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(Part A)

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 18, 2012

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

• (1105)

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

DIVISIONS AT REPORT STAGE ON BILL C-38

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that I have been inaccurately recorded as voting yea in Division No. 325 at page 9478 of *Debates* and page 1650 of *Journals* for Wednesday, June 13. If you were to look at the video, you would clearly see that I stood and voted nay to Motion No. 273, along with my government colleagues.

I would ask that the records of the House be changed to reflect that fact.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. government House leader for bringing this to our attention. We will certainly look into it and make sure that the record is accurate.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION ACT

The House resumed from May 14 consideration of the motion that Bill C-300, An Act respecting a Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Don Valley East has eight minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand this morning to talk about Bill C-300, the federal framework for suicide prevention act.

Suicide is a tragedy that not only affects the person who actually commits suicide but all the people around him or her, the whole community and relatives, et cetera, who are actually involved. The tragedy of suicide is that most people do not understand why.

A close friend of mine woke up one day and went into the washroom only to find his brother hanging there, having committed suicide. The effect of that on him and his family was tremendous. Years later, he remarks that he just does not understand why. Understanding why has been a quest for many people for a very long time.

This bill is very supportive in terms of trying to understand why. The framework allows some investigation and research to be undertaken and pushed forward so that we can better understand what causes these tragedies.

For example, a very famous footballer in England had a successful football career and was a coach in one of the first division leagues. He was seen the night before, partying and enjoying himself. The following day, it was discovered that he had taken his life. Nobody really understands why people feel this despair and that they have to take their own lives, ending it like that. He was a successful, wealthy man.

Suicide affects people from the entire spectrum of life, from the very rich to the poor and everybody in between. Understanding suicide in this country can help. We have had many tragedies of suicide among aboriginal people, particularly among youth, in the prime of their lives, who take their own lives. There must be some reason for that.

To understand that reason has to be a quest that we as a Parliament can undertake. The question is, "Why are these tragedies happening?" This bill puts forward a framework whereby research can be done, as well as follow-up with the victims and the communities around them, to try to understand and prevent some of these tragedies that are happening.

I ask all members on all party sides to support this bill.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak, today, to what no one can doubt to be an incredibly important and urgent issue: the need for a pan-Canadian suicide prevention strategy.

Private Members' Business

The House of Commons demonstrated its commitment to developing a national strategy in October of last year. The hon. member for Toronto Centre, the interim leader of the Liberal Party, introduced an important and powerful motion passed by this House almost unanimously when we agreed that suicide is more than a personal tragedy; it is also a serious public health issue and public policy priority. As a government and as national representatives, we must work with our counterparts in the provinces and territories and with representatives from non-governmental organizations, first nations, Inuit and Métis people, to establish and fund a comprehensive, evidence-driven national suicide prevention strategy.

I was proud to stand along with nearly every other member in this House to support that motion.

This issue with other mental health and end-of-life concerns has been forefront in my mind for more than two years, both here and as a member of the all-party parliamentary palliative and compassionate care committee, which I helped form with Bill C-300 sponsor, the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga, the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh, the hon. member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar and the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

What brought us together goes back to our initial reactions to a private member's bill dealing with end-of-life issues. At that time I felt, and still feel, that if people are given a reason to live, feel their lives are relevant and significant and truly do not feel that they are a burden on society and are able to live pain-free, they just might be less inclined to turn to more desperate measures as a relief from the emotional, mental or physical pain from which they suffer.

Over the course of our hearings, we travelled widely and Canadians from across the country came to Ottawa, at their own expense, to share their stories and experiences with us. These were men and women, parents, siblings and families who were directly affected by mental health issues and suicide, as well as experts who deal with mental health and suicide prevention daily.

Our committee ultimately concluded and recommended that the federal government establish a suicide prevention secretariat and that it provide the secretariat with adequate funding so that it might conduct and support research and act as a conduit between the provincial and municipal governments and community stakeholders to accomplish these goals.

