors have changed the way search and rescue is coordinated since then.

Current navigation technologies, alerting technologies and communication technologies allow us to safely and efficiently coordinate search and rescue efforts from one centre within each of the search and rescue regions that cover Canada.

By consolidating the sub-centres of St. John's and Quebec, this initiative would see the integration of all search and rescue coordination functions, both marine and air, at the three existing centres. Marine search and rescue mission coordinators will work side-by-side with their Canadian Forces colleagues facilitating a stronger co-operation in search and rescue mission coordination.

The consolidation of rescue sub-centres will improve the efficiency of Coast Guard operations.

I would like to emphasize that consolidation will not impact the excellent search and rescue coordination service that we currently provide to the maritime community in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec.

As we move forward we will ensure implementation will be seamless and there will be no negative impacts to the aeronautical or maritime search and rescue services in Canada or to the safety of life at sea.

I would also like to point out that by joining Coast Guard marine search and rescue coordination service currently provided in St. John's and Quebec with the joint rescue coordination centres in Halifax and Trenton, we expect to improve coordination by locating all Coast Guard and Canadian Forces search and rescue services within the same centres.

I would like to reiterate that no changes are being made to the Canadian Coast Guard's capacity on the water. Canadian Coast Guard response resources will continue to work with other search and rescue service delivery partners such as Canadian Forces assets, volunteers and other local resources to respond to every distress call.

All officers, helicopters and vessels, including the two heavy icebreakers that were recently moved to the St. John's area, will remain in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We will continue to ensure that local knowledge and expertise is embedded in the tools and training of the crews, mariners and Coast Guard employees.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm the department's commitment to ensuring the safety of the maritime community in Newfoundland and Labrador and in the rest of Canada through the Coast Guard's search and rescue service.

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has been parliamentary secretary for quite some time and he certainly knows the issues.

I have a few questions. He mentioned that with one centre closing, the resources and staff which were there are being moved into one centre and how that creates an advantage. I need to grasp exactly how that is supposed to work, if the groupings of these people are to improve the services, but the aspect that was local is eliminated and these people are no longer on the ground. A good illustration of that would be the situation in Quebec City where language becomes that barrier.

Could the member specifically address the language issue? Could he also give more detail as to why the grouping of these individuals into one centre in Halifax and closing down the sub-centre is going to improve that service? The final point is dollar value. How much money will this move save?

• (1925)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Mr. Speaker, it is our view that the consolidation of these sub-centres is a timely and sound decision given the evolution of technology in search and rescue over the past 30 years.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

By consolidating our search and rescue coordination services, we will continue to provide the high level of service that we always have but we will do it in a way that brings value to Canadians.

Again, safety will continue to remain the highest priority for the Coast Guard.

Any reports that this decision will impact search and rescue response on the water are simply not true.

Careful thought was given to this decision by the minister and the Coast Guard. There will be the same level of capacity on the water.

Local knowledge will continue to be used in search and rescue coordination. Service will continue to be available in both official languages.

This is a responsible decision on behalf of Canadians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:26 p.m.)

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