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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 35 years ago yesterday, on November 15, 1976, the Parti Québécois took power in Quebec's National Assembly for the first time. During its first mandate, René Lévesque's party accomplished great things, particularly in terms of farmland protection legislation, the Charter of the French Language, automobile insurance and political party financing legislation.

It was also during this first mandate that the first referendum on Quebec sovereignty took place. Today, 35 years later, the dream of making Quebec a country is more relevant than ever. As we face this backward-thinking government that rejects Quebec values, Quebecers must realize that this is no longer our home and that it is time we built our own country.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to commend the work accomplished by the Parti Québécois over the past 35 years.

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[*English*]

BURLINGTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to congratulate and thank the Burlington residents who have contributed to a fantastic new addition to the city's cultural mosaic. In the next few weeks we will be officially opening the Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The dream of a performing arts centre facility began in 1999 and the vision has come to fruition.

I want to recognize all who have taken a leadership role in this project, have contributed financially and have provided support by volunteering their time.

I also want to thank our Conservative government for its support through the cultural spaces program. The financial support made the difference in kick-starting this vital cultural infrastructure project in our community.

The Burlington Performing Arts Centre will deliver experiences that inspire for many generations to come.

I want to thank all involved for their vision, their commitment, and their contribution in making this dream come true.

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LITTERLESS LUNCH CHALLENGE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the winner of my second annual litterless lunch challenge.

This year over 50 classes from Baker Drive, F.W. Howay, Lord Baden-Powell, Moody, Ranch Park, Rochester and Maillard Middle schools participated in the challenge during Waste Reduction Week.

This year's winning class went an astounding 100% litter-free for the entire week. Congratulations to Ms. MacKay's kindergarten-grade 1 class students from Baker Drive Elementary in Coquitlam. They are this year's litterless lunch winners.

My sincere thanks go to all the students, teachers and parents who helped make this challenge such a success. They did a great job. Special thanks go to the Green Team at Maillard Middle, which coordinated the entire school's participation in the challenge.

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DIABETES

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. This past Monday we celebrated World Diabetes Day, marking the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting who, along with Dr. Charles Best, co-discovered insulin 90 years ago.

Nearly every Canadian is touched in some way by diabetes. Diabetes is expected to have a continued widespread impact on Canadians in the coming years.

More than three million Canadians live with some form of diabetes, and this number is increasing by 3% to 5% every year. The greatest rise is in children five to nine years of age.

Statements by Members

Diabetes and its complications cost the Canadian economy more than \$17.4 billion a year.

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, JDRF, is the leading charitable funder and advocate of diabetes research in the world. It is working hard to find a cure for diabetes and its complications through the support of research.

I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in supporting JDRF and all diabetes agencies in having a very successful World Diabetes Month.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, one of the more effective United Nations bodies that has addressed and redressed individual cases of political prisoners who have been arbitrarily arrested, illegally detained and unjustly imprisoned in violation of international human rights law.

Indeed, the UN working group has issued important rulings in the illegal detention of Burmese opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and helped secure her release, and in the illegal detention and imprisonment of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo.

I am now petitioning the working group in the case of the arbitrary arrest, detention and imprisonment of Egyptian blogger Maikel Nabil, one of the first political prisoners of the post-Mubarak era, who is now entering his 86th day of a hunger strike. We urgently seek his release, and the UN working group can help us in this regard.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House an ongoing human rights crisis: the mass killing of a vulnerable native people in the Congo.

Since the 1960s, the countries and rebel groups surrounding the Congo River basin have displayed utter contempt for the lives of pygmies. To put it simply, pygmies are under threat of eradication. We know this due to the courageous work of intrepid Canadian journalist Geoffrey Clarfield.

Pygmies have endured massacres, the raping of their women and even cannibalism at the hands of their oppressors. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, rebel factions ridicule the United Nations because it has no legal means of stopping their inhumane crimes, so the slaughter of pygmies continues. Since 2003, an estimated 70,000 pygmies have been killed by tribal militias under erasure board campaigns. The remaining population hides in remote areas of the surrounding forests for safety, yet they are still in danger.

I call on the international community to help stop the slaughter of pygmies.

● (1410)

PALLIATIVE AND COMPASSIONATE CARE

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, almost two years ago a group of MPs from across party lines formed a non-partisan parliamentary group aimed at promoting awareness of deficiencies in Canada's palliative and compassionate care framework. The Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, which now has over 55 members and was co-chaired by me and the members for Kitchener—Conestoga and Guelph, conducted research and heard from Canadians throughout the country.

Tomorrow, November 17, the committee will release its landmark report outlining the findings and making recommendations on three main long-term health issues: palliative care, suicide prevention and elder abuse. Through our study we learned some troubling statistics. At least 10 Canadians die by suicide each day. Suicide is the leading cause of death among those between the ages of 10 and 24. We also discovered that only 16% to 30% of Canadians who need palliative care are able to access it. We also learned that as many as 10% of all seniors will experience some form of abuse in their lifetime.

I am proud of what the committee has accomplished in working across party lines to produce a substantial report that demonstrates that parliamentarians of all political stripes can work co-operatively for vulnerable Canadians.

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FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security heard testimony that the failed and costly long gun registry has no ability to prevent crime and there is no evidence that it has stopped a single crime or saved a single life. It does not prevent anyone from using a firearm for violence and it does not keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

A master instructor for the Canadian Firearms Safety Course testified that the registry misses the target of the criminal use of firearms. He said that instead, it targets millions of lawful, legitimate firearms owners.

The fact is the registry can do nothing to prevent criminals from obtaining or using firearms. Front-line police officers cannot risk their lives on the inaccurate, unverified information in the registry.

At the committee the Minister of Public Safety had to explain to the NDP that there is a difference between feeling safe and actually being safe. It is irresponsible to continue pouring tax dollars into the long gun registry because it feels like the right thing to do or the safe thing to do. The NDP proved again that it is unfit to lead.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about my protecting freedom bill, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act which would repeal section 13. Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act erodes the fundamental building blocks upon which our society is built. These are not just the freedoms that every Canadian holds so dear, but also the freedoms that our society depends upon to grow and mature.

As George Washington described, “If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led like sheep to the slaughter”. Freedom of speech is the bedrock upon which all other freedoms are built. Without the freedom of speech and expression, what good is the freedom of assembly or the freedom of religion? Freedom of speech is the only real tool that free and democratic societies have to fight bigotry and ignorance.

We must ensure that we protect and enhance our fundamental freedoms. This is not just an issue of blue or orange, left or right. This is an issue that affects all Canadians equally. I am asking all members to stand and support Bill C-304, my protecting freedom bill.

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OCCUPY PROTEST MOVEMENT

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, protests are a vital part of our democracy. Citizens occupying public space are part of a proud tradition of non-violent civil disobedience. This is a practice that takes discipline, dedication and courage. It has been a constant presence in virtually all movements fighting for economic and social justice. Think about the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, the ending of apartheid in South Africa, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Arab Spring. Embedded in these historic struggles for freedom and equality, acts of non-violent civil disobedience help nudge history in the right direction.

The Occupy protests across Canada speak to the fact that something is fundamentally wrong when a few individuals and corporations control most of the wealth of nations. While some seek to trivialize and shut down the Toronto protests, at its core the Occupy Toronto movement is a cry out for social justice, for greater democracy and an economic system that nurtures rather than distorts the true face of humanity.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposes creating jobs and are attacking Canada abroad. The New Democrats are at it again today, undermining the Canadian economy. They claim that Canadian jobs will be driven away to the U.S. if the Keystone XL pipeline goes through. As we have consistently said, the Keystone pipeline will create thousands of jobs and billions in economic growth on both sides of the border.

We are encouraged that an agreement has been reached to find a new route for the pipeline. I hope this news will mean the project can proceed. However, the delay highlights the need for Canada to ensure it opens export markets outside the United States, into Asia in particular.

Statements by Members

Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters to Canadians, jobs and economic growth. That is what we are doing.

* * *

●(1415)

MCGILL'S WOMEN IN HOUSE PROGRAM

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to welcome to Parliament the students participating in McGill's women in house program. Women in house has the noble mandate to foster an interest in political involvement in young women with the goal of improving female representation in government.

The women in house program began in 2001 as an attempt to break down the barriers women face in politics. Tomorrow female MPs and senators will mentor the young women who are sitting in the gallery today. The participants will hear first-hand from female politicians about the daily realities of political life. This program makes politics accessible to young women and has inspired past participants, including myself, profoundly.

As a student, I was a participant and a coordinator of women in house and it motivated me to push the boundaries of what it meant to be a politician. I hope participants will take away from this eye-opening experience the desire to get involved and break down the barriers women face in politics.

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DIRECT SELLING INDUSTRY

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's direct selling industry injects over \$4.5 billion in total sales into the Canadian marketplace and provides earning opportunities for 900,000 of our constituents, including many of my own in Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Direct selling builds sales, management and interpersonal skills. Many direct sellers will apply these skills to their careers, their households and other business ventures.

More than 90% of Canada's direct sellers are women, embracing their entrepreneurial spirit and benefiting from the flexible and convenient opportunities that direct selling provides.

This evening the Direct Sellers Association of Canada will celebrate the Year of the Entrepreneur at its annual parliamentary reception. I encourage all members to attend and meet some of Canada's leading direct sellers, their companies and to learn more about this dynamic and important industry.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an extraordinary moment for our planet. This month the world's seven billionth citizen was born into a population more aware than ever of the challenges of sustaining life on a crowded planet.

Between 1960 and 2000, the world's population doubled. During that same period, the world lost 25% of its land species, 28% of marine life and 29% of freshwater species. This is the fastest and greatest rate of biodiversity loss since the extinction of the dinosaurs.

People depend on nature for many things: a stable climate, clean air, fresh water, abundant food, tourism and incalculable economic benefits. To thrive as a species, we must work together to conserve nature.

I am honoured to chair the all party international conservation caucus, a non-partisan group with representation from all five parties. The ICC brings together scientists and environmental and conservation experts and provides them with a platform to present their research findings, to talk about conservation challenges and solutions and to help inform parliamentarians and others.

Together, we can make a difference.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP were down in DC yesterday, taking another run at the Canadian economy attacking good jobs here at home. The New Democrats cannot help siding with anti-Canadian special interests. They have a leadership candidate calling for a moratorium on oil sands development. The member for Burnaby—Douglas even claims Canada will lose jobs as the result of the Keystone XL pipeline.

I would like to remind the hon. member that the Keystone XL pipeline will create thousands of jobs and billions in economic growth on both sides of the border. The NDP opposes creating jobs and are attacking Canada abroad.

Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters to Canadians, jobs and economic growth. Our government will continue to promote Canada and the oils sands as a stable, secure and reliable source of energy for the world.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week the official opposition has sent a delegation to Washington to do what the Conservatives have failed to do, to speak for all of Canada on energy security.

Instead of engaging Americans in a constructive dialogue, the Conservatives are trash-talking fellow Canadians and questioning their patriotism. However, Canadians are smarter than that. They remember a Conservative MP trashing Canada in the *Wall Street Journal* because Canadians did not support George Bush's war in Iraq. They also recall the same member telling Americans that "Canada is a Northern European welfare state in the worst sense of

the term". Who was that MP who was trash-talking Canada? It was the Prime Minister.

We will take no lessons from that side of the House on who is standing up for Canada. It is time the Conservatives end the attacks and the hypocrisy and instead get down to developing a clean energy strategy that works for all Canadians and provides clean energy jobs.

* * *

• (1420)

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP has shown a lack of leadership and disunity on countless recent occasions, including fairness of the shipbuilding process, marketing freedom for western Canadian farmers and the ineffective and wasteful long gun registry. What is clear is the NDP does not stand up for northern Ontarians, so much so that the placeholder NDP leader has imposed more harsh disciplinary measures on the NDP MPs from Thunder Bay—Rainy River and Thunder Bay—Superior North for voting to end the useless long gun registry. She has removed the MP for Thunder Bay—Rainy River from the aboriginal affairs and northern development committee. I am going to miss his important contributions to this committee and so are his constituents.

We have heard from stakeholders across the region who have said that the NDP leader's disgraceful actions are an affront to the parliamentary system. Why does the leader of the NDP want to silence the voice of northern Canadians? It is a worrying example of why the incoherent, disunited NDP is not, and could never be, fit to govern.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Nicole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over the past few months, we have witnessed a protest movement on a scale never seen before. The occupy movement is denouncing economic disparity. People are fed up and they decided to act.

The parks might be cleaned up, people may have to go home, but the economic problems will not go away. Unemployment is too high, especially for youth. The income gap is growing.

Has the Prime Minister heard the cry for help?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): The real question, Mr. Speaker, is whether the NDP has heard any such cry.

Oral Questions

The focus of Canadians is on jobs and economic growth. That is what this government is focused on. That is why Canada has one of the best records in the world on that.

This government does not go to another country to argue against job creation in Canada, but that is what the NDP did, a party that is totally unfit to govern or to even comment on the creation of jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister must understand that the protesters are only the tip of the iceberg. Whether it is in Calgary, Toronto, Montreal or elsewhere, these people represent the general disgust that is spreading through the middle class.

Last month we lost 72,000 full-time jobs. The new jobs the government has been bragging about are temporary, casual, part-time or low-paying jobs. Even CIBC has said that the jobs created in the past seven months have all been poorly paid.

Does the Prime Minister realize that?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when real Canadians face challenges, they roll up their sleeves and get to work. That is what our industries are doing, despite the NDP's extreme opposition. The NDP goes to the United States to oppose the creation of jobs in Canada. That party is not fit to govern this country.

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our party is doing the job that the Prime Minister should be doing.

While the financial community is playing roulette with people's savings and major corporations are raking in huge profits and getting tax cuts, real people are paying the price. The quality of jobs is going down and minimum-wage jobs are on the rise. In fact, wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. Real wages are going down, the purchasing power of families is going down and people are having a hard time making ends meet.

Why is the Prime Minister turning a blind eye to this economic reality?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the best records in the western world on job creation and support for our families. That is our government's clear record, because we remain focused on the economy.

[*English*]

That is totally different from the NDP. The fact that the NDP has focused on the Occupy protest rather than on job creation tells us everything we need to know about the NDP. It is a party that is totally unfit to govern or to even comment on job creation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Prime Minister that last month, on his watch, Canada lost 72,000 full-time jobs.

Since May 2008, the Canadian economy has created barely 200,000 net jobs—jobs that pay a lot less and are more precarious. Over the same period, 450,000 more people entered the job market.

Therefore, some 250,000 more jobs are needed, just to return to the same level.

Why is the Prime Minister denying the evidence? Why is he not making job creation a priority? Why is he leaving so many Canadian families behind?

[*English*]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I can quote the Minister of Foreign Affairs, that is another fact free question. Most every comment in that question was false. I would like the member to tell that to over 600,000 Canadians who are working now who were not working at the end of the recession.

Ninety per cent of those jobs are full-time jobs, and 81% of those are in the private sector. That is a good news story. I do not know how he could make it such a negative story.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is sad. Canadians are struggling with lost jobs and the Conservatives are struggling with bogus job numbers.

We have seen, under this government, that the jobs that are created are low wage jobs. One in five Canadian men and one in three Canadian women now make less than two-thirds of the average wage, and the jobs they get pay \$10,000 less than the jobs the Conservatives lost.

Canadians cannot get back to work until the government does its job. Why does the government not do its job so Canadians can get back to work with family-sustaining jobs, with decent wage jobs, with the kind of jobs that build our economy in this country?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can say what a \$10 billion tax hike would do to jobs. That is what the NDP wants to load on us. It was in its campaign platform. It wants to download that onto Canadians.