The result of this federally directed collaboration would be the development and implementation of a national suicide prevention strategy, similar to the one we are discussing today. By working together, the various levels of government and stakeholders could develop and implement a program with nationally recognized and accepted standards for the training of suicide intervention personnel. By providing a nationally directed body to coordinate with other levels of government and groups, research and information could be more easily shared instead of being isolated in a series of silos across the country.

More important, it would enable the development of a national public awareness program on suicide and suicide prevention, as well as facilitate social media around reducing the stigma associated with suicide and mental health issues.

We have all heard various notable figures speak out and tell marginalized youth that it gets better; an important and valuable lesson that too many Canadians do not hear in time. However, our efforts to reach youth and others in need more effectively must be better coordinated across the country.

The facts behind suicide are staggering. Ten Canadians take their own life every day. By the time we wrap up here tonight, 10 more Canadians will have committed suicide because they are struggling with pain and hopelessness, depression and desperation. By the end of today, 10 more Canadian families will be devastated by the loss of a loved one. For every Canadian who commits suicide, there are 100 who attempt to kill or deliberately harm themselves. That is 1,000 Canadians a day, hundreds of thousands a year. Many of those Canadians will be men aged 25 to 29 or 40 to 44, or women aged 30 to 34. Suicide is the leading cause of death in those age groups. It is the second leading cause for young men and women between 10 and 24 years old. It may be one of our veterans, where the suicide rate is nearly three times higher than in the general population.

● (1110)

Suicide rates among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, intersexed and two-spirited youth is seven times the rate of heterosexual youth. The leading cause of death for aboriginal males aged 10 to 19 is suicide and the rate for Inuit youth is among the highest in the world, at 11 times higher than the national average. Yet, in the face of these staggering statistics, and for not one good reason, we remain hostage to our inability to appropriately deal with the crisis, which affects us from coast to coast to coast. We are one of two countries in the G8 without a national suicide prevention strategy.

We also know that suicide intervention works. Countless lives are saved every year through intervention. We know that so much more can be done and so many more can be saved with the appropriate public funding of research and a national direction to guide the response in each of our provinces. Many organizations have called for a national suicide prevention strategy. In October 2004, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, known as CASP, issued the first edition of the CASP blueprint for a Canadian national suicide prevention strategy, a document that was later revised in 2009. The CASP blueprint called for an awareness and understanding of suicide, so that we might all understand this tragedy better, and so that fewer Canadian families would be needlessly victimized. It called for prevention and intervention that not only features community-based programs which address the specific needs of at-risk sections of our population, but that can be implemented more broadly. In order to adequately address these needs, the call for funding and support, as well as a more coherent approach to the gathering of information, must be answered.

Private Members' Business

A month ago, the Mental Health Commission of Canada reported on its mental health strategy for Canada, once again calling for a national suicide prevention strategy. It stated, "Despite the fact that pan-Canadian initiatives could help all jurisdictions to improve mental health outcomes, planning documents that address these matters from the perspective of the country as a whole are rare."

The testimony is voluminous, the statistics are clear. Suicide is so much more than a personal and sudden decision made in a time of great pain, angst or isolation. It is a terrible scourge that affects nearly every family across the country.

In closing, all of us here want to see this national tragedy end, and we have yet another opportunity with this step forward. We came together in October to pass a motion calling for a national strategy for suicide prevention. We came together as members of an all-party committee to advocate a national strategy for suicide prevention, outlined in the committee's report, "Not to be Forgotten". Now we can come together again and support Bill C-300.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-300 would require the government to establish a federal framework for suicide prevention in consultation with relevant non-governmental organizations, the relevant entity in each province and territory, as well as with relevant federal departments.

I support this bill because suicide is a major health issue in this country and it must be recognized as such, so that Canada makes it a real public policy priority. There are some 4,000 suicides in Canada every year, so this is an urgent problem and the government must take a stance. We must increase awareness and understanding of suicide across the country and make prevention a priority. This bill will open the dialogue on suicide prevention.

Suicide is a public health issue that requires proper public intervention in terms of prevention, treatment and funding. For intervention to be even more effective, the government must take some responsibility, by calling on the provinces and territories, first nations, the Métis and the Inuit to work with the federal government to develop a long-term national suicide prevention strategy.