That would kill jobs. That would be the worst thing that Canadians could see and it would kill jobs. The 600,000 more Canadians who are working than were working in July 2009 would not appreciate that.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a number of our allies are now reviewing the F-35 contract, which means that the total number ordered may be lower than anticipated. The Americans themselves are facing a great challenge with this. Now we hear that the production of the plane may in fact be delayed.

I ask the Prime Minister, exactly what will it take to convince the government that this contract is one that needs to be reviewed by the Canadian government? We need to have a competition to produce the best possible price for the greatest possible Canadian security.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the previous government that ran a competition to select a company internationally to create the next generation fighter plane.

Oral Questions

The current CF-18s will begin to come to the end of their useful life in this decade. That is why we are proceeding with the purchase of new airplanes, with great support by the way from not just the men and women in uniform but also the industry.

I have heard no concrete suggestion on how we would proceed from the Liberal Party.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will say it again: Canada needs a new, real competition to meet our needs here in Canada, to meet the needs of the Canadian industry and to meet our security needs. That is what must be done. We need to look at how the facts are changing. The government is taking an ideological approach that makes no sense. That is the Liberal Party of Canada's concrete suggestion.

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, procuring the F-35s is supported not only by the Canadian Forces, but also by the aerospace industry in Canada, particularly in Quebec. The proposal to kill this industry makes no sense. That is why the Liberal Party is getting the cold shoulder.

* * *

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government will yet come to the conclusion that it has to have an open competition. That is an inevitable fact of life because the option that it is putting forward, the one it is going with, makes no sense.

Another island of profligacy which seems to dominate the life of the Conservative Party is in corrections. Spending directly on care and custody has gone from \$1.1 billion to \$2.1 billion in the last five years. That is a 100% increase in direct spending on care and custody.

What will it take for the government to realize that we cannot have islands of profligacy in defence and corrections if we are seriously asking Canadians to pull in their belts—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always interesting to observe the priorities of the Liberal Party. The only spending it opposes is anything to do with cracking down on criminals or supporting our men and women in uniform.

For obvious reasons, our priorities on this side are very different. We have a responsibility to our men and women in uniform to give them the best equipment they deserve and we have a responsibility to keep dangerous and repeat offenders off the streets.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the failure on Keystone shows how this out-of-touch government is mishandling our key trading partnerships.

The Americans understand that protecting the economy and the environment go hand in hand, yet our government has stuck its head in the oil sands, exporting unrefined bitumen and killing thousands of Canadian jobs.

Thankfully for Canadians, New Democrat MPs have flown to Washington to help explain that most Canadians disagree with the Conservatives.

When will the Conservatives start putting Canadian jobs and the environment first?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a bizarre anti-trade mission the NDP has travelled to Washington to fight against the creation of Canadian jobs. Apparently, those NDP members forgot to ask for permission from their union bosses. Today, Buzz Hargrove supported the Keystone project because it would generate thousands of jobs. The NDP is totally out of touch with ordinary Canadians and economic reality. Send in the clowns.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the opposition leader, the Prime Minister appeared on Fox News and criticized the Canadian government for refusing to go to Iraq.

Conservatives know what our MPs are doing in Washington. What the Conservatives failed to do was stand up for Canadian jobs and the environment.

Like Americans with Keystone, first nations communities in B.C. do not want the risky Enbridge and TMX pipelines going through their communities.

When will the Conservatives stop playing oil sands cheerleader and agree to consult and protect British Columbian communities?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are extremely fortunate to have the third-largest proven oil reserves in the world. This project will generate hundreds of thousands of jobs, trillions of dollars in economic activity and revenue to support social services, including education and health.

Are the NDP members so star-struck by jet-setting Hollywood stars that they are blind to the needs of Canadian workers and their families?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government does not understand that in the 21st century, jobs and the environment go hand in hand. That is why two of my colleagues are currently in Washington to pick up the government's slack. The United States has decided to allow more time for studying the Keystone pipeline project because it is concerned about the environmental impact. However, on this side of the border, the Conservatives continue to move forward with blinders on.

Will this government follow the example of our neighbours to the South and take the time to truly assess the environmental and economic impact of the Keystone pipeline project?

Oral Questions

●(1435)

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Keystone XL will create tens of thousands of jobs and generate billions of dollars in economic activity. These revenues will help fund important social services such as health care and education. Nonetheless, the NDP has gone to the United States, determined to hinder this project and job prospects for Canadians. The NDP position would be laughable if it were not so harmful to Canada's national interests.

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues are in Washington to tell Americans that the majority of Canadians want natural resources to be developed in a sustainable manner.

Both the environment and thousands of jobs are at risk. Several refineries have already closed their doors in Montreal East resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs, especially in my riding. The facts are there and speak for themselves. Now the government wants to export thousands of jobs outside the country. That is exactly what will happen with the Keystone project.

When will this government prepare a plan for the sustainable development of Canadian resources and the accompanying jobs?

[English]

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP seems oblivious to the facts and does not listen very well either.

This project would generate hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs and millions of dollars in economic activity. Does the NDP care at all about Canadian workers and their families? Is it so ideologically driven that it is blind to the interests of Canadians?

* * *

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about families. Yesterday, the minister accused me of using scare tactics, but the fact is that Montreal families are worried that the Champlain Bridge might collapse. Reports tell of crumbling concrete and eroding steel.

Yesterday, I asked the minister if he had a plan for Montrealers if their bridge is shut down while they wait for a new one. He did not have an answer. I will ask again today.

If the Champlain Bridge has to close, what is the government going to do about it?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the difference between them and us is that they want to close the bridge and we want to keep it open and work on it to keep it safe. That is the only difference.

Those members do not care about the population. They care about political ideas. We are doing the job.

[Translation]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's plan for the new Champlain Bridge

may cause more problems than it will solve. Montrealers are seriously considering avoiding the new bridge and using the others. Access to the south shore will be even more congested. Is that the government's solution to traffic problems?

When will the government present a plan that truly meets the needs of Montrealers?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as usual this member is mixing up jurisdictions. He now wants us, rather than the City of Montreal, to make plans for Montrealers. The federal government owns two bridges and 50% of another bridge in the Montreal area. We will manage what falls under our jurisdiction and let the province manage what falls under its jurisdiction, which he does not understand. He always wants to mix everything up. We are working with facts and not with hypotheses about what will happen in 10 years. We will build a new bridge and we are investing in the existing bridge to make it safer.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government wants to engage in free trade talks with countries that are clearly opposed to supply management. Producers in Quebec and Ontario want to keep this system, which allows family farms to survive.

Will this government admit that it is threatening producers' livelihoods by going ahead with these talks? Will the government recognize that it wants to use supply management as a bargaining tool?

●(1440)

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to defend and promote Canada's interests in every sector of our economy, including supply management.

After a review of the framework that was released on Saturday by the trans-Pacific partnership, TPP, partners, we determined that Canada can lead and even exceed the ambition set out in that framework.

All countries approach negotiations with a view to protecting their interests. Canada's approach to the TPP will not be any different from our free trade negotiations with the European Union.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, the government is saying one thing and doing the opposite. The government cannot be trusted.

Last week, the Minister of International Trade said that it was not in Canada's interest to participate in negotiations to create a trans-Pacific free trade zone. However, the next day, the Prime Minister himself voiced his support for these negotiations. Either the government is improvising or it is giving in to pressure. And, it is the dairy and poultry producers who may have to pay the price.

Oral Questions

Can the government finally set the record straight? Is it going to stand up for Canadian producers, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have always been clear. We would only join negotiations if it were in the best interests of Canadians.

We are standing up for supply management. Unlike the NDP, we do our due diligence first.

Last Saturday we reviewed the negotiation framework for the trans-Pacific partnership and are now confident that Canada can meet that ambition and even exceed it. As such, we formally expressed our willingness to join the TPP negotiations. We know that increasing Canada's ties to the Asia-Pacific countries will bring more jobs and opportunities and greater prosperity to hard-working Canadians in every region of our country.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is another about-face between a minister and the Prime Minister.

Wheat farmers saw it last spring when the Minister of Agriculture told them that he would not dismantle the Wheat Board without a vote by prairie farmers. Six months later, there was no vote.

Now the government wants dairy and poultry farmers to just "trust it".

Farming families are asking for a simple answer to a simple question: Is the government dismantling supply management, yes or no?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we value the supply management sector in this country. We had it in our campaign platform, unlike the NDP. We brought it forward in a throne speech, which those members voted against.

Yes, we are with the supply management sector.

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SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 40,000 more Canadians were unemployed this month than last but the minister remains committed to cutting 600 call centre jobs at the EI centres. Statistics show that only 32% of incoming calls are being answered within required times and 51%, over half, are being hung up on.

It is time for the Prime Minister to get involved in this file. Will he walk over and tell his minister to fix this mess? He should walk over, because if he calls he will probably not get through.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is overhauling all of our service delivery programs so that we can modernize them to provide better service to Canadians. There are numerous ways that Canadians looking for help from Service Canada can access it. One is through the call centres, which have a

much better record than what the member purports, but they can also click on the Internet and they can show up in person, because all of our front-line services are still there to serve Canadians.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2006 Monte Solberg was minister for Service Canada, and he went to cut the jobs for summer students. The opposition made such a fuss that the prime minister went over and told Monte, "Fix this, Monte". To his credit, he had that program put back in.

Canadian unemployed are hurting. They are missing monthly payments. They are going six weeks without cheques. They are running their households on maxed-out credit cards. Will he walk over and tell his minister, "Fix this mess"?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are making every effort to improve the service that we provide to Canadians. The way we are doing it is through automation. That is the best way to get fast service. We are consolidating our EI processes to make them more efficient as well, because Canadians deserve their assistance quickly. That is why we are working to make the system more efficient, more effective and more affordable.

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SENIORS

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the junior finance minister falsely claimed this party voted against an extension of the time to convert RRSPs to RRIFs during our recent recession. The fact is we suggested this measure, we supported this measure, and I voted for this measure.

It is sad to see this Conservative government shamelessly misleading the House to hide the fact that it is refusing to help these seniors. Why will they not give seniors more time to convert their RRSPs into RRIFs so that they can at least try to rebuild their value?

•(1445)

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals vote against so much that it is hard to keep track of what they vote for and what they vote against. There is very little that we have put forward that they have voted in favour of. We actually have extended, from 69 to 71, the age for seniors to roll their RRSPs into RRIFs.

I will say what I know is factually correct: they voted against the tax-free savings account. This measure has been tremendously successful. It is an opportunity for people to save, tax protected, for their retirement, and I am quite sure that they voted against that. In fact, they may stand up and admit it.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Associate Minister of National Defence said that our allies understand the importance of the F-35 program. Apparently, he did not get their memos. The Americans are on the verge of withdrawing from the program entirely. Norway, Australia and the United Kingdom are also considering withdrawing, and the Netherlands has already backed out. It is quite clear that the government is not getting the message from our allies.

Will the government finally launch a transparent bidding process for a new plane?

[English]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is engaging in fearmongering about the importance of the F-35 program, a program that is critical to maintaining Canada's sovereignty, supporting our military men and women and creating aerospace jobs for Canadians. We are on track, we are on time and we are staying with the program.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): If the government would show leadership and demand that economic spinoff clauses be included in a bidding process for fighter jets, the Canadian industry would benefit from more jobs anyway. The government is saying that the price of the F-35s will drop once the factories making the planes are running full throttle, but that may never happen because we will likely be the only ones ordering these planes.

Why is this government so bent on wasting taxpayers' money on planes that no one wants? The F-35 program has stalled; does the government have a plan B for replacing our CF-18s?

[English]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only is there a plan B, but there is a plan A to ensure that we acquire the best possible equipment for our men and women. Moreover, we are one of nine international nations that are part of this program. It was the Liberal government of the day that got us involved in this to begin with.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the point is that plan A is not working here. Yesterday the associate minister of defence claimed again that our allies "... understand the importance of this program". Apparently, Mr. Speaker, he missed the memo. Let me share the news: Israel, Australia, Turkey, and Norway are all reconsidering their orders, and the Americans are talking about pulling out entirely. The Conservatives insist everything is fine.

The F-35 purchase has become a fiasco. When will the government admit its expensive mistake and put this boondoggle of a contract out to public tender?

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government and our closest military allies understand the importance of this program to the protection of our sovereignty. Canada is not the only country among our closest allies

warning critics of the damage their reckless plans would cause to our military and aerospace workers.

I am pleased that Secretary Panetta has taken a similar action to warn Congress of the reckless short-sighted implications such a proposal could have. If our opposition members had their way, they would cancel the equipment our air force agrees is the best it needs to do its job in safety and to key effect.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is the same line again. To the associate minister and the Prime Minister, living in denial is a dangerously expensive and irresponsible approach to military procurement.

The facts here are simple. The economics are simple. The government says the F-35 price tag will go down when the planes are in full production, but when we are the only ones ordering them, that price can only skyrocket.

If the Americans pull out of the F-35 program, this plane is unaffordable, so what is the government's backup plan? Why is the government hell-bent on blowing the budget on a plane that everyone else is walking away—

• (1450)

The Speaker: The hon. Associate Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely untrue. There is no indication that anybody is walking away from the F-35 program. The aircraft are coming off the production line. Pilots are flying them. They are being delivered to countries. Our program is on track and on time, and we are staying with it.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, week after week, month after month, Syria's brutal regime is cracking down on innocent civilians by killing them in cold blood. We know that Canada has been an active and vocal opponent of these atrocities.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs please reiterate to the House Canada's position regarding actions of the Assad regime against the Syrian people?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the campaign of violence and terror against the Syrian people must end. This government has called for President Assad to step down. Our government has taken decisive action by imposing very tough sanctions on the regime and on the key actors who are causing the violence. Canada stands with the Syrian people in their time of need.

While I have this opportunity, I would like to strongly advise any Canadians currently in Syria to leave through commercial options while they are still available.

*Oral Questions***CAMPAIGN FINANCING**

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Conservative Party of Canada pled guilty to violating the Canada Elections Act, exceeding spending limits and improper reporting. It was charged the maximum fine allowed under the law. As a result of the Conservative scheme, 17 Conservative riding associations received illegitimate rebate money, and Elections Canada has outlined which Conservative riding associations benefited from this illegal scheme.

My question is for the Receiver General. What steps has the government taken to recoup this ill-gotten money from the Conservative Party of Canada?

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 thought the hon. member was rising today to apologize on behalf of the NDP. Just last week the NDP had to admit that it broke the Canadian election law, that it violated the law in attempting to use the power of the political donation tax credit in order to fund a third party organization. It did so in violation of the law. It has now had to admit it.

On this side of the House, every single Conservative accused of wrongdoing has now been cleared. We are very pleased with the outcome. We will continue to stand by the fact that we followed all the rules.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible. They are unable to even differentiate between a donation made following the death of our leader and an illegal procedure to get around the law. Is that possible? Taxpayers' money was given to the Conservative Party illegally. Elections Canada has already indicated which riding associations received illegal money and how much they received. The Conservatives have admitted that they violated the act. They know how much illegal money they took.

What are they waiting for? Are they going to do what needs to be done and reimburse the taxpayers?

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 hon. member forgot to mention that it is his party that admitted to violating the Canada Elections Act. They have admitted it. The NDP members should rise in the House of Commons and apologize to all Canadians.

Every member of our party accused of wrongdoing has now been cleared. We are proud of this outcome. We followed all the rules and we will continue to do so.

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PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Peterborough clearly said that he planned on interfering with the work of the Federal Court and the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in the CBC matter. He has put pressure to bring a judge to the committee and—

surprise, surprise—he was mocked. Now he is asking for access to the full documents, which the parliamentary law clerk has deemed unlawful.

Does the government support this member's attack on the justice system?