This is what families and stakeholders have been calling for for years. We need clear measures to ensure that our commitment gives rise to tangible, concerted actions with stakeholders across the country. Any strategy must also take into account groups at risk, which we must absolutely not ignore in light of what is at stake. I am thinking in particular of young people, the first nations, persons with disabilities, veterans as well as gays and lesbians.

The only way to help them is to understand their realities and the taboos associated with the issue and stigmatization, which is common. Take, for example, persons with disabilities, whose condition is deteriorating every day, who struggle with instability and social isolation, and who have a much higher unemployment rate than the general labour force. Needless to say, these are factors that lead to situations of great despair.

We are also seeing new social groups in distress that are harder to reach, such as farmers. This group of people rarely, if ever, turns to crisis workers despite high levels of stress and intense distress. In

recent years, the Canadian armed forces also reported a higher suicide rate as soldiers returned to Canada by the hundreds: 20 of them took their own lives in 2011, nearly twice as many as the year before. According to the Canadian army, 187 soldiers have committed suicide since 1996. Mental health issues and post-traumatic stress are taking a heavy toll, putting soldiers at increased risk of suicide. It is clear that there are serious, ongoing deficiencies with screening and prevention services for these soldiers.

We must also consider the aboriginal communities that the government has been neglecting. The suicide rate among young aboriginals is much higher than among non-aboriginals—four to six times higher. The situation varies from one community to the next, which points to the need for targeted initiatives that take into account the unique cultural and spiritual makeup of each community.

The riding of Montcalm is also especially affected by suicide. According to the suicide prevention centre in Lanaudière, the suicide rate in this region is above the Quebec average. Statistics Canada determined that the Quebec average in 2006 was 14.8 suicides per 100,000 inhabitants, and that of Lanaudière was 16.1 suicides per 100,000.

That said, it is very difficult to put numbers on suicide attempts, but there are 210 hospitalizations for suicide attempts in Lanaudière in an average year. Despite a gradual decline in youth suicide among Quebecers since 2000, we should still be concerned about this excess mortality, especially among boys, whose suicide rate is much higher than that of girls.

On the other hand, the rate of attempted suicides is twice as high for girls. For each of the groups affected, we must find all the factors that may lead to suicide and we must intervene. It is absurd that a national suicide prevention strategy has not yet been established, after nearly 20 years of demands from NGOs. The impact of suicide on Canadian society is clear to everyone; nearly 4,000 people take their own lives in Canada every year. It is one of the highest rates among the industrialized nations.

Suicide is not an issue that affects only one region of the country; it affects them all. In order to meet the needs of people in distress, however, the appropriate public health resources must be in place and we must work with the communities to reflect the special factors in each cultural and community group.

Private Members' Business

●(1120)

Prevention initiatives must reflect these specific realities. Combatting this phenomenon is possible, but in order to do so, we need to take concerted, coherent and intensive action so that people who are in distress have access to the effective resources they need. We must be able to guarantee access to mental health and addiction services, provide adequate support to professionals and stakeholders, reduce the stigmatization and focus on research.

In terms of suicide prevention, I find Canada's poor record compared to other industrialized countries very disturbing. Our suicide rate is far too high, and yet we do not have a national strategy to address the problem. Furthermore, industrialized countries that have a national suicide prevention strategy have lower suicide rates and are doing much better than we are.

In the 1990s, both the United Nations and the World Health Organization called upon every country to establish its own national strategy. Many countries answered that call. Unfortunately, Canada was not one of them. It makes no sense. Why did Canada depart from this trend towards adopting a national strategy?

Nevertheless, I want to commend the hard work of mental health care professionals across the country. They do an outstanding job of answering calls, engaging the public and working with schools and workplaces. However, their work would have a greater reach and be more effective if their efforts were coordinated and best practices were shared nationally.

Currently, efforts are fragmented and organizations working on prevention are underfunded. The government can do something to change this situation by clearly identifying current shortcomings and disseminating best practices on prevention, research, expertise and primary care. We absolutely must have national guidelines on this.