• (1455)

[*English*]

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we support, believe in and applaud is the member for Peterborough's efforts to hold CBC accountable for the money it gets from taxpayers.

The committee the member is referencing can decide its own business, what witnesses to call and what documents to ask for.

What the member for Peterborough is simply doing is what he promised his constituents he would do, which is to stand up for value for taxpayers' dollars. Unlike the member for Timmins—James Bay, who promised he would stand up in the House of Commons and vote against the long gun registry, he has a record of standing up for his constituents; the member opposite has a record of abandoning his.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the duck hunter across the way heard the question or not, because I do not know what the heritage minister is doing standing and responding to a question about undermining parliamentary convention. Maybe it is his desire to attack the CBC. Maybe he is just excited and wants to talk about guns. The other day he got up about the Wheat Board.

However, he is not answering the fundamental question. Does the government support the efforts by the member for Peterborough to intervene in a direct court action when the parliamentary clerk says it is unlawful—yes or no?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, the committee can decide its own business and its own witnesses all at once.

The member opposite raised three issues.

He talked about the Wheat Board. We said what we would do in the campaign; we delivered.

He talked about the gun registry. We said what we would do in the campaign and we delivered.

With regard to accountability for the CBC, we said in the campaign that we would demand accountability. We are delivering for the member for Peterborough.

We have a record of standing up, making promises to Canadians, fulfilling those promises, and getting re-elected.

The member made promises to his constituents and abandoned them. He should be ashamed of himself.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party of Canada supports the amendments to Bill C-10 proposed by the Government of Quebec. The federal government may well have jurisdiction to legislate on criminal matters, but Quebec and the other provinces manage the administration of justice and are stuck dealing with the consequences. The government did not even bother to come up with a proper French version.

My question for the Minister of Justice is simple. Will he agree to allow Quebec, by decree, to opt out of the requirement to publish the identity of a minor? They call this lasting security. Will he agree, yes or no?

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave us a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe, and that is what we are doing. The provinces have given us a number of recommendations in the past. We took them into consideration when we created this bill. We have made changes that were requested by Quebec and the other provinces, regarding pretrial detention, adult sentences, and deferred custody and supervision under order. We will protect Canadians and will continue to protect them, unlike the Liberal Party.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for decades Canadian delegations to international conferences have been understood to represent Canada, not just the governing party. The Conservative government broke this tradition in 2006 for COP 12 in Nairobi. Opposition MPs were again included at COP 14 at Poznan.

Since the government is again refusing to include opposition MPs, we are travelling on our own.

Will the government commit today to providing access for us to Canada's meetings?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I conveyed a respectful message to my critics across the floor some weeks ago, explaining that I would not, and we would not, be taking a large entourage to Durban.

I would also remind my colleague that pairing practices that were relevant during our previous minority government are no longer appropriate now that Canadians have elected a strong, stable, environmentally sensitive Conservative government.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the CRTC has now rejected an attempt by large Internet companies to enforce wholesale usage-based billing.

That is good news for Canadians using smaller ISPs, but it does nothing to protect customers of other Internet providers, leaving 94% of consumers behind.

When will the Conservatives finally present a real plan for digital issues that protects all Canadian consumers from being ripped off?

• (1500)

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, at our government's request and thanks to the hard work of the President of the Treasury Board at the time, the CRTC has re-examined the issue of usage-based billing to ensure fairness for consumers of small Internet service providers.

Canadians have been very clear in expressing concern with earlier UBB decisions. Let me clear. Our government's policy will always be to encourage competition, increase consumer choice and minimize regulation.

This is the plan. We have a vision, not those guys.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we understand is that the government is turning its back on the majority of Internet users. Indeed, nearly all Canadians get their Internet service from the big suppliers. Yesterday's decision does absolutely nothing for them. Some 94% of Internet users have been abandoned by this government, which is once again protecting its friends in large corporations rather than ordinary Canadians.

Will this government finally admit that affordable Internet access has become a basic need for everyone?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, it is very simple. We need to increase competition and choice for consumers and reduce regulation. That is the plan; that is our vision.

We introduced the Broadband Canada program in 2010. The goal of that program is to reach 98% of Canada's vast territory. What did those folks do? They voted against it. And just yesterday, the member for Timmins—James Bay said that it was a great day for Canadians, because of the CRTC's decision, so frankly, Mr. Speaker, if you want inconsistency, look no further than across the floor.

* * *

[English]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country are increasingly concerned that section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act infringes upon our most important human right, namely the freedom of expression.

This is the reason why I was pleased to introduce Bill C-304, which will repeal section 13.

My bill has the wide-ranging support of journalists, civil libertarians and the Muslim Canadian Congress. People from all points of the political spectrum agree that this part of Canada's Human Rights Act needs to be repealed.

Oral Questions

Can the Minister of Justice please inform this House of the government's position on Bill C-304, protecting freedom?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Westlock—St. Paul for introducing this legislation, and for his commitment to the promotion and protection of free speech among all Canadians.

Our government believes that section 13 is not an appropriate or effective means for combatting hate propaganda. We believe the Criminal Code is the best vehicle to prosecute these crimes.

Therefore, I urge all members to support Bill C-304 and our government's forthcoming amendments to strengthen the hate provisions of the Criminal Code. I say to the opposition, get on side with the media. *Maclean's* magazine, the *National Post* and even the *Toronto Star* say this section should go.

* * *

IRAN

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as per the evidence, the Iranian regime has accelerated its nuclear weaponization program, continued its state sponsorship of terrorism and genocidal incitement, and intensified its massive domestic repression.

Will the government sanction the Central Bank of Iran, put the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on the terrorist list, this epicentre of the Iranian threats, sanction the Iranian crude oil sector and those companies that trade with IRGC entities, and expand the orbit of sanctions against those entities and individuals engaged in the massive assault on human rights in Iran?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Mount Royal for his question and his work in this regard.

Canada today has the toughest sanctions against the Iranian regime in the world.

We are incredibly concerned by the IEA report on its nuclear weaponization program. We are tremendously concerned about the Saudi assassination plot. We are tremendously concerned by the abysmal and terrible record on human rights.

We will continue to work with our allies to ensure that we continue to have the toughest sanctions on this despicable regime.

* * *

● (1505)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since 2004 Health Canada has reported that levels of trihalomethane in Fort McKay First Nation drinking water have exceeded federal guidelines 87% of the time.

Exposure to this substance can cause low birth weight, miscarriage, birth defects and some forms of cancer.

Residents are already suffering severe skin rashes. How many more first nation children and elders must suffer before the government finally provides a safe source of drinking water?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have made major investments in our water action plan for first nations since 2006. It is ongoing. We have done a national assessment, so we know where to set our priorities and focus our resources.

We will be introducing legislation on water so we can have enforceable standards, and we will develop regulations with our first nation partners.

In addition, the government has implemented a comprehensive monitoring system for this area of Alberta to make sure that the water quality is being appropriately sampled.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a key economic priority for our government is the Keystone XL pipeline that will create over 140,000 jobs in Canada.

However, the opposition parties seem to disagree. They do not want these jobs, or any jobs, in the oil sands.

NDP leadership candidate Brian Topp and the former environment critic have openly called for a moratorium on oil sands development.

Could the Minister of Natural Resources inform the House about the latest NDP anti-jobs plan?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to have domestic policy disagreements. It is another to go to the United States, our largest trading partner, and advocate against Canadian exports. It is perhaps the most bizarre foreign trade mission I have ever heard of.

NDP members are apparently proud of what they should be ashamed of. They undermine what they should support. They take trips to foreign capitals when they should stay home. They are lost and unfit to govern.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Sayed Sharifi is an Afghan interpreter who risked his life to help Canadian soldiers.

They have hailed Mr. Sharifi's bravery under fire and his integrity and say he is the most skilled interpreter they have ever encountered. His life is at risk after receiving death threats from the Taliban.

He is exactly the kind of person the Afghan interpreter visa was designed for. However, Mr. Sharifi's application was denied after he expressed concern with the program's inefficiency.

Will the minister do the right thing and ensure this brave servant of our troops gets the visa he so richly deserves?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government created a special program to provide opportunities to resettle in Canada for Afghan nationals who worked with our troops in Afghanistan for a period of at least one year and who are facing individualized risk to their life or safety.

There is a process in place. The process is not one where politicians arbitrarily decide who qualifies based on media reports. It is an assessment done by highly trained public servants from several departments who have, in this particular case, reviewed this application on three separate occasions and found that there are credibility problems and contradictions in this application.

He has been given the same access as everyone else who has qualified for the program, and the officials in charge have determined that he does not qualify.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, moments ago the member for Etobicoke North asked the Minister of the Environment about the inclusion of opposition members of Parliament concerned with climate change.

The accreditation process is a stroke of the pen. Where opposition members of Parliament are prepared to pay their own way, will the government commit to ensuring that opposition members of Parliament go to Durban as representatives of Canada?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources, just commented, political disagreements over the policies of our government are appropriate in this House, but I will not take a critic from an opposition party, which is opposed to every single responsible position we take with regard to climate change, greenhouse gas reduction and adaptation.

With regard to the minister who asked this question, it is under consideration.

* * *

• (1510)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this point of order concerns the Hon. Prime Minister.

When I asked my questions, the Prime Minister tried to ridicule me by mimicking me. By trying to ridicule me, he made himself look foolish. I very respectfully ask that he apologize.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that anything the member has raised poses a question of unparliamentary language. I

Routine Proceedings

know that there is often lots of enthusiasm in the House and he should be proud that he inspired some enthusiasm today.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out today in question period, yesterday the Minister of State for Finance falsely claimed that the Liberal Party voted against an extension of time to convert RRSPs to RRIFs during the recent recession. In fact, the Liberal Party voted for clause 15 of Bill C-10 and the bill itself in 2009. He misled the House.

In view of the fact that my friend failed to take the opportunity during question period to stand up and do the right thing and apologize for misleading the House, I want to invite my friend to do what I know he has the class to do and to do so now. Perhaps while he is up, he could tell seniors why the government is refusing to give them more time to convert their RRSPs.

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to have an extension of question period.

As I said in my answer, it is hard to keep track of how much the Liberals vote against because most everything they vote against. The actual bill, they voted against.

The Speaker: It is important to remember that question period has ended and that if members have disagreements over facts or elements of motions, they should maybe take it up in the next question period.

I see the hon. member for Halifax West is rising again. I hope he has a point of order and not a continuation of the debate.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, it could become a question of privilege. In fact, this party voted for Bill C-10 in 2009. My hon. friend is misleading the House and I would invite him to withdraw his remark.

Hon. Ted Menzies: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the hon. member is speaking about the wrong budget that it was initiated in. It was actually budget 2007 and the Liberals did vote against it in budget 2007.

The Speaker: We have heard enough on this issue. If members want to clarify their positions on it, they can do so at other opportunities but not through points of order.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 10th report later this day.

* * *

STATISTICS ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-346, An Act to amend the Statistics Act (Chief Statistician and mandatory long-form census).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to have the member for Burnaby—New Westminster second this very important bill.

The bill would restore the long form census and also would make sure that politics was not involved in the hiring of the chief statistician. All members would be involved in selecting the chief statistician. The bill would give direct questioning to the chief statistician himself.

What is really important to note is Canada has thrown away its long form census. That undermines many surveys that are conducted because it is used in that process. This hurts the economy and the way we actually make decisions about spending. It is my pleasure to table this bill that would fix that problem.

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

* * *

●(1515)

INCOME TAX ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-347, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for gifts).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce this bill.

In the last number of budgets the Conservative government has been reducing the charitable amount allowed when people make donations to charities. This bill would reverse that trend. The bill would provide for charities to get more money back at tax time so that they would be able to provide services in the community.

It is important to note that the not-for-profit charitable sector accounts for 8% of the Canadian economy. That sector has been suffering. It has had no tax policy changes. This bill would level the playing field and provide more of an economic hit for our country than a general corporate tax cut would.

I am pleased to table the bill in an effort to help support Canadian charities and to make sure that they remain sustainable with the economy the way it is right now.

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

WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-348, An Act to prevent psychological harassment in the workplace and to make consequential amendments to another Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce this bill which deals with psychological harassment in the workplace. The bill was brought forward by a former Quebec member who is no longer in the House, but I have introduced it the last couple of times.

The bill would bring psychological harassment under the labour code. This bill would protect people who are psychologically harassed at work. There are laws similar to this in Ontario and Saskatchewan. This bill would make it more uniform and would protect workers from harassment in their workplace. We have seen the reason we need this kind of legislation in this country with the recent situation involving the RCMP.

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

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CANADA CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-349, An Act to amend the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act and the Textile Labelling Act (animal fur or skin).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it may not be common knowledge, but many products on Canadian shelves actually have dog and cat fur in them. Over two million dogs and cats are slain for their fur, which is imported into countries like Canada, but consumers are not aware of that.

The bill would require that if dog or cat fur was used in a product, the product would have to have a label to that effect so consumers would know. This is important because of the inhumane nature involved in the slaying of dogs and cats, animals that we have as pets in Canada. If Canadians knew that their child's toy or a scarf or coat contained dog or cat fur, I am sure most Canadians would not choose those products.

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

* * *

FEDERAL LAW—CIVIL LAW HARMONIZATION ACT NO. 3

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC) moved that Bill S-3, A third Act to harmonize federal law with the civil law of Quebec and to amend certain Acts in order to ensure that each language version takes into account the common law and the civil law be read a first time.

Routine Proceedings

HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time)

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier this day be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

• (1520)

[Translation]

PETITIONS

MINING

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by more than 540 residents in my riding who oppose the opening of the Elmtree mine. This mine will operate for a very short 18 months, but it will cause significant damage to the residents and the environment in the Chaleur region. This mining operation will lower property values and diminish the quality of life of the local people. The Nigadoo River basin and Chaleur Bay will be polluted, which will threaten the drinking water of a number of residents in my riding.

They are calling on Parliament and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to refuse to give the Castle Resources mining company a mining permit.

[English]

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Peter Braid (Kitchener—Waterloo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition certified by the clerk of petitions. The petition is from constituents in my riding and is regarding the CCSVI treatment for multiple sclerosis.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition to present from a number of people in western Canada, particularly in and around Saskatoon. They are concerned about Canadians who are suffering from both chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency and multiple sclerosis, and the fact that many of those Canadians are denied testing or treatment for CCSVI in Canada.

The petitioners are calling upon the Minister of Health to consult broadly with experts who have practical experience in treating CCSVI. They call upon the Minister of Health to proceed urgently with phase III clinical trials. They ask the Minister of Health to develop a follow-up scheme so that the case history of these patients can be properly tracked.

I am pleased to present that petition today.

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. The first is in support of my Bill C-322.

The petitioners state that horses are ordinarily kept and treated as sporting and companion animals. They are not raised as food-producing animals. They are commonly administered drugs which are prohibited for use in the food chain. The petitioners ask the House of Commons to adopt into legislation an act to amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act, thus prohibiting the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption as well as horsemeat products for human consumption.

The petitioners are from New Brunswick.

CANADA POST

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have never had a petition as big as this one. There are over 2,000 names, of which 1,000 come from Quesnel, British Columbia, over 300 from Nelson in the West Kootenay region, and the rest from other parts of British Columbia.

These citizens are concerned that Canada Post announced it will be removing mail processing from local cities, towns and communities in British Columbia and sending it to Vancouver, which it is already doing. This has resulted in the reduction of services and loss of good-paying jobs, which has negatively affected our communities.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to support local economies by preserving local jobs and maintaining mail processing at post offices in local cities, towns and communities throughout British Columbia.

The other petition deals with the same subject in regard to the post office.

The petitioners are asking that prior to making any changes to their mail processing and transportation network, Canada Post conduct a thorough and in-depth study into the service and economic impact on local communities and use those results to hold full, open and transparent consultations with local communities that will be impacted by the changes.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition regarding chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, CCSVI.