With this government, we also have very few effective suicide prevention initiatives for our soldiers and veterans. It is inconceivable considering that modern-day veterans have a higher suicide rate than other Canadians, according to three studies released in 2011 by Veterans Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence and Statistics Canada.

It was the first reliable statistical study of its kind, and I would like to share some of the findings. The suicide rate among veterans is 46% higher than that of other Canadians in the same age bracket, and the only cause of death that is proportionally higher.

Why is there no ongoing evaluation of initiatives and monitoring of trends? What are we waiting for to take suicide seriously?

The World Health Organization calls suicide a huge public health problem but, we should remember, it is a problem that is largely preventable. In Quebec, there has been a 34% decline in the suicide rate in the past 10 years. Research has led to significant progress in suicide prevention. Consequently, it would be unfortunate to not share these advances and new means of prevention.

I will close by saying that this bill reminds us that we must take immediate action, and it will help prevent people from committing suicide. Given the extent of the scourge we are trying to eliminate, the government must act and continue to act. Because the high rate of suicide is a concern, prevention must be a public policy priority.

Therefore, I encourage all my colleagues to support this bill and to continue our suicide prevention efforts. After all, suicide is a concern for all of us. We must ensure that this issue becomes a priority for Canada so we can help more people in distress and save as many lives as possible.

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a little bittersweet for me to rise today to discuss this issue. Nevertheless, I am here to speak about the troubles that my home community is facing.

I inevitably return to my roots and talk about my community and other aboriginal communities in the country. Now, members must understand that the kind of reasoning I am using also applies to the rest of Canada.

Although I always try to distance myself or separate myself from the negative discourse surrounding the realities in Canada's aboriginal communities, after reviewing my recent speeches, I see that I tend to bring up some obscure points when I talk about the realities in the communities. What members must know is that I spent part of my life in a community that really struggled socially. This will necessarily be reflected in my speech. My colleagues have mentioned this to me, and since I am capable of introspection, I must say that these obscure points sometimes come out.

As I have said many times over the past year, my professional orientation probably has been guided and shaped by the idea of culturally appropriate social intervention. When I say, "culturally appropriate social intervention", I refer to my criminal law practice, and also to my work in mental health.

In addition to providing legal services, I made sure that I took action, spoke to people and tried to find agreement or a way to connect with people more directly by referring to their everyday reality. That is why I was so successful with the legal aid office, where I began working when I was quite young, in 2007. As I have said before, I dealt with 400 files. Word got around quickly and people in the community asked me to help them more and more, because, in addition to providing legal services, I tried to improve their quality of life and influence everyone's future.

When I finished my bar admission course, my employer asked that I take responsibility for contentious matters involving the Innu and Naskapi communities. With time, my activities in the mental health field grew, and became a large part of my professional practice.

Private Members' Business

When I joined the legal aid office in 2007, I was assigned to the circuit court. As we travelled, I discovered that there was a rather significant demand for mental health services in my community. Rapidly, I found myself being asked to go to the psychiatric wing of the Sept-Îles hospital to meet clients who were sometimes dealing with the criminal justice system or the penal system, as well as custody orders, or custody in institutions under the Quebec Civil Code. In each of these cases, I had to specialize and reorient my career, because of the huge demand.

Now, when talking about problems and care with respect to mental health, there is always the concept of suicide, along with violent death and other elements that reveal the deterioration of the social fabric. These elements often come to the surface when clients are receiving services.

At the tender age of 24, 25, 26, I was called to work in fields that typically require specialized knowledge. The other lawyers who took these cases on had much more experience than I in the field, but I took the cases on anyway. Over the years, I gained more and more specialized knowledge. Now I can talk about Seroquel dosage and anticonvulsants because I was assigned to many of those cases. I am also familiar with the concept of toxic psychosis, which I will discuss in further detail shortly.

Inevitably, exposure to marked social dysfunction during childhood, combined with the career path I chose, influenced my understanding of social problems like suicide and associated issues. Everyone in my community has a passing familiarity with violent death.

• (1125)

I am not saying that this problem is the norm. Still, every time I return to Uashat, one of the first things I do is ask my family and friends whether there have been any violent deaths. By that, I mean everything from suicide to cirrhosis and overdose. That is the first thing I ask people in my community about. Invariably, they have names to add to the list. Many of the dead are people I represented in my legal practice, neighbours or friends. At times, when I call, people name others too. I do not necessarily need to go to Uashat to get that information. However, every time I return to my community, people tell me things that, while anything but banal, are part of daily life there. Children grow up intimately familiar with the atmosphere of bleakness and gloom in the community. That is part of everyday life there, and that background inevitably informs my own views.

I did a little research, and my community of Uashat won the gold medal for having the highest suicide rate in the world in 2003, as reported in *Le Soleil* in that same year. That is a very sad record, I know, but it simply illustrates the scope of the problem in my community.

I brought this up at a meeting of the aboriginal affairs committee. One stakeholder said that Uashat was going through a period of economic growth and increased socio-economic affirmation. However, I reminded that individual that this has always been a major problem for the community. Although, technically, there is some economic vitality, as I said in committee, in the end, it has very little impact on maintaining any quality of life or on the quality of the social fabric.

Aside from emphasizing the need for a national suicide prevention strategy, we also need to ensure that government initiatives and efforts on the ground somehow converge in order to really understand the causes and variables that will ultimately give us some answers. Not only is the suicide rate far too high—at dozens of suicides every year—but these suicides are being committed by very young people. In our communities, violent deaths are not necessarily limited to young people, but the suicide rate among youth is nevertheless especially high. Government efforts will have to address this problem. I will always be willing to work on this problem.

Aside from the fact that Canada will have no choice but to adopt a national suicide prevention strategy, I believe that particular efforts must be made to help aboriginal Canadians and aboriginal youth.

I submit this respectfully.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank members of the House for the discussion we have had on this important topic.

It is never easy to talk about death, and as members have acknowledged, it is even more difficult to talk about suicide. That is why this conversation was so important. I am grateful to all hon. members who joined in.

As I have said so often, in this case the conversation is just as important as the legislation, but the legislation is important. We know that 10 Canadians die by suicide each day. We know that suicide is the second-largest killer of our youth. We know there are identifiable communities which suffer from suicide rates that are grossly disproportionate to their general population.

These are broad statistics that do not lie, but while the statistics are depressing, the thousands of stories behind the statistics are tragic. Let me share one person's story.

This individual was molested at the age of seven. This person also experienced severe bullying. Today, he is openly talking about taking his own life. This individual just turned 11. It is one thing to hear numbers about youth suicide, but it is another thing entirely to be confronted by a real-life story where an 11-year-old child requires intervention.

As the father of three children and the proud grandparent of nine, I was sick when I heard this story. What to do? I am not trained in crisis intervention, but when this child's mother sought help from my office, we were able to connect her with people who possess the skills, experience, understanding and training to offer help.

It was on the recommendation of a friend who follows the deliberations of this House that the mother contacted me. The conversation has already made a difference.

Government Orders

Bill C-300 is only under debate. The legislation has not yet been enacted and is not in force. This conversation, though, has been ongoing for months, and without this conversation, at least one child would still be contemplating a very permanent response to some temporary and surmountable challenges, but with connections to help has now found hope.

I thank all hon. members for the quality of debate they brought to this topic. I thank members from my party and also members from the opposition parties who were willing to attach their names to this effort as joint seconders.

This conversation has already helped at least one child. Please do not let this conversation end with this debate. I ask all hon. members to keep it alive, both here in Ottawa and at home in their constituencies.

Every riding in Canada needs to engage in this dialogue. The most important type of leadership members of the House can provide is not as makers of the law, but as local leaders of critical and crucial conversations. By continuing the conversation, each one of us can help break the stigma and the silence. We can provide hope, the oxygen of the human spirit.

I ask members to allow Bill C-300 to proceed without a standing vote. I ask them to let Bill C-300 move as quickly as possible to the Senate to become law and provide hope as soon as possible. With each day's delay, 10 Canadians will fall victim to suicide.

• (1135)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time for debate has expired. The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House will suspend sitting until 12 o'clock.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:37 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 o'clock)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[English]

JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (for the Minister of Finance), moved that Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish a belated happy Father's Day to you and everyone else in the House.