While the government has announced clinical trials for CCSVI, all there is right now are announcements. What is needed is action.

Canadians with MS cannot afford to wait as any delay possibly means more damage.

Some 30% to 50% of MS patients who are untreated worsen by one EDSS score in one year and 50% with relapsing remitting MS later develop a progressive form of the disease for which there are no drugs.

Privilege

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Minister of Health to consult experts actively engaged in the diagnosis and treatment of CCSVI to undertake phase III clinical trials on an urgent basis with a large patient participation in multiple centres across Canada and to require follow-up care.

• (1525)

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition to the House on behalf of concerned Canadians regarding the public funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The petitioners are asking the government and the House to end the public funding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The corporation receives about \$1.1 billion per annum. That gives it an unfair advantage over its private sector competitors.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of petitioners in my riding.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support my Bill C-305 and to enact a Canadian public transit strategy. They desire a fast, reliable, accessible and affordable public transit system across Canada. They want the federal government to provide a permanent investment plan to support public transit, establish a federal funding mechanism for public transit, and work together with all levels of government to provide sustainable, predictable, long-term and adequate funding for public transit.

SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition brought to me by the residents of Bonavista North in my riding.

The petitioners would like to call to the attention of the House the community partnership office with Service Canada. The agreement in place is to help out smaller rural areas with Service Canada, but the partnership offices will no longer exist after the end of March 2012.

This is a vital service, especially for seniors and those most vulnerable, but now it will be an outreach program with Service Canada in Gander, which is several hours away. The problem is that the government will be closing the processing centres as well for Service Canada and services will be diminished in these areas.

The community partnership that the petitioners speak of is a vital service and becoming increasingly vital now that these cuts and measures are about to come.

I thank the constituents in Bonavista North in the areas of New-Wes-Valley, Deadman's Bay, Badger's Quay and other areas of the riding of Bonavista North. I hope the House will find this in good position.

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.

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member Mount Royal.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

TELEPHONE CALLS TO MOUNT ROYAL CONSTITUENTS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege raised by some very troubling circumstances. My riding office is receiving numerous calls in this matter and thus I am raising it now, as per the requirement that questions of privilege be raised at the first available opportunity.

It seems that constituents in my riding of Mount Royal have been receiving calls from a telephone number identified as “campaign research”, asking my constituents if they intend to support the Conservative Party in the impending, if not imminent, byelection.

The very fact that I am standing here in this place and otherwise discharging my responsibilities clearly illustrates that there is no vacancy in the electoral district of Mount Royal and thus no pending byelection. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is you who informs the House of such vacancies.

However, as personally disconcerting as this matter is, it has more important serious consequences for the work of a member of Parliament and indeed should be a matter of concern for all members of the House.

Accordingly I raise this question of privilege as I believe this matter constitutes a prima facie breach of my parliamentary privilege and prejudices the work of the House and this institution. If the Speaker so agrees, I would move the appropriate motion at the appropriate time.

It is long established, and O'Brien and Bosc so notes it on page 113. I am quoting from a ruling by Speaker Bosley, although it is sometimes mis-attributed to Speaker Fraser. The ruling is as follows:

It should go without saying that a Member of Parliament needs to perform his functions effectively and that anything tending to cause confusion as to a Member's identity creates the possibility of an impediment to the fulfilment of that Member's functions.

Here is the key point, Mr. Speaker. I continue:

Any action which impedes or tends to impede a Member in the discharge of his duties is a breach of privilege.

Further, as per speaker's ruling of May 3, 2006, and found in *Hansard Debates*, and reiterating a line of similar Speakers' rulings, Speakers have consistently upheld the right of the House to the services of its members free from “intimidation, obstruction and interference”. That is why I say this is a matter of concern not only to myself and my constituents but to the House as a whole.

Privilege

While there may be additional issues of misusing an electoral list and other conduct beyond the purview of the Speaker and the parliamentary process, this practice inhibits and impedes the exercise of my parliamentary functions or, indeed, of any member of Parliament so targeted.

For example, beyond the phone calls, emails and requests for meetings as a result of these calls, which themselves are an encumbrance, it causes confusion among the electorate. It impedes me in the discharge of my functions, which as O'Brien and Bosc quoted earlier states, constitutes a breach of privilege.

Constituents are asking my office and myself when will this imminent, but as I said, non-existent byelection, in fact be occurring? Calls have come in asking, and constituents are surprised, if not shocked, by this, whether I am still serving. Such questions cause damage to my reputation and credibility and would do so to any member of the House.

Just 10 or so days ago in a householder circulated to my constituents, I outlined, as members of the House do when sending these householders, various initiatives in Parliament. I made reference to items I hoped to see adopted in the House. Accordingly how are my constituents supposed to reconcile my reference to things I am fighting for in Parliament with what they hear "The member is, or has, stepped down?"

The insinuation therefore that I am abandoning my MP role here is at variance with the truth. I am saying this at the risk of sounding self-serving just to put the facts on the record, but I may have more motions on the order paper than any other member of this place. I seek to take my responsibilities as a parliamentarian very seriously, be it in committee, where now before the justice and legal affairs committee I have some 50 amendments with respect to the proposed omnibus crime bill, or in parliamentary debate, where like many other members in the House I remain an active member in take note debates, or just to use today as a case study, like other members in the House, I posed a question in question period and earlier made a statement.

• (1530)

However, the key point is that work, as it would be with regard to the work of any member in the House, gets overshadowed and overtaken if my constituents are made to think that I am not even here or am about to leave.

Mr. Speaker, I refer your attention to page 112 of O'Brien and Bosc on this matter. In the past, Speakers have found prima facie breaches of privilege related to the damaging of a member's reputation. Therein are references to two Speaker's rulings, one of April 2005, in relation to a matter raised by the then-member for Windsor West, and one in October 2005 on a question from the then member for Bourassa.

These rulings dealt with mailings that contained false and misleading information to constituents or that misrepresented their source. While, and I understand well, the Speaker cannot intervene on matters of debate and on disputes as to facts, these rulings demonstrate that prima facie breaches occur, and this is the important point, as you know only too well, Mr. Speaker, when the cumulative effect of such misrepresentation of facts either causes confusion as to

the identity of the member or attacks one's reputation such as to damage his or her credibility in a serious way in the minds of the electorate.

Simply put, I have made no announcement about stepping down as the member of Parliament for Mount Royal. While others might, and I would hate to cast aspersions on my ageism, think that I am stepping down, there is in fact no byelection planned or pending. Any suggestion otherwise falsely offers a critique that I am not present here in Ottawa and working for my constituents in an ongoing way on matters of concern to them and on matters of concern to the House.

Indeed, misinforming my constituents can create difficulties for any MP. I draw to the attention of the House comments of the Speaker on December 1, 2009, regarding a privilege matter I then raised and which the Speaker agreed in the sense of finding a prima facie breach of my privileges in the matter of false and misleading mailings then sent to my riding. In his comments the Speaker, Mr. Milliken, said:

The privilege here was that a member's ability to do his or her job was interfered with by sending this material into his or her constituency. In this case, it was the member for Mount Royal's constituency.

The material was not accurate and caused problems for the member in doing his job as a member of Parliament...Hon. members know that members raising questions of privilege are not normally trying to settle whether a statement is true or not. It is a matter of whether their privileges as members have been breached.

Indeed, even if one views the question of whether there is a pending byelection as a dispute over facts, though clearly there is no dispute over facts as there is no pending byelection, the spreading of such false information, and this is the important point, is a breach of my privileges and interferes with the discharge of my function, as it would be a prejudice to any of the members of the House involved in such conduct and, indeed, may prejudice the institution of Parliament itself.

Simply put, how am I, or any member, to effectively represent a constituency if the constituents are led to believe that the member is no longer their elected representative? How can one correct the confusion and prejudicial damage that has been done in the minds of those who may think I am no longer their representative in Parliament or no longer discharging my duties?

In short, telling my constituents that I am resigning and that there is a byelection imminently occurring is not only patently false, but the clear and important point here is that it violates my privileges as a member and should be regarded by all members in the House as an unacceptable practice for this institution and its members. The particularly relevant part is that while this occurred in my riding of Mount Royal, nothing is to stop this from occurring in another riding and this practice ends up being an affront to all who serve in this place.

If you require more information on this matter prior to ruling, Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to table appropriate documentation before the House. As I noted before, if you agree that this is a prima facie breach of privilege, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion to refer this matter to committee which, with its investigative powers, could get to the bottom of this and recommend appropriate sanctions in the circumstances where appropriate.

Government Orders

• (1535)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the member's motion for your determination that this is a clear prima facie breach of his privileges as a member of this House. It is the same type of abuse that any one of us could be exposed to.

One point I want to make is that at some point down the road, once it goes to committee, the committee will use its investigative powers, and we are potentially not able ultimately to determine the source or sources of this conduct. That is not an issue that should be of concern for your ruling. Your ruling is simply on whether, on the face of it, it is clearly a breach of his privilege.

It is a breach to any one of us if that type of conduct is allowed to stand. It is important for his constituency to be advised that this House, through you, Mr. Speaker, has made a determination that it is a breach of his privilege. That finding and ruling on your behalf is quite crucial to redress some of the loss and abuse that he has suffered in his relationship with his constituents, so it is quite important that the ruling be made.

I would suggest it is also important that the ruling be made fairly rapidly.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know nothing of the activities that the hon. member has complained of, though it is quite evident and the government is certainly willing to admit that he is in fact here today in Parliament. That, I think, is evident to everybody.

However, it does bring to mind a dilemma that was faced by Sir John A. Macdonald over several decades, when George Brown, holding the editorial pen of *The Globe*, repeatedly wrote that he was about to resign. Though that did go on for several decades, I do not ever recall a point of order being made or a point of privilege being made at that time.

However, if we do see fit to make further submissions, we will advise you.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. members for their interventions. The Chair will take this under advisement.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE ACT

(Bill C-16. On the Order: Government Orders:)

November 15, 2011—Consideration at report stage of Bill C-16, An Act to amend the National Defence Act (military judges)—The Minister of National Defence.

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 practices of this House, Bill C-16, An Act to amend the National Defence Act (military judges), be deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill concurred in at report stage, read the third time and passed)

* * *

KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

BILL C-13—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill and, fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of the order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

I invite all hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate.

If we keep our questions and answers to about a minute each, we should be able to accommodate many members. As has been our accustomed practice, preference will be given to opposition MPs. Although government members will have the opportunity to ask questions, the Chair will recognize more opposition MPs to allow them a chance to question the government.

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here we go again. It is the sixth time in 33 days since we came back in September that the government has moved for time allocation. It is the second time the government has done it on this bill, a bill that is 644 pages long. We have had an absolute minimum number of hours for debate here at second reading, in committee and then back here in the House for report stage and third reading.

It is particularly offensive when we see what has just happened. A few minutes ago the government House leader had all parties' support to run a bill through this House on consent. It was a straightforward bill, deserving of support from all sides. It had support from all sides. That is the third time that has happened in this session of Parliament.

There is no pattern at all in this Parliament of opposition parties acting in an obstructive way. What we are simply asking for, and what we are entitled to, is a reasonable amount of time to debate bills. Again, it is 644 pages and it is a budget bill.

Government Orders

I think it is important that I make the point that follows. I am going to quote from O'Brien and Bosc, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. It states:

The cardinal principle governing Parliament's treatment of financial measures...

I will divert from the quote. There are 644 pages of financial measures in this text.

...was that they be given the fullest possible consideration in committee and in the House.

I am going to quote again, from Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada*. It tells us that:

...no member may be forced to come to a hasty decision, but that every one may have abundant opportunities afforded him of stating his reasons for supporting or opposing the proposed grant.

Again, that is the financial one.

In this light, how can the government House leader possibly justify closing off debate in this way on a budget bill?

● (1545)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps the most debated budget bill in my lifetime, or certainly in my memory.

The budget was introduced in March. The first efforts by the opposition to obstruct the bill were actually to bring down this Parliament and to have an election called. In that election, the essence of our platform and the main subject of debate among the voters was in fact this budget.

It was debated by all Canadians for an entire election. What did Canadians say at the end of that election? They liked that budget so much and wanted the government to do it so much that they gave the government a majority, the first majority government in Canada in four Parliaments.

As a result of that mandate, that request from Canadians that we implement the budget that they debated in that election, we have moved forward with it.

This is the 2011 budget we are talking about. It was introduced in March. If the hon. members opposite have their way, it would not even be passed into law in 2011. We would be having it in 2012. In fact, we might have the 2012 budget before we have the 2011 budget implemented. That is the way the opposition would do it.

This is at a time when we have, on the global stage, economic challenges unprecedented in my lifetime. We have very significant global challenges that need a response and that need the low-tax plan for jobs and growth that we are implementing through this budget implementation bill. That is why we have to do it. We have to deliver on the commitments we made to Canadians to get Canada's economy moving.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader's arguments are absolutely, totally bogus.

There is no justification whatsoever for a majority government to use its majority to try to limit the ability of the opposition to hold the government accountable. An election cannot be used as a card to give the government full rights to bring in time allocation any time it wants. That is just not right.

I believe that Canadians as a whole would not support this new majority government's attitude of arrogance and its feeling that it has the right to prevent the exchange of accountability inside the House of Commons today.

We have this motion today because the government, and in particular the government House leader, have failed to negotiate in good faith to expedite the passage of bills.

The opposition has shown good will. Bills have passed. As just mentioned, a bill passed just prior to this motion. We have shown how quickly we can do things.

My question to the government House leader is this: does he not see the value of having good, solid negotiations with opposition House leaders and opposition members so that we can facilitate good, healthy, accountable debate inside the chamber before continually bringing in time allocation motion after time allocation motion? Does he not see the merit in negotiation?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, what this government values and what Canadians valued in the last election was a government that is prepared to take action to help the Canadian economy. That is what we are doing with this bill: taking action that is required at this challenging time in the global economy.

Let us consider some of the actions that my friends opposite have voted against and now wish to delay with further debate: a hiring credit for small business to ensure and support hiring and the creation of new jobs; tax support for clean energy generation; a tax credit for volunteer firefighters; a new family caregiver tax credit; enhancing the Wage Earner Protection Program Act; a tax credit for children's involvement in music and dance lessons to help local economies; the extension for a further two years of the accelerated capital cost allowance to allow manufacturers and businesses to invest in new equipment to make them more competitive, so that they can compete and create jobs against the rest of the world at a time when we really need to do that.

These are the measures that the other parties are saying should not be allowed to pass. These are the measures that they wish to delay and obstruct further. It was not good enough that they forced an election and tried to prevent these measures from being put in place; now they want to prevent them from being put in place at all this year, when we need them in place before the next taxation year and budget year take effect.

● (1550)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the House leader just said is absolute rubbish. We have never seen a government that has been this arrogant in using the sledgehammer of closure repeatedly over 33 days. It has now used it six times over 33 days. Even the Brian Mulroney government was not that arrogant. Even the Liberals at their worst did not invoke closure all the time.

Government Orders

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, the Conservatives promised during the election campaign to be moderate. There is one other thing they promised with this new bill that we have only been debating for a few hours at report stage: they promised that they would not include the Canadian Securities Regulation Regime Transition Office and would wait for the Supreme Court judgment. Over the last few hours, we have been exposing the lie. They went to the public promising something that they have not delivered, and that is the real reason for this closure. They are closing down now, for the sixth time in 33 days, a whole variety of legislation. They simply do not respect the parliamentary democracy that we live under.

I was attending Remembrance Day ceremonies, like so many other New Democrats. We are proud of the veterans who fought. Many of them died; many of them gave their lives, limbs and mental health, often to preserve parliamentary democracy, and now we are seeing the government rip it up. The government is showing no respect for Parliament, no respect for the chance to debate and no respect for the opposition's ability to bring forward the fact that it has broken its election commitments and promises.

Is that not the real reason the government is invoking closure yet again in this Parliament?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member had any respect for Parliament, he would understand that we have not once moved closure. We are talking about time allocation, whereby we allocate a certain amount of time for the debate of bills.

An hon. member: It's a form of closure.

Mr. Peter Julian: It's closure.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I invite my friend to read the Standing Orders and acquaint himself with the rules of Parliament.

What I can tell you is that it cannot be delayed further. Something that Canadians need at this important time is action on the economy, action to create jobs and economic growth.

I will take one element as an example, the accelerated capital cost allowance, the piece that allows businesses to write off their investments in new equipment and machinery on a quick two-year basis. Jayson Myers from the Canadian manufacturers' association said, "This is something that is very important. Manufacturers, and many businesses generally, and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters strongly support and congratulate the government for extending it in the budget.

That is why Soprema in British Columbia made a multi-million dollar expansion. That is what has helped Celestica move into solar panel manufacturing. It has helped Prévost bus lines in Quebec develop a new robotic system and it has helped Aberfoyle Metal Treaters get a new contract with Boeing to do heat treating. I could go on and on.

We are moving forward with measures to create jobs; they want to stop those measures to create jobs. They tried to do it by forcing an election on this issue and they lost the election on this issue. Canadians asked us to move forward, and that is what we are doing right now: delivering on our low-tax plan for jobs and growth.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, throughout the world and right here in Canada and Quebec, many people are protesting. I think we will have to pitch our tents inside Parliament to make this government understand that, although it may have a majority, it does not have a dictatorial mandate to do whatever it wants, whenever it wants and whenever it sees fit, and to invoke closure with every bill.

We are now rising almost every week in this House to speak out against this government's way of doing things, which does not allow for debate. Debate is democracy. I do not understand why this government, knowing that it has a majority and will win every vote, is incapable of listening to the people. We, the opposition parties, speak on their behalf, as does the government. All of us represent the people, not just those on one side of the House.

We would have liked to talk about the Canada-wide securities commission, which is not at all acceptable to Quebec. This is a bone of contention between the federal government and Quebec, as well as other provinces. The government refuses to discuss it. There is also no unanimity with respect to funding for political parties.

Can the minister tell me why the government refuses to allow debate and why it is constantly shutting down debate? The Conservatives are not acting like a democratic government.

• (1555)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of Quebec and Canada consider the economy, economic growth and job creation to be serious priorities. These are our government's priorities—its top priorities even.

For example, in this budget, we have measures to remove the limit on eligible expenses caregivers can claim for their financially dependent relatives under the medical expense tax credit. To help job creation, we propose helping apprentices in the skilled trades, as well as workers in regulated professions, by making occupational, trade and professional examination fees eligible for the tuition tax credit.

We have many measures related to training and job creation. Our priority is our plan for job creation and economic growth.

[*English*]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every one of us in this room was elected to represent our constituents, and we were elected to be members of Parliament in a parliamentary democracy. A parliamentary democracy does not shut down debate so other points of view are not heard.

I heard from my colleague earlier that this budget was debated last March. Many of us were not in the House last March.

Government Orders

The budget is actually bigger than many telephone books in many of our small towns around the country, and yet the debate is being limited so that we cannot shine light on what is in the budget.

If the debate were allowed to proceed, the government would get to paint a glorious picture of what it thinks it is doing, and we, as the opposition, would get to comment on what is good and what is lacking in that budget.

Surely, parliamentary democracy requires time for parliamentarians to debate. The government cannot start behaving as if we were living in an autocracy.

My question is, will the government allow the opposition to debate this without time constraints?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, this budget has been debated more than any other budget I can imagine in my lifetime.

It was the subject of an election campaign. If my colleague from Newton—North Delta did not have an opportunity to review that big document, the budget, in March, and she did not have a chance to shine light on it during that period of time when all Canadians were making their choices on how they wanted to vote and who they wanted as their government, then I do not believe another day of debate would help her.

Canadians had a chance to make a choice on this budget. They debated this budget, not just parliamentarians, but all Canadians. Those Canadians voted and gave a strong mandate to our government to deliver on our low tax plan for jobs and growth. They gave us a mandate to do it months ago. The budget was introduced in March, and my colleagues opposite are saying they have not had time to study it yet.

Where were they during the election? Where have they been for the past six months? It has been there in black and white. It is time to get on. Let us deliver results for the economy and let us deliver those results now.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier it was said that it is not closure the hon. member is talking about here, but time allocation.

Certainly, the way it is playing out right now is an affront to anybody who is elected, no matter where they sit in the House.

There are so many new members in the House from both sides. I have heard many Conservative members speak eloquently about this particular budget; they made their views known.

Yet there are many other brand new MPs who would also like to speak on this budget and this measure. Why does the hon. member not provide this opportunity for his new members to continue the debate and allow them to have their say, based on the fact that their constituents voted for them to do so?

• (1600)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the members of this House, through the course of an election campaign and the months that followed since the adoption and debate on the budget itself and now on the budget implementation act, have had ample opportunity to pass the bill.

I am concerned about the Canadians with families who are looking for the major earner to find a job. They are looking for that job to be created. The people who are waiting for us to pass our small business job creation tax credit need to see that stimulus in the economy. Businesses are waiting for the assurance to make investments that can be written off on an accelerated basis so that they can create jobs and help local economies compete.

I think that six months is plenty of time for the opposition to have debated this issue. Now we need to deliver real action for Canadians. That is what Canadians are really concerned about. When are they going to see these measures put into law so they can enjoy the benefits of economic growth and jobs?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only a few moments ago the New Democrats were introducing a bill about labelling products that use cat fur. The government right now is talking about moving forward a low tax plan for jobs and growth.

Can the House leader comment on the priority of ensuring that we get this through: a budget for 2011 in 2011 and not next year or some other time?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I do agree that there seems to be a difference in priorities.

The priority of the opposition is to have more opportunity to hear itself talk, to debate, but not to take action. However, the priority of the government is to deliver on the tax credit for job creation; benefits so that businesses can create jobs, invest and become more competitive; tax credits to further support clean energy generation; tax credits for mining exploration; and tax credits for families so that their children can continue to participate, even in challenging times, in activities like music and dance lessons to enhance their quality of life and create jobs in local communities.

Those are our priorities. It is not a priority to have another month of debate after we have already had six months and an entire election to talk about it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the statement made about the tax measures in Bill C-13, the Conservatives clearly seem to forget that their behaviour was underhanded. They deliberately transformed a budget bill into an omnibus bill containing items that must be discussed in a democracy.

They decided to make constitutional amendments by creating a Canadian securities commission when they do not have the right to do so under the Constitution. They also decided to include a major amendment to the legislation on political party financing in this bill. These are things that could have been the subject of much debate, but the government knowingly and deliberately made the decision to include these non-budget, non-monetary items in this bill. These two items do not pertain to any financial legislation and do not create any jobs. However, the Conservatives decided to disrupt everything, to include everything and to shut us up as quickly as possible. That is what they did. That is why there should be significant and structured discussion on these items.

Government Orders

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I am a bit surprised to hear the member say that a measure such as political party subsidies is not a spending question. Subsidies cost millions of dollars each year. I understand that the NDP wants to receive money from taxpayers for their political activities every year, but we feel that this is an unnecessary expenditure. It is now up to parties to raise their own money. That is our government's opinion.

• (1605)

[English]

We debated these issues in the election and they are important spending questions. However, right now we are really focused on jobs, economic growth and creating the right environment for Canada's economy to continue its performance, which is better than that of all the other major western countries, but it needs to keep on track.

What we see today is an example of opposition parties that simply do not understand the fundamental economic priorities of Canadians today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): There are still several members who wish to ask questions and there are seven minutes remaining. I ask that members keep their questions and responses to less than a minute.

The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it very offensive that for the sixth time in 33 days the government has put time allocation on debate. This is a debate on a 644-page document that is not the same document as that presented before the election. There are similarities, but they are not the same.

The same thing is happening in committee. The government wants to close down debate and is not allowing motions to go through.

Is the government planning to prorogue? Is that why it is rushing everything through? Is that why it is trying to run this as a dictatorship? Let us not forget that the Conservatives only received 39% of the vote.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what to do with those questions from a party that received less than 30% of the vote.

We have had a phenomenal amount of debate on this budget. At a time when we see economic meltdown in Europe, challenges in the global economy, the Americans wrestling with debts and deficits far in excess of ours, the real question we have to ask ourselves is: how do we make sure that we are delivering on the economic priorities of Canadians?

Our government is focused on the economic priorities of Canadians: job creation, a tax credit for the creation of jobs through small businesses, economic growth by allowing businesses to invest and create jobs to become more competitive and allowing mining exploration to proceed—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. Questions and comments. The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a small businessman and a politician I went through an election on this budget. Much discussion took place about the benefits in this budget for business, job creation and families.

I go home each weekend and am asked if we have done that yet. My constituents ask me when they will be able to take advantage of the job creation credits or the art tax credit. They wonder why it takes so long. I will let the minister answer.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the experience of the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London corresponds exactly with my experience. I thought it corresponded with what the opposition wanted because those members used to ask about a jobs plan. They wanted to see some action on jobs. We are delivering action on jobs.

While we are doing that, not only does the NDP have its folks down in the United States trying to kill Canadian job creation, but it is right here with another group in the House trying to keep job creation plans from going forward, trying to block a tax credit for job creation, trying to block benefits to allow businesses to invest and become competitive.

Whether we are talking about industries like sealing, asbestos and oil, opportunities to export, or job creation tax credits, the opposition parties have a clear track record: they are fighting against the creation of jobs for Canadians. We are working to create jobs for Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government House leader made reference to jobs. From day one, the Liberal Party of Canada has been talking about the importance of jobs.

One of our fundamentals is that proper debate should take place. When we debate a bill it is always nice to have the minister who is responsible for it listen to what is being said, and even possibly answer some questions.

Does the government House leader not believe that there is an obligation on the minister who is sponsoring a bill to listen to what is being said on the bill and possibly even answer a question? Better yet, I would like to see the Minister of Finance stand up and answer this question, but I suspect he will not.

• (1610)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. friend opposite. He is interested in talking about jobs. Apparently, he is more interested in talking about jobs than allowing us to get on with creating those jobs. Will he come around and agree that we should be creating jobs?

Why do the opposition parties want to delay, for example, enhancements to the wage earner protection program? While people around the world are losing their jobs, we want to protect the wages of Canadians whose businesses face challenges or who might lose their jobs. Why does the member want to delay that protection further? Is it for the satisfaction of talking a few more times on the bill that he has already talked on dozens of times? Why is that his priority?

Government Orders

Our priority has to be hard-working Canadians. We have to get on their side and deliver for them. That is what this government is doing.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst has the floor for a final question.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is surprising to listen to the government. We know that it goes to the trouble of sending our troops overseas to fight for democracy. Yet here in Canada, it sounds as though the Conservative government, which was elected on May 2, believes that Parliament should be shut down for the next four years.

There is no need for debate because Canadians told the Conservatives what they need and that they agree with the government. That is completely undemocratic. And this is not just about Bill C-13 and the budget; this is about all of the bills. The government does not want to listen to the opposition or to Canadians. What this government is doing is undemocratic. It had better think twice; otherwise, it does not believe in democracy or in the institution of Parliament.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, the government tabled a budget in March 2011. Today is November 16, 2011, a number of months later, a number of months after the election and after numerous debates on the budget. Now we are debating whether it is possible to hold a vote on that budget and give the other place, the Senate, the opportunity to review the matter. The same process needs to be followed there in order to see this through.

I have a simple question for the hon. member. Why does he not want to see an immediate improvement in the wage earner protection program and have it apply to more workers affected by an employer bankruptcy or receivership? Why does he want to block this very important measure for workers in New Brunswick and across Canada?

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): 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 Saint-Jean, Gasoline Prices; the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, Official Languages; the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville, Poverty.

[*Translation*]

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

● (1655)

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

(*Division No. 56*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
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
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lautzon	Lebel
Leef	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Oda
Oliver	Opitz
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel

Points of Order

Richards	Richardson
Rickford	Ritz
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 155	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Fortin
Freeman	Garneau
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Grogue
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Sellah	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault

Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote— 117	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the debate on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to continue the argument we have had over the motion I brought on Monday with regard to the proceedings that have been going on in the ethics committee, if I could complete that in response to the government House leader's argument of yesterday.

I really do not expect the whole House to stay, if people want to go. As witty, eloquent and brilliant as my argument will be, I think a number of members may want to leave at this point.

The Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps I will give the House a few moments to leave if members wish, although I am sure they will miss the hon. member's intervention, so the member for Windsor—Tecumseh can be heard when he does add to his remarks from Monday.

I will ask all hon. colleagues, if they do need to carry on conversations, to do so outside the chamber so the Chair can listen to the member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Joe Comartin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to have you hear this response to the arguments we had from the House leader yesterday.

At the outset, I read through his arguments in the blues because I was not in the House when he made them. I believe he has made a number of errors in his argument and I want to address those. Also, there were a number that were just irrelevant, but I will touch on those as I go through.

Let me start with the comments where he seemed to have focused on the fact that committees were their own masters. I clearly acknowledged that in my remarks when I made my argument on Monday. However, I want to emphasize, as I said at that time, committee members, chair and committee as a whole are regularly responsible for our own conduct, but it is not an absolute authority on our part. There are times, Mr. Speaker, and this is one of them I would argue, when you should intervene. It is not an absolute right for committees to be in charge of their own responsibilities.

The House leader acknowledged that in his talk to the House when he said, "I would agree that in certain situations the Speaker ought to intervene". He admitted again that he was wrong when he said that because he blew his argument when he was supporting mine.

Points of Order

Mr. Speaker, let me go to the times when it is appropriate for you to intervene, using again the House leader's quote from Mr. Speaker Parent when he said the Speaker had the right to intervene because "The Chair found there was an evident breach of the Standing Orders".

The litmus test, as set by the Government House Leader, seems clear in this regard, that if the committee chair or the committee itself is in breach of the Standing Orders, the Speaker should intervene, which is what I am asking you to do, Mr. Speaker.

You will recall in my initial remarks, Mr. Speaker, when I quoted the *House of Commons Procedures and Practice*, second edition, by O'Brien and Bosc, on page 1048:

At all times, directives from procedural sources higher than parliamentary committees (Constitution; statutes; orders of reference, instructions and Standing Orders of the House; and rulings by the Speaker) take precedence over any rules a committee may adopt.

Therefore, using the government House leader's litmus test that the Speaker should intervene when committees break Standing Orders in conjunction with the superiority of rules like the *sub judice* convention and the division of powers set out in the Constitution, it seems that he and I can agree that when the Constitution and conventions are contravened by the committee, that the Speaker should take action. I think he is on side with me in that regard, although he may be reluctant to admit it.

The House leader then went on to argue that the letter of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, Mr. Robert Walsh, to the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, dealt mostly with potential consequences and hypothetical scenarios. I have to take serious exception with that characterization of Mr. Walsh's opinion. Mr. Walsh stated very clearly that with respect to compelling the production of documents for the purposes that were set out in the motion by the member for Peterborough, which has already been adopted by the committee, "such initiatives are not within the constitutional functions of the House or, by extension, its committees".

The committee has adopted that motion, it is seized with the study, there is absolutely nothing hypothetical about this. His attempt to characterize Mr. Walsh's opinion in the way that he did is really unfortunate because it is grossly inaccurate.