It is my absolute pleasure to kick off third and final reading of the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. This is a very good measure that the government has put forward which will help Canadians across the country secure jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

Before I speak to the bill, I will take a brief moment to thank my fellow members of the finance committee and the special subcommittee that was created specifically to study the bill. Together, both committees held nearly 70 hours of hearings on the legislation, making it the longest committee study of a budget implementation bill in over two decades.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the hundreds of witnesses we heard at committee, including government officials, business leaders, union representatives, economists, industry associations and many others. Their words and testimony made clear that we need this legislation to keep our economy strong, especially when events in Europe remind us that the global economic outlook remains fragile.

We heard from witnesses such as University of Guelph Professor Jane Londerville and Carleton University Professor Ian Lee. Both applauded this bill for the increased oversight it brings to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which will strengthen Canada's housing sector.

The Mining Association of Canada explained how the mineral exploration tax credit would help northern and remote communities to grow.

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities voiced its approval for the measures taken by this bill to increase the availability of registered disability savings plans.

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters praised our government's focus on more efficient and responsible resource development because it believes our plan will "maximize our economic opportunities while maintaining the right balance between environmental protection and economic growth".

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business gave its approval to reforms to employment insurance that would better assist and encourage Canadians looking for work.

Witnesses such as the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and Consumer Health Products Canada were pleased to see the elimination of bureaucratic red tape that delayed new products already approved by Health Canada from coming to market for years on end.

The Canadian Museums Association noted that amendments contained in this bill would mean that Canadians right across the country would get to see more and more of the world's finest art in our museums.

Government Orders

We heard from witnesses such as the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and the Rotman International Centre for Pension Management, which commended the government for common sense reforms to old age security, which will ensure that the program remains sustainable for generations to come.

Windsor Police Service and the RCMP explained how provisions contained in this legislation would allow them to better partner with American law enforcement to keep Canada's border with the United States safe and open for business.

There were many more witnesses who provided countless hours of testimony and spoke to the great importance of this bill and the positive impact it would have on Canada's economy. I encourage Canadians to visit the finance committee's website and read about all of this first hand.

At times like these, Canadian families want their government and elected officials to stay focused on the economy, not on partisanship or procedural games. Canadians see the headlines about Greece and Spain. They read about how those economies have hit hard times. They know that European governments have been unable to effectively deal with their economic crisis.

While it should be clear to everyone in this Parliament, sometimes it does not seem that way, so I will say it anyway. Canadians do not want economic uncertainty. Canadians do not want their politicians to play procedural games while the economy teeters. Canadians want a government with a plan to grow Canada's economy and create jobs in their communities so they can continue to focus on what matters to them, such as raising their families, saving for their retirement and continuing to live in the very best country on Earth. That is exactly what our Conservative government has committed to do since being elected in 2006.

• (1205)

Despite what the NDP and Liberals would have us believe with their constant talking down of the Canadian economy, our Conservative government's plan to grow the Canadian economy has worked and it has worked very well. It is a plan that has included record investments in research and development, record investments in infrastructure, over 140 tax cuts leaving over \$3,100 in the pockets of an average Canadian family, lower business taxes, investments in skills, training and education, and so very much more.

We know that our plan has been effective but members do not have to take my word for it because the facts speak for themselves. Let us look at the facts.

Fact, since we took office in January 2006, Canada has created nearly 1.3 million net new jobs, which is the best job growth record in the G7.

Fact, *Forbes* magazine, one of the world's leading business publications, has ranked Canada as the best country in the world to do business.

Fact, the World Economic Forum, a respected independent financial leader, has declared Canada's banks to be the soundest in the world for four straight years in a row.

Fact, both the OECD and the IMF have forecast that Canada's economic growth will be among the strongest in the industrialized world in the coming years.

Fact, Canada's net debt to GDP ratio remains the lowest in the G7 by far.

Fact, all three of the world's major credit rating agencies, Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch, have recently renewed Canada's top credit rating.

When Conservative members point out these facts, the NDP and Liberals are quick to attack them, dismissing undisputed international praise of Canada's economy as somehow having nothing to do with our government's economic policy since 2006. Naturally, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, I do not agree with that statement at all.