However, not satisfied with what he did with Mr. Walsh's matter, he then went on to do the same for one of the remarks that I made. The government House Leader said about my remark:

—the member for Windsor—Tecumseh premised much of his concern around the notion that the ethics committee would not be successful in keeping its proceedings in camera.

When I made reference to that, all I was doing was acknowledging that Mr. Walsh had raised the point.

● (1700)

My argument was entirely based on the fact that the breach had already occurred. It is not based just on the inevitability of the in camera proceedings being breached. The breach has already occurred. When that motion was passed, according to the opinion of Mr. Walsh, the breach occurred, the breach of the constitutional division of powers between the judiciary and the legislative wing of

the government and the conventions that have grown up around that. It is not hypothetical, it has already occurred.

The House leader then went on and brought to your attention, Mr. Speaker, a portion of the ruling of Mr. Speaker Fraser, at page 9756 to 9758, of *Debates*, which I did not see any reason to bring up, although he seemed to accuse me for not doing so, simply because it was irrelevant. He is talking about some responsibility that I seem to be giving to you about controlling the chair. This is not an issue here. It is not the conduct of the chair that has any relevance to the procedural motion that I brought. The chair of that committee did absolutely nothing to breach the rules. It was the original motion being passed by the majority in that committee that breached the rules.

He went on to talk about somehow you intervening, Mr. Speaker, and having to control, which of course is not your responsibility, other than in extreme cases. We have no way of knowing about that, because all of this was done in camera, and I made no reference to it in any way. He raised a totally irrelevant point.

He went on with another mischaracterization. The government House leader claimed that the CBC's production of documents, as prescribed in the adopted motion, was voluntary. Let us look at this. Here is a line from the opening paragraph of the letter to the committee's chair that accompanied the documents in question. It had turned over certain documents to the committee earlier this week. It said:

While we have chosen to comply with the order...we do so under protest and with strong reservations about the purpose for which the documents have been requested.

That is not voluntary by any stretch of the imagination and it is absurd that it would be claimed to be so. It is like saying it is voluntary when an individual is being mugged and turns his or her wallet over at the point of a gun. That is what they were faced with and it was not voluntary at all.

I want to address a few comments about what the government House leader did, spending a great deal of time and energy setting out the proper process for the committee to compel documents through an order of the House. While very informative, the point of the lesson in the context of the question at hand escaped me. He claimed his point was that:

—that the appropriate time to be raising points about the proceedings of the ethics committee and how they may intersect with the *sub judice* convention would be at that time, that is to say, after any report from the ethics committee is presented.

While I agree with him that is one of the times we can do it, it is not the only time by any means. There are other appropriate times, and this is one of them. It is a very strong argument on my part.

In a situation like we have here, where we have, as found by the Law Clerk, a clear contravention of the Constitution and its conventions that have grown up under it, that is the time when you have the authority to intervene, Mr. Speaker, and I would submit strongly that you should do so in this case.

I want to make one additional point about the argument he made, and I think you raised it after I had made my argument on Monday, Mr. Speaker, about the normal practice of waiting for a report to come from committee before you make a ruling on a motion of this kind.

Points of Order

If we go back a bit and look at where that practice came from, and it is about a practice, the reason for it is it would be unfair to the Speaker in any given situation to ask him or her to make a ruling when the facts were not clear. If you have a report that has been passed by committee, it is before you, as the Speaker, you would clearly know what the facts are. You would have any number of cases where you as the Speaker would need that report in order to make a valid ruling. I acknowledge that.

That is not the situation we have here. There are only two facts that are of any relevance in terms of the breach of the mandate of the committee and it moving beyond its mandate. One is the motion itself, which we have. The second is we have the opinion of the Law Clerk, which says that motion, as passed by the committee, if carried out, would in fact be a breach of the Standing Orders and the practice in the House as well as the contravention of the Constitution and the conventions under it.

Two facts are all you really need, Mr. Speaker, to make your ruling: first, to recognize the motion that was passed in the standing committee; and second, the opinion of the Law Clerk that it is a breach of the Constitution.

• (1705)

In his final point, and I will make a couple of comments on this and then I will be finished, he urged the Speaker to wait. I think he was trying to argue a similar point, as was earlier said, that somehow the Speaker had to wait until the breach had occurred and the report had come to the committee. As I have said in all the facts that I have already given you, Mr. Speaker, that is simply not a necessity in these circumstances.

I want to make this final point with regard to interpreting that motion, and that is the comments that have been made by the member for Peterborough, and I made reference to these in my opening argument. He has clearly said, as the motion also clearly demonstrates, that the committee would be substituting the role of the judiciary. Again, I go back to those words that I think are so damaging to the cause of the government side. The member for Peterborough said, "We are going to determine and assess the facts of the case behind closed doors". Those were his words.

In that regard, it is clear the judiciary in the country has that responsibility. It is clear under the Constitution. We could go through any number of pieces of legislation where it is clear. That is the role of the judiciary. It is clear in the Broadcast Act that it is its authority. It makes the interpretation, not a parliamentary committee.

Parliamentary committees make use of that, once that determination has been made in terms of whether there should be amendments to the legislation. However, the committees do not make that assessment. It is done by the judiciary.

I will conclude, Mr. Speaker, by again asking you to take into account the request I made with regard to how to dispose of this matter, either to declare the committee's work with regard to the study to be completely beyond its mandate or at the very least, as a fallback position, that it suspend any further study until such time as the courts have concluded, and that may include an appeal to the Supreme Court, their intervention in this matter.

• (1710)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will first deal with the question of disclosure that has been made by the CBC in forwarding documents.

My friend suggested that somehow this is not a voluntary disclosure but rather one that has been compelled. We have the unusual phenomenon before us where the corporation, which is required to disclose information under the law, has done so, but the opposition House leader is making the case that it should not have done so. It was the choice of the CBC to make that information available.

There was some information under seal which the CBC obviously believed to be of concern, but some that was not under seal and obviously CBC believed it to be open. The committee has not yet had an opportunity to turn its attention to those items to determine whether it is satisfied.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, for any determination to be made by you in advance of the committee having decided whether the voluntary disclosure it has received is satisfactory would be premature. It would be highly unusual for you to offer an opinion in advance of the facts before you.

Further, the opposition House leader characterized, or mischaracterized, the parliamentary law clerk's letter as a finding. It is not a finding. It constitutes advice. My friend is a lawyer and I am trained in a similar fashion. We all know there are such things as legal opinions. We all know there is a diversity of legal opinions. We all know that unless they are made by a judge, or the Speaker in the context that we are in, or the chair of a committee in that context, they are not findings. They are merely letters of advice.

Not only has the member elevated it in his arguments to the level of a finding, he has created this very unusual device where he wants you, Mr. Speaker, to be the police officer to enforce his interpretation of what that legal advice is to the committee. That is a stretch many steps too far.

It is the member's interpretation of the law clerk's advice that he is now purporting you should make into an order that must be enforced. There is no such order. His interpretation, with the greatest of respect, is not one that is shared by others. It is certainly not an appropriate role for the Speaker to do that. It certainly is highly inappropriate for us to essentially displace the role of the Speaker by that of the law clerk and suggest that this advice somehow displaces any decisions that are made by the chair of the committee or by you, Mr. Speaker, ultimately as Speaker. Again, that is not appropriate.

The committee has the benefit of that advice. It can act on that advice and it can interpret that advice. It is the role of the chair and members of that committee to interpret that advice as masters of their own universe. It is not the member's place to provide that interpretation in a definitive fashion.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, in asking you to deal with this, he is asking for an interpretation of law or of the Constitution. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are abundant rulings, including some by yourself already in your short time as Speaker, that make it clear it is not the Speaker's role to interpret law or the Constitution.

Finally, I listened very carefully to my friend's arguments. He said that it was appropriate for the Speaker to intervene when there is a clear breach of a standing order. However, I do not see any here. I listened very carefully to my friend's arguments, but I did not hear him say what standing order had been breached. I would invite him to rise and state which standing order has been breached, and if there is none, I think that disposes of the question definitively.

The Speaker: I thank hon. members for their further submissions. I am taking the matter very seriously and will come back to the House with a decision in due time.

* * *

KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, as reported (without amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, a very important bill to residents in my riding of Richmond Hill and to all Canadians.

This bill builds on our government's commitment to continue the work over the last five years focusing on what matters most to Canadian families. It continues our long-term plan launched in 2006 to heighten Canada's advantages through a national economic road map that would truly make Canada a world economic leader and improve the quality of life for students, seniors, families and workers.

It is because of this government's prudent and visionary decisions since then that Canada has weathered the global economic turmoil of the last three years better than most other advanced countries. As we see the difficulties endured by so many other countries around the globe, we recognize that this strong, stable national majority Conservative government is acting swiftly to ensure that Canada's economy continues to grow and remain strong.

I would like to remind all hon. members in the House that before the global recession hit, our government paid down nearly \$40 billion of the debt to bring Canada's debt level to its lowest level in 25 years. We were well on our way to more competitive taxation levels. This is why we were able to act promptly to stimulate our economy as the downturn in the global economy necessitated appropriate action.

I am proud that under the leadership of our Prime Minister Canada currently has the strongest job growth record and the lowest net debt to GDP ratio in the entire G7. Both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development anticipate Canada to lead the way in economic growth over the next few years. The reason for this enviable record is that this government's top priority has always been the economy with a focus on a long-term low tax plan to create jobs and growth.

Despite our strong domestic economy, we remain in a period of heightened global uncertainty. As has been mentioned many times in

Government Orders

the House, Canada is not immune from global economic turbulence. This is precisely why Bill C-13, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, is so essential for Canada's continued economic stability. Bill C-13 invests in key areas that support job creation. Our government's priority has always been Canadian families, emphasizing help for students, seniors, families and communities, while maintaining our fiscal advantage.

Bill C-13 contains strategic investments that will contribute to the long-term economic growth and prosperity for Canadians.

One might ask how Bill C-13 will create jobs and economic growth. For one, it recognizes that it is the private sector that drives growth and wealth creation. We know that small- and medium-size businesses have been leading the way in job creation over the last two years. This is very important in Richmond Hill where 98% of all businesses are small or medium size, with the vast majority of those having less than 20 employees. This is why we will continue to support entrepreneurs and job creators in Richmond Hill and right across the country with key initiatives in the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, Bill C-13. Let me highlight a few.

A temporary \$1,000 hiring credit for small businesses will help up to 525,000 employers defray the costs of additional hiring. A two year extension of the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment will support our manufacturers. The extension by 16 weeks of the work-sharing program will help employers going through a rough patch retain their employees and the skills they contribute to their businesses. A reduction in the increase of employment insurance premium rates in 2012 from 10¢ to 5¢ will stimulate job creation. Reducing unnecessary red tape through the continued work of the Red Tape Reduction Commission will allow entrepreneurs to focus on what they do best: growing their business and creating jobs.

● (1715)

Increased funding for the National Research Council's industrial research assistance program will support collaborative projects between colleges and businesses and will help strengthen our manufacturing sector by accelerating the adoption of information and communications technologies. Further reducing the corporate tax rate will make Canada very attractive as a place in which to invest and do business. In fact, Canada will have the lowest overall tax rates on new business investment in the G7, a fact of which I am very proud. Keeping taxes low allows our businesses to invest in their operations, creating much needed jobs for Canadians.

Government Orders

These are the very kinds of measures that will help small businesses like those in my riding of Richmond Hill. Nestled in the heart of the GTA, Richmond Hill is one of Canada's fastest growing and most diverse communities. It is a shining example of Canada's dynamic communities. Families, seniors, small- and medium-size businesses, organizations and the municipality find that the stability our government has infused into our economy is the key factor that has positioned us as world leaders throughout the global economic crisis.

This next phase of Canada's economic action plan, Bill C-13, continues to build on our strong economic policy with help for all Canadians and particularly for those who most need it, our seniors, our families and our communities.

For example, 680,000 low income seniors are benefiting from the enhancement to the guaranteed income supplement. Those who need it most are receiving an additional \$600 per year if single, and \$840 per year if a couple.

A new caregiver tax credit on up to \$2,000 will financially help those looking after loved ones with infirmities including for the first time, spouses, common-law partners and children.

Homeowners are being helped with the extension until March 31, 2012 of the eco-energy home retrofit program. Some \$400 million has been allocated across the country to help homeowners defray the costs of making their homes more energy efficient, an investment that at the same time is creating jobs and stimulating local economies.

A new children's arts tax credit on up to \$500 in eligible fees assists families with the costs associated with arts, cultural and developmental activities for their children. Arts, cultural and educational activities are very important in Canada, especially in my riding of Richmond Hill. Last week I was at Cosmo Music highlighting this very measure which is in effect for the 2011 taxation year. Parents in Richmond Hill are very pleased to know this kind of assistance is available to them. They appreciate knowing the value and recognition our government places on these types of activities.

I am also very pleased that Bill C-13 makes permanent the annual gas tax funding for municipalities each and every year. People will remember that it was this government that doubled this investment from \$1 billion to \$2 billion. Permanent gas tax funds give our municipal partners stable, predictable funding that they can count on to assist with their infrastructure needs. This is very significant particularly in Richmond Hill. As an example, the town can now expect over \$5 million each and every year and can incorporate this revenue into its budgetary process.

These and other measures in Bill C-13 continue to focus on what matters most in my riding and to all Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth. We are maintaining our focus on the priorities set out in the next phase of Canada's economic action plan by supporting job creation and providing support for families, seniors and communities.

In closing, I call on all members in the House to support the important initiatives in this next phase of Canada's economic action plan that will continue on our nation's proven path of economic

stability. I look forward to the passage of Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, and the benefits it will bring to all Canadians.

• (1720)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to what my colleague said and, again, it is obvious that the Conservatives are clearly out of touch with the needs of Canadian families. Canadians want real action on job creation, real action on hiring more doctors and nurses and real action on retirement security.

Fast-tracking this legislation, which is over 600 pages, is the wrong thing to do. We talked about this but I need to emphasize it again.

The fact of the matter is that there is an issue here with the economy, and the government is not acting on it. The government is going to make it harder for people who have to access EI.

Given the fact that the government is fast-tracking the bill, I am wondering if the member could tell me whether or not the government is looking at proroguing.

• (1725)

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, on the question of what we are doing for nurses, I would like to remind the member that built right into our economic action plan is the credit for nurses and doctors that would forgive their loans. That is very important in the northern regions of Canada.

Let me add that 600,000 new jobs have been created in Canada since July 2009 as a result of our government's ability to react when it was needed most to help Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that the previous speaker recognize that since 2008 there are actually 500,000 fewer full-time jobs.

Housing is a very important issue in Winnipeg north, as I am sure it is in many communities across our country, whether it is housing for seniors or individuals on low income. We are looking for leadership from the government to deal with things such as housing co-ops, non-profit housing, house leases, different types of housing programs that would make it that much more affordable for home ownership.

Does the member have any comments on how he believes this budget would advance those types of issues?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, we all know that the government has focused primarily on creating jobs with its low tax plan.

As far as housing is concerned, the member wanted me to point to something specific in the budget, and I will point specifically to the funding for the retrofit program, which has been extended. Canadian families from coast to coast to coast are availing themselves of this program. Over \$400 million in additional money has been allotted to that program. It is an excellent example of how our government is helping families cope with the costs of improving their homes.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is calling for higher taxes and reckless spending. We have seen this experiment in Greece and in Italy and it has not worked there.

Could the member explain to the opposition why that is not a good path to follow?

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Mr. Speaker, I am going to point specifically to our Minister of Finance who has been voted as the best finance minister in the world by his peers. The reason, in my humble opinion, he has that distinction and that recognition among his peers is that our finance minister, under the leadership of our Prime Minister and this government, has been able to react to changing global economic conditions quickly with this next phase of Canada's economic action plan. It is the best possible plan we could put in place at this point in time.

I urge all members in the House and my colleagues in the opposition to support this important legislation.

• (1730)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to rise in the House in support of Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

It is also an honour to follow my friend from Richmond Hill, who so eloquently stated the reasons why the bill is so important for our country.

As the finance minister said early on in the introduction of the bill, our government is focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and providing economic growth.

Canada has the strongest job growth in the G7, with nearly 600,000 net new jobs created since July 2009, and the IMF projects that we will have among the strongest economic growth in the G7 over the next two years.

As has been pointed out over and over again, we are not immune to global economic turbulence. That is why we need to stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. Our government is focused on creating jobs and generating economic growth. Based on our economic performance compared with the rest of the world, it is truly working.

Our measures have been applauded by many in the private sector. For example, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business applauded the government's provision of a temporary hiring tax credit. Dan Kelly, the senior vice-president for the CFIB, said:

Since the 2011 budget announcement, many members have called about the credit and reported it will make it easier for them to hire, enhance wages or adjust to rising Employment Insurance premiums. ... This is a particularly important initiative as the government has declared 2011 as the Year of the Entrepreneur.

It is the entrepreneurs and the small business owners in this country who create the jobs this country needs.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act would help support Canada's economic recovery and would be promoting job creation and economic growth by implementing a whole host of measures like, as I pointed out a minute ago, providing a temporary

hiring credit for small business and expanding tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments.

Coming from Manitoba as I do, I know that clean, green energy from Manitoba Hydro is very important to our economy, and this is what our government is supporting.

I was especially pleased to see the extension by one year of the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors to support Canada's mining sector. It is truly remarkable how the mining sector has come alive in Canada over the last decade and has become such an important contributor to our gross national product.

Indeed, that is why it is so shameful to see the NDP denigrating our country, denigrating the oil sands, when the oil sands are so important for our country and our economic growth. It is truly a shame that it is out to kill this most important enterprise. Having worked in the oil sands myself and lived in an oil sands camp, I have experienced first-hand the men and women of Canada who are working in the oil sands, providing for their families, saving for their children's education, and on and on. It is truly a remarkable Canadian achievement, and it is truly disgraceful to see the NDP doing whatever it can to kill this engine of economic growth.

We are also simplifying customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade. Canada is a trading nation. Trade is what supports our economy and, in turn, what supports the social programs that all Canadians need.

We are accelerating the capital cost allowance.

This is something I am kind of interested in. We are eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers wishing to work the option of remaining in the workforce. That is something that many of us are clearly looking forward to.

In terms of supporting communities, our bill would legislate a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. I represent a remote rural constituency with many municipalities, and this fund that our government has doubled in the last few years is vital to the maintenance of important infrastructure for my communities.

We are enhancing the wage earner protection program.

• (1735)

Here is one that was especially well received in my constituency and indeed across the country. We are introducing a volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters. This is an example of how the government supports communities. Our volunteer firefighters give of their time. For many years they were the unsung heroes of many of our communities. We are so proud to have provided the volunteer firefighters tax credit, something they have requested for many years, which in a sure but small way recognizes the contributions they are making to our communities. That is what community is all about and what the government supports.

Government Orders

We will be increasing the ability of Canadians to give more confidently to legitimate charities.

With regard to the family caregiver tax credit, we are removing the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit.

We are introducing a new children's arts tax credit for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

This is truly an incredible list of what the government is doing. It includes forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas. As a member of Parliament, like many of my colleagues I represent a remote rural constituency. Health care is very important. Providing incentives to new doctors and nurses to live and work in our beautiful rural communities will only help to strengthen them.

We will be helping apprentices and skilled trades and workers in regulated professions by making occupational trade and professional examination fees eligible for the tuition tax credit.

We will be improving federal financial assistance for students.

We are making it easier to allocate registered education savings plan assets among siblings without incurring tax penalties or forfeiting Canada education savings grants.

The phasing out of the direct subsidy of political parties is something I am pleased to see. As we listened to the members of the NDP early in the debate on this particular bill, I was astonished that all they focused on was this tax giveaway to political parties, which to their minds is a big deal. I guess free money is what they are all about, whereas the members of our party have worked hard. We have attracted donations from thousands of small donors and have built up a strong base of funding. We earned it. They want it for nothing. That is the difference between us and them. I am pleased to support the phasing out of the direct subsidy of political parties.

We will be closing numerous tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

In terms of Manitoba in particular, as all members in the House know, all politics is local. I am especially pleased with what Manitoba will see come out of the bill. There will be \$5,000 in grants from the energy program for Manitoba families to make their homes more energy efficient; \$840 in new annual financial support for needy Manitoba seniors; the new family caregivers tax credit; and, this is one that is especially important in my constituency although the point is somewhat moot now, the waiving of licence renewal fees for hunters and firearms owners. Thank goodness this will be a thing of the past once the bill is passed.

I thank the hardworking Minister of Public Safety, another Manitoba MP I might add, who is spearheading this particular initiative, along with the member for Portage—Lisgar.

In terms of agriculture, and I represent a very strong agricultural community, help for Manitoba farmers will be provided by the new \$50 million agricultural innovation initiative. Our agriculture is only strengthened by research and innovation. That is why Canadian producers are among the most efficient in the world.

I could go on with the number of initiatives that are in our budget. I will say that this is a good budget for Canada and all of our citizens. It is our low tax plan for jobs and economic growth.

• (1740)

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress released its most recent report tracking Ontario's economic progress. The report states that Ontario lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs between 2007 and 2009 and that everyone knows that these jobs are not coming back. This flies in the face of all the numbers the Tories like to trot out. I wonder if the member opposite can speak to this disconnect between the facts and what his government keeps talking about.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, there is no disconnect between the facts and our performance.

One need only look at who is in government in Ontario: the poster child for a high tax economy that does not create jobs. Ontario used to be the engine of the Canadian economy and could be still, if the proper policies were put in place. High taxes and the excess spending of government funds simply do not work and Ontario shows that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when the member from Dauphin made reference to hydro, it really made me sit up and listen. We in Manitoba have a passion for Manitoba hydro because it is a wonderful opportunity for economic development.

This is a billion dollar question, maybe even a bit more than that. I wonder if the member could provide any comment on his thoughts on east side versus west side for the Bipole III transmission line for Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I share the member's concern regarding the choice the Manitoba government has made. The Manitoba NDP government chose to build a hydro line along the west side of Manitoba that will cost an extra \$1 billion to build, rather than the shorter east side line.

The extra distance causes a line loss of enough electricity to power 25,000 homes, or a community the size of Brandon, Manitoba. That represents \$1 billion of excess spending by the Manitoba NDP. Year after year enough energy to power 25,000 homes will simply go up in smoke for nothing.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Madam Speaker, given the member's reputation as a strong environmentalist working with corporations to ensure that the environment and industry work together, could he comment?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, one of the things that is evident, when one looks at environmental indicators around the world, is that as a country gets richer the environmental indicators get better. There is no trade-off between wealth creation, economic growth and environmental quality; they all go hand in hand.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

• (1745)

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved:

That Bill C-13 be amended by deleting Clause 181.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 2. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP) moved:

That Bill C-13, in Clause 181, be amended

(a) by replacing line 23 on page 206 with the following:

Government Orders

“April 1, 2012 and the eleven following”

(b) by replacing line 26 on page 206 with the following:

“April 1, 2016 and the eleven following”

(c) by replacing line 29 on page 206 with the following:

“April 1, 2020 and the eleven following”

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved:

That Bill C-13 be amended by deleting Clause 182.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 4. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of Bill C-13.

Call in the members.

• (1820)

[Translation]

The Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1.

• (1830)

[English]

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 57)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Atamanenko
Bélanger
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Coderre
Côté

Angus
Aubin
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Chow
Cleary
Comartin
Cotler

Government Orders

Crowder	Cuzner	Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Dion	Dionne Labelle	Kent	Kerr
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre	Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Lake	Lauzon
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau	Lebel	Leaf
Easter	Eyking	Lemieux	Leung
Fortin	Freeman	Lizon	Lobb
Garneau	Garrison	Lukiwski	Lunney
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère	MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Godin	Goodale	Mayes	McColeman
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	McLeod	Menegakis
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu	Menzies	Merrifield
Hughes	Hyer	Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Jacob	Julian	Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
Kellway	Lamoureux	O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Lapointe	Larose	Oda	Oliver
Latendresse	Laverdière	Opitz	Paradis
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Mai	Payne	Penashue
Marston	Martin	Poilievre	Preston
Masse	Mathysen	Raïtt	Rajotte
May	McCallum	Rathgeber	Reid
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Rempel	Richards
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Richardson	Rickford
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Ritz	Schellenberger
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Seeback	Shea
Nantel	Nash	Shiple	Shory
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Smith	Sopuck
Pacetti	Papillon	Sorenson	Stanton
Patry	Péclet	Storseth	Strahl
Perreault	Pilon	Sweet	Tilson
Plamondon	Quach	Toet	Toews
Rae	Rafferty	Trost	Trottier
Ravignat	Raynault	Truppe	Tweed
Regan	Rousseau	Uppal	Valcourt
Sandhu	Savoie	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Scarpaleggia	Sellah	Vellacott	Wallace
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	Stewart	Warawa	Warkentin
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sullivan	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
St-Denis	Stewart	Sky Country)	Wilks
Stoffer	Sullivan	Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Thibeault	Toone	Williamson	Yelich
Tremblay	Trudeau	Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
Turnel	Valeriote— 116	Young (Oakville)	
		Zimmer— 157	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
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
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James

Nil

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 2. A negative vote on Motion No. 2 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 3.

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 58*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brousseau
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau

Government Orders

Fortin
Garrison
Giguère
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer
Julian
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Marston
Masse
May
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Raynault
Sandhu
Sellah
St-Denis
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay

Freeman
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hughes
Jacob
Kellway
Larose
Laverdière
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Ravignat
Rousseau
Savoie
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Turmel — 90

Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Norlock
O'Neill Gordon
Oliver
Pacetti
Payne
Poilievre
Rae
Rajotte
Regan
Rempel
Richardson
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
sor)
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Trudeau
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 183

Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
McCallum
McGuinity
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
O'Connor
Oda
Opitz
Paradis
Penashue
Preston
Raitt
Rathgeber
Reid
Richards
Rickford
Scarpaleggia
Seeback
Shiple
Sims (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Truppe
Uppal
Valeriote
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Aspin
Bélanger
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brisson
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Calkins
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Clement
Cotler
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Dreeshen
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Gill
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Lemieux

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Ashfield
Bateman
Bennett
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chisu
Clarke
Coderre
Cuzner
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dion
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Eyking
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Garneau
Glover
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hayes
Hillyer
Hoepfner
Hsu
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
Leef
Leung

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 3.

[English]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1850)

[Translation]

(The House divided on Motion No. 3, which was negated on the following division:)

Government Orders

(Division No. 59)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Fortin
Freeman	Garneau
Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Grogulé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Sellah	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote — 117	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
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
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kram (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Oda	Oliver
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 157	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 3 lost.

The next question is on Motion No. 4.

● (1900)

(The House divided on Motion No. 4, which was negated on the following division:)

*Government Orders**(Division No. 60)*

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brousseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Grogulé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Sandhu
Savoie	Sellah
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel— 91	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Bateman
Bélanger	Bennett
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Byrne	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coderre
Cotler	Cuzner
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dion
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)

Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodale	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	Hsu
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinity
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Oda
Oliver	Opitz
Pacetti	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poillievre	Preston
Rae	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor)	
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 182

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 4 lost.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance) moved that the bill be concurred in.**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

● (1905)

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

(Division No. 61)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
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
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Oda	Oliver
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poillievre	Preston

Raitt
Rathgeber
Rempel
Richardson
Ritz
Seeback
Shiple
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 157

Rajotte
Reid
Richards
Rickford
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Angus
Aubin
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Coderre
Côté
Crowder
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Fortin
Garneau
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Grogûh 
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Jacob
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle— mard)
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rac
Ravignat
Regan
Sandhu
Scarpaleggia
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-

Adjournment Proceedings

Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Turnel

St-Denis
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay
Valériote— 116

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the delay, there will be no private members' hour today.

[*Translation*]

Therefore, the order is deferred to a future sitting.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Tarik Brahma (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in June, I asked the Minister of Industry to explain the measures being taken by the government to ensure that Canadian families across the board are not being fleeced by fluctuating gas prices. At the time, the minister told me he had referred the issue of fluctuating gas prices to the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. Indeed, the committee agreed to study the matter, but, as the hon. member for Windsor West pointed out at the time, similar studies had already been done.

Ongoing analysis is certainly useful, but when the results do not translate into any measures for Canadians, then it is clear that the government is using delay tactics instead of taking concrete measures, such as those advocated by the NDP for Canadian families.

These are harsh economic times. Families are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, and thousands of jobs are being lost in Canada every day. The rising cost of living is hitting families harder all the time, and they are struggling to cope.

Unfortunately, this country does not have a national public transit strategy and communities are being underserved. For example, in my riding of Saint-Jean, we are completely dependent on cars and therefore on the price of gasoline. The same goes for most Canadians. Gasoline is not a luxury item. It is a necessity for getting to work and even for looking for work. This government keeps telling us over and over again that it was elected to create jobs, but in the meantime, it is doing nothing to make life easier for job seekers, the unemployed and workers.

We have an oil industry with very few players, and families have to endure fluctuations that have less to do with supply and demand and more to do with pure speculation. In the end, the oil companies are getting richer and families are getting poorer.

[*English*]

There is a serious impact on the Canadian economy, and just one example is the effect on Canadian tourism.

Let me tell the House a story. Just this morning my office heard from a woman who would soon be retiring and after many years of dedicated work, she looked forward to travelling in her RV. She has chosen to travel in the United States rather than in Canada because gas prices are simply too high in Canada.

Many Canadian families are being confronted with the reality of paying much more for gas in Canada. They choose to travel south rather than right here at home.

At a time when we want to boost our economy, inaction on this issue is not only unwise, but it is unfair when so many Canadian families are struggling.

[*Translation*]

Canadians have no choice but to live with random fluctuations and steady increases in the price of gas. We are left to wonder who in this government is doing anything to protect consumers.

It is time to act. It is time for this government to take immediate action.

Canadians want answers and they want action. What concrete measures will the government take to protect consumers from fluctuating gas prices?

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind all hon. members of the House that this government is committed to taking action to ensure Canadian businesses and consumers prosper in a competitive and innovative marketplace.

The Commissioner of Competition has considerable powers to investigate the actions of all businesses and individuals when there is evidence that there may have been a violation of Canada's competition laws. These powers were strengthened by recent amendments to the Competition Act, providing the commissioner additional powers to attack cartel behaviour that is the most harmful to competition.

With regard to the petroleum industry, it is clear that when the Competition Bureau finds evidence of behaviour that violates the Competition Act, it has not hesitated to fully pursue the appropriate enforcement action allowed under the act to protect competition and consumers.

For instance, in 2008, and again in 2010, following an investigation by the Competition Bureau, charges were laid under the Competition Act against 38 individuals and 14 companies accused of fixing the price of gas at the pump in four markets in Quebec. As a result, to date, 13 individuals and 6 companies have pleaded guilty in this case, with fines totalling over \$2.8 million. Six of these individuals have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment totalling 54 months.

Adjournment Proceedings

I would also remind the House that the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology has repeatedly reviewed trends in gasoline prices in Canada.

A recommendation from a previous report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology concerning gasoline prices in Canada was that the Government of Canada create and fund a petroleum monitoring agency to collect and disseminate price data on crude oil, refined petroleum products and retail gasoline for all relevant North American markets.