Canadians might expect some bias in my assessment, so I do not want them to just take my word for it. This is what the OECD said only a few short days ago about Canada's economy, "overall, Canada's...performance has been very good in recent years. We attribute that to good macro policy settings, good structural policy".

When Canadians watching at home hear the NDP and Liberal speakers stand up bashing Canada's economy and our government's economic policies, I urge them to consider all of the facts.

Despite our careful stewardship to grow and protect Canada's economy, we cannot be complacent and rely on our past achievements to carry us forward. That is something almost every Canadian can relate to, be it a small business owner who is hoping to grow, an employee looking for a promotion, a high school student applying to college, or a family trying to pay the bills while also trying to save enough for retirement.

To succeed we must look forward and be prepared for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Both today's legislation and economic action plan 2012 would do exactly that and are unapologetic in their comprehensiveness and ambition. The challenges we face are equally multifaceted and wide-ranging.

[*Translation*]

There are many challenges and uncertainties still confronting the economy. The recovery is not complete and too many Canadians are still looking for work. The global economy remains fragile and any potential setbacks would have an impact on Canada. Canadian businesses face ever-increasing competition from emerging fast-growth countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Our aging population will put pressure on public finances and social programs. Let us not kid ourselves: it will not be easy during this particularly intense time, but we know that we have the leadership that it takes to get things done.

Government Orders

Economic action plan 2012 takes important steps to address these structural challenges and ensure the sustainability of public finances and social programs for future generations.

International experience shows the importance of taking action now, rather than delaying.

Economic action plan 2012 focuses on the drivers of growth and job creation—innovation, investment, education, skills and communities.

Underpinning these actions is the ongoing commitment to keeping taxes low, which is central to the government's long-term economic plan. I am pleased to announce that since its release nearly four months ago, economic action plan 2012 has received some extremely positive reactions.

• (1210)

As the Quebec Employers Council said, the economic action plan contains “measures to support economic development and job creation in Canada”.

[*English*]

These are the words of the Vancouver Board of Trade:

This budget reflects the type of long-term thinking that needs to be shown in a global context of the need for more free trade, particularly with Asia, South America and Europe.

The St. John's Board of Trade said that budget 2012 “focuses on the future and on future generations. It's a focus on high-quality job creation. We have a focus on innovation that is going to help us diversify the economy, which is going to be critical for future success”.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce said:

The 2012 federal budget presents a plan for long-term economic growth that builds on Canada's economic fiscal advantages.

Finally, a recent Waterloo region editorial in the *The Record* stated that budget 2012 was an:

...intelligent and visionary plan to preserve a progressive, prosperous Canada in a global landscape filled with both upheaval and promise.

And for this reason it is the most ambitious and important federal budget in a generation.

Underlying it all is an astute recognition of how this nation and the world around it are changing. Canada is aging. The growth in its workforce has slowed to a crawl. New economic superpowers — China, India, Brazil — that have emerged or are emerging offer new markets yet greater competition.

This budget tackles these challenges head-on....

What do all those third party assessments of economic action plan 2012 have in common? They recognize that our Conservative government's plan is forward looking and focused squarely on Canadians' long-term economic prosperity.

We contrast that with members of the NDP who continue to push their failed high-tax, anti-globalization, anti-trade agenda and the ever-expanding government bureaucracies of the 1970s that go with it. Or, the Liberals who also want higher taxes and who are guided by the belief that every aspect of Canadian life should be managed by a government program run by an endless stream of bureaucrats. Or, let us consider the radicalism of the Green Party which wants to shut down huge sectors of the Canadian economy, punish Canadians

with a new tax on the energy they use and labels Canada's natural resource industry and the people it employs a “disease”.

None of the oppositions' proposals are based on facts, like how Canada's population is aging or the continued fragility of the global economy. Instead, the oppositions' plans are based on a rigid ideological belief that government must always grow larger, control more and leave less in the pockets of its citizens through higher taxes. That is why they have been so vocal in their opposition to economic action plan 2012.