Since that time, our government has been proactive in providing Canadians with information on gas prices and industry trends. In that regard, I would refer the hon. member and all Canadians to the energy sector of Natural Resources Canada, which acts as the lead on energy policy for the Government of Canada. It produces Fuel Focus, a report providing Canadians with valuable information on a regular basis regarding various aspects of the gasoline market in Canada and the economic factors influencing prices.

The report, released every second Friday, provides an overview of gasoline prices in selected Canadian cities, a comparison of gasoline prices between selected Canadian and competing American centres, trends in refining and marketing margins and costs and an overview of events influencing world crude oil prices. The report also provides insight into other related topics to help better understand gasoline markets, including consumer-related information to help reduce energy costs.

Through Natural Resources Canada's energy sector, the government has taken action to assist Canadian consumers in understanding what is taking place in this complex market. In addition, the Competition Bureau, through the principled enforcement of the Competition Act, continues to guard against anti-competitive activity in this and other sectors of the Canadian economy.

This government has also acted to ensure that Canadians get what they pay for at the pump. We passed the Fairness at the Pumps Act, which will protect consumers from inaccuracies at the pump. This government has acted and we will continue to act in the best interests of Canadians.

• (1915)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tarik Brahmi: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the floor for his answers, which are definitely concrete, but practically speaking, simply providing consumers with information regarding the state of price increases does not solve the problem. Just because the government produces reports on margins and fluctuating prices and gives that information to Canadians does not change the fact that some price fluctuations are unjustified. Canadians expect the government to take specific action in order to gain some sort of control over those fluctuations, and not simply that it give them information.

When will this government finally take action that produces results instead of simply giving information?

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I find the NDP position on this file a bit contradictory. Both the NDP and Liberals opposed the GST tax cut, the decrease from 7% to 6% to 5%, which helps to keep

Canadians' money where it belongs, in their own pocket. It is also interesting that the hon. member wants to talk about high prices when he knows that his own party's policies would impose a costly carbon tax on Canadians that would see gas prices skyrocket. Jack Mintz, a respected economist, has stated that the NDP's plan would result in a 10¢ hike in gas prices.

In addition, the government has already taken action to protect consumers by recently passing the Fairness at the Pumps Act. The act protects consumers from inaccurate measurements when buying gasoline and will ensure that consumers get what they pay for.

Moreover, as we have seen with the charges laid in Quebec in 2008 and 2010, when the Competition Bureau finds evidence of behaviour that violates the Competition Act, it does not hesitate to take law enforcement action to protect competition and consumers.

Clearly, the government recognizes the importance of this issue to Canadians and is committed to ensuring a strong, independently enforced legislative framework exists to guard against anti-competitive behaviour. These are concrete measures that we are very proud of over here.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Since the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier is not present in the House to raise a question during the adjournment debate, his notice is deemed to have been withdrawn

The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

POVERTY

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Madam Speaker, on October 18, I rose in the House to talk about the problem of growing poverty in the suburbs of Canadian cities, particularly in Quebec. More specifically, I rose to ask the Conservative government's Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development a very simple question: When will the government bring forward a real plan to fight poverty?

This issue is particularly close to my heart because I am proud to represent the suburban communities of Terrebonne and Blainville. What I have seen in my riding is both encouraging and discouraging. I am pleased to see the daily dedication of the many community organizations that, with limited resources and funds, provide essential services to people affected by poverty. However, I am discouraged when I hear the increasing number of stories about good citizens sucked down into poverty and when I see that these heroic community organizations do not have the resources or the time to serve everyone effectively. Of course, the minister chose to avoid answering my question and defended the government's introduction of job training programs during the recession and the 2% cut to the GST.

Adjournment Proceedings

That response was both evasive and inadequate. It was evasive because lowering the GST is not an anti-poverty strategy since it helps only the wealthiest people. It was inadequate because, although these skills training programs are important, they do not constitute an intelligent policy to fight poverty. They are not a long-term strategy to combat poverty with measurable objectives and they do not include a plan to coordinate initiatives among all departments or to implement accountability mechanisms. The proof is in the numbers.

Let us talk about the numbers. Today, the use of food banks has gone up by 26% since 2008. The unemployment rate remains at 7.3%, and has gone down only slightly since the recession. There are 136,000 fewer jobs for people between the ages of 15 and 24 than there were before the recession. Only 50% of Canadians experienced any true increase in their income over the past 30 years, while the income of the richest 0.1% of Canadians tripled. The average household debt to income ratio is now over 150% and the poorest Canadians are the primary victims of such debt.

We also know that housing prices and rents have risen dramatically across Canada, especially in downtown areas. Therefore, it is not surprising that pockets of poverty are becoming more common in the suburbs, where low-income families can find slightly less expensive housing. However, they still cannot make ends meet. A study conducted by the Vieille-Capitale health and social service centre reported this trend in Quebec City.

What are the effects of such growing inequality and increasing poverty? Scientific research has concluded that there is a direct link between income disparity and poor mental and physical health, addiction, poor school performance and increased crime. Faced with this compelling evidence and the complete failure of this government to bring forward a plan to tackle increasing poverty and inequality, the minister had no choice but to avoid my question.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the member for Terrebonne—Blainville has given me this opportunity to explain our government's recovery plan.

I could not help but notice the difference between our party and theirs. She talks about more meetings, discussions and debates; we actually prefer action, and that is what we have done.

The Canadian economy is emerging from one of the worst economic crises that we have seen since the Great Depression. It is obvious that Canada's recovery is the strongest among all the G7 countries. In other words, the targeted measures in the first phase of our economic action plan are working, and we are on the right road.

That is not to say that the economic problems other countries are facing will not have repercussions on our own economy. The recovery is still fragile.

The best protection against poverty is a strong economy, not more meetings and more discussion, and the best guarantee of a strong economy is job creation. That is why jobs and the economy are going to continue to be our priority.

We want the best for our fellow Canadians. We are investing in programs to promote growth and create jobs, programs such as the one-time hiring credit for small business.

We are investing in programs for Canadian families. We provide over \$14 billion per year in benefits for families with children.

We are investing in programs for caregivers. For example, we estimate that more than 500,000 caregivers will benefit from the family caregiver tax credit.

We are investing in programs for the working poor. We provide over \$1 billion per year in the working income tax benefit, which helps to ensure that low-income Canadians are financially better off when they get a job.

We are investing in programs for our seniors, who have worked hard to build our country. For example, budget 2011 increased the guarantee income supplement for seniors who have little or no income, and that will benefit more than 680,000 seniors.

We are investing in programs for Canadian workers who have been laid off with measures such as the targeted initiative for older workers, which has helped close to 16,000 people.

We are investing in programs that promote education and skills training, because those are the key to economic independence and prosperity for everyone.

We are looking for ways to harmonize these investments with balanced budgets, yet without imposing a tax hike on hard-working Canadians.

The unfortunate thing is that the member opposite and her party have opposed virtually every one of these initiatives.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, we have voted against them because tax credits are of absolutely no help to people who have no income. These are people who are living on the streets, who cannot work, who cannot find jobs.

I am sorry, but this plan does not work; just look at the 76,000 jobs that were lost in a month. They do not have a plan, but they do not want to admit it. The government's obsession with tax credits and reductions does nothing for low-income Canadians because these people do not pay taxes. The government's tax reduction program for big business has done nothing to reduce the unemployment rate or improve the quality of jobs. What is more, this government has not invested any new money in social housing to improve social and urban diversity and reduce the tax burden.

I am proud to be part of the NDP, which introduced real plans to fight poverty during the last Parliament, such as Bill C-545 and Bill C-304.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, Canadians gave us a clear, strong mandate.

They want us to respect the money they make and they want us to respect the money that we receive in taxes. They want us to spend it very wisely.

Adjournment Proceedings

The best way to fight poverty is to get Canadians working. Our government is doing that: 656,000 new jobs have been created since July 2009.

Our government is reaching out to help families right across the country, especially those in need. That is one of the reasons we introduced measures such as the universal child care benefit. As well, we have increased the national child benefit.

Every action that we take is to help Canadians and their families become independent and help them contribute to the economy and the community.

It is unfortunate that the NDP seems to want people to be dependent on government rather than independent from it. Sadly the NDP, as I have pointed out, has voted against every one of those initiatives that we have brought in to help the most vulnerable families.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:29 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS			
Parti Québécois		Mr. Julian.....	3145
Mr. Fortin.....	3141	Mr. Menzies.....	3145
Burlington Performing Arts Centre		National Defence	
Mr. Wallace.....	3141	Mr. Rae.....	3145
Litterless Lunch Challenge		Mr. Harper.....	3145
Mr. Donnelly.....	3141	Mr. Rae.....	3146
Diabetes		Mr. Harper.....	3146
Mr. Brown (Barrie).....	3141	Public Safety	
Human Rights		Mr. Rae.....	3146
Mr. Cotler.....	3142	Mr. Harper.....	3146
Human Rights		Natural Resources	
Mr. Young (Oakville).....	3142	Mr. Stewart.....	3146
Palliative and Compassionate Care		Mr. Oliver.....	3146
Mr. Comartin.....	3142	Mr. Stewart.....	3146
Firearms Registry		Mr. Oliver.....	3146
Mr. Sorenson.....	3142	Ms. Pécelet.....	3146
Human Rights		Mr. Oliver.....	3147
Mr. Storseth.....	3143	Ms. Pécelet.....	3147
Occupy Protest Movement		Mr. Oliver.....	3147
Mr. Cash.....	3143	Champlain Bridge	
Natural Resources		Mr. Nicholls.....	3147
Ms. Bateman.....	3143	Mr. Lebel.....	3147
McGill's Women in House Program		Mr. Nicholls.....	3147
Ms. Freeman.....	3143	Mr. Lebel.....	3147
Direct Selling Industry		International Trade	
Mr. Preston.....	3143	Mr. Rousseau.....	3147
The Environment		Mr. Fast.....	3147
Ms. Murray.....	3144	Mr. Rousseau.....	3147
Natural Resources		Mr. Fast.....	3148
Mr. Payne.....	3144	Canadian Wheat Board	
Natural Resources		Mr. Allen (Welland).....	3148
Mr. Masse.....	3144	Mr. Ritz.....	3148
Firearms Registry		Service Canada	
Mr. Rickford.....	3144	Mr. Cuzner.....	3148
		Ms. Finley.....	3148
		Mr. Cuzner.....	3148
		Ms. Finley.....	3148
		Seniors	
		Mr. Regan.....	3148
		Mr. Menzies.....	3148
		National Defence	
		Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue).....	3149
		Mr. Fantino.....	3149
		Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue).....	3149
		Mr. Fantino.....	3149
		Mr. Kellway.....	3149
		Mr. Fantino.....	3149
		Mr. Kellway.....	3149
		Mr. Fantino.....	3149

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mrs. Turmel.....	3144
Mr. Harper.....	3144
Mrs. Turmel.....	3145
Mr. Harper.....	3145
Mrs. Turmel.....	3145
Mr. Harper.....	3145
Mr. Julian.....	3145
Mr. Menzies.....	3145

Foreign Affairs			
Mr. Daniel	3149		
Mr. Baird	3149		
Campaign Financing			
Mr. Ravignat	3150		
Mr. Poilievre	3150		
Mr. Ravignat	3150		
Mr. Poilievre	3150		
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister			
Mr. Angus	3150		
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	3150		
Mr. Angus	3150		
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	3150		
Justice			
Mr. Coderre	3151		
Mr. Goguen	3151		
The Environment			
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	3151		
Mr. Kent	3151		
Telecommunications			
Mr. Dionne Labelle	3151		
Mr. Paradis	3151		
Mr. Dionne Labelle	3151		
Mr. Paradis	3151		
Human Rights			
Mr. Storseth	3151		
Mr. Nicholson	3152		
Iran			
Mr. Cotler	3152		
Mr. Baird	3152		
Aboriginal Affairs			
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	3152		
Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	3152		
Natural Resources			
Mr. Anders	3152		
Mr. Oliver	3152		
Citizenship and Immigration			
Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	3152		
Mr. Kenney	3153		
The Environment			
Ms. May	3153		
Mr. Kent	3153		
Points of Order			
Oral Question Period			
Mr. Dionne Labelle	3153		
Mr. Van Loan	3153		
Mr. Regan	3153		
Mr. Menzies	3153		
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Government Response to Petitions			
Mr. Lukiwski	3153		
Committees of the House			
Procedure and House Affairs			
Mr. Preston	3154		
Statistics Act			
Mr. Masse	3154		
Bill C-346. Introduction and first reading	3154		
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	3154		
Income Tax Act			
Mr. Masse	3154		
Bill C-347. Introduction and first reading	3154		
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	3154		
Workplace Psychological Harassment Prevention Act			
Mr. Masse	3154		
Bill C-348. Introduction and first reading	3154		
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	3154		
Canada Consumer Product Safety Act			
Mr. Masse	3154		
Bill C-349. Introduction and first reading	3154		
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	3154		
Federal Law—Civil Law Harmonization Act No. 3			
Mr. Nicholson	3154		
Bill S-3. First reading	3154		
(Motion deemed adopted and bill read the first time) ..	3155		
Committees of the House			
Procedure and House Affairs			
Mr. Preston	3155		
Motion for concurrence	3155		
(Motion agreed to)	3155		
Petitions			
Mining			
Mr. Godin	3155		
Multiple Sclerosis			
Mr. Braid	3155		
Mr. Goodale	3155		
Health of Animals Act			
Mr. Atamanenko	3155		
Canada Post			
Mr. Atamanenko	3155		
Multiple Sclerosis			
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	3155		
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation			
Mr. Lizon	3156		
Public Transit			
Ms. Chow	3156		
Service Canada			
Mr. Simms	3156		
Questions on the Order Paper			
Mr. Lukiwski	3156		
Privilege			
Telephone Calls to Mount Royal Constituents			
Mr. Cotler	3156		

Mr. Comartin	3158
Mr. Van Loan	3158

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

National Defence Act

(Bill C-16. On the Order: Government Orders:)	3158
Mr. Van Loan	3158
Motion	3158
(Motion agreed to, bill concurred in at report stage, read the third time and passed)	3158

Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act

Bill C-13—Time Allocation Motion

Mr. Van Loan	3158
Motion	3158
Mr. Comartin	3158
Mr. Lamoureux	3159
Mr. Julian	3159
Mr. Bellavance	3160
Ms. Sims	3160
Mr. Simms	3161
Mr. Watson	3161
Mr. Giguère	3161
Mrs. Hughes	3162
Mr. Preston	3162
Mr. Lamoureux	3162
Mr. Godin	3163
Motion agreed to	3164

Points of Order

Committees of the House

Mr. Comartin	3164
Mr. Van Loan	3166

Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act

Report Stage

Bill C-13. Report Stage	3167
-------------------------------	------

Mr. Menegakis	3167
Mrs. Hughes	3168
Mr. Lamoureux	3168
Mr. Adler	3169
Mr. Sopuck	3169
Mr. Cash	3170
Mr. Lamoureux	3170
Mr. Toews	3170
Division on Motion No. 1 deferred	3171
Mr. Julian	3171
Motion No. 2	3171
Division on Motion No. 2 deferred	3171
Ms. May	3171
Motion No. 3	3171
Division on Motion No. 3 deferred	3171
Mr. Julian	3171
Motion No. 4	3171
Division on Motion No. 4 deferred	3171
Motion No. 1 negatived	3172
Motion No. 2 negatived on division	3173
Motion No. 3 negatived on division	3174
Motion No. 4 negatived on division	3175
Mr. Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance)	3175
Motion for concurrence	3175
Motion agreed to	3177

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Gasoline Prices

Mr. Brahma	3177
Mr. Lake	3177

Poverty

Ms. Borg	3178
Mr. Anderson	3179

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