I want Canadians at home to know that today's bill is a solid plan for our economy that will bring jobs today and prosperity for tomorrow. With today's act, we are encouraging business to invest and create jobs in Canada by making the review process for major economic projects more timely and transparent while protecting the environment under the principle of one project, one review; extending the mineral exploration tax credit to support junior mineral exploration; and getting rid of dated foreign investment restrictions that prevent Canadian telecommunications companies from growing their operations.

We are improving training by making employment insurance more efficient and focused on job creation by removing disincentives to work while continuing to support unemployed Canadians. We are bolstering Canada's immigration system to better meet our economic needs by ensuring that skilled immigrants can come to Canada and apply their skills where they are needed most.

We are supporting families and communities by guaranteeing the increase of health and social transfers well into the next decade, expanding tax relief to better meet the health care needs of Canadians, expanding accessibility to the registered disability savings plan, requiring that federally regulated long-term disability plans be insured, and ensuring wider access to OAS and GIS through proactive enrolment.

That is a lot in one paragraph and there is so much more covered in this bill.

We are also better managing taxpayer dollars and getting back to balanced budgets by refocusing government programs, including completely eliminating dated and ineffective programs that are duplicative or no longer serve the needs of Canadians.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

Before closing, allow me to say that our government's economic policies have made Canada a model of stability in a struggling global economy. We are one step closer to passing this important piece of legislation, which will support job creation, the responsible development of our resources, small business and vital sectors of our economy.

This bill has had the longest debate in the House of Commons and the most extensive study in committee of any other budget implementation bill in over 20 years.

Canadians want their government to concentrate on what is most important: jobs, growth and economic prosperity.

That is exactly what we are doing by implementing economic action plan 2012.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance present such a rosy picture of this omnibus bill when we see our trade deficit worsening, our employment rate sluggish and our personal debt rate at an all-time high?

We have heard expert testimony, including from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, at the finance committee that this budget implementation bill will worsen unemployment and be a drag on our economic growth. It will cut services, cut jobs and cut growth. At a time of such global economic uncertainty, why would we backtrack on our international environmental commitments? Why would we backtrack on developing growth and our economy?

If the hon. parliamentary secretary is so confident in what the government is doing in this omnibus bill, why does the government not have the courtesy and honesty to break it up and allow for a full and honest debate throughout this country?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for the question, but unfortunately I do not agree with much of anything that she said.

In fact, as I made perfectly clear in my speech, Canada is seen by many countries across this world as being the leader when it comes to job creation following a recession that hit us all.

When my colleagues across the way talks about a sluggish employment record, that is absolutely not true. We have the strongest economic growth and the strongest employment growth as a result. In fact, we have seen over 760,000 jobs created since 2009, thanks to the economic policies and thanks to the environment that was produced so that economic growth could continue.

When we talk about the measures in the budget implementation act, all of the things mentioned by my learned colleague are actually false. We have protected the environment. We have taken some measure to move forward to protect the safety and security of Canadians. We have moved forward to ensure that there are health measures that protect generations to come.

There is more and more to see in the budget. I wish the member would take the time to actually read it and not continue to argue about process.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the hon. member as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and, as such, a member of the finance committee as we undertake our work on the study of income inequality now that the House of Commons has overwhelmingly supported my motion on income inequality. I do look forward to working with her, and with members of all parties on the finance committee to address this important issue.

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My question for the parliamentary secretary is about the issue of accountability, transparency and respect of Parliament. This morning, the Parliamentary Budget Officer came forward with a legal opinion, which had been sought, that actually says that the government is breaking section 79.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act in its refusal to provide detailed information on the impact on the fiscal situation of the cuts that the government is proposing to make.

The government is refusing to give members of Parliament and the Parliamentary Budget Officer the detailed impacts of the legislation we are passing on the fiscal situation, such as the impacts of spending initiatives and the impacts of cuts.

Today we have an unprecedented situation where the Parliamentary Budget Officer has attained a legal opinion that the government is actually breaking section 79.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

Why is the parliamentary secretary not actively defending the interests of Parliament to have this information before we vote on this kind of legislation? Why are the Conservative members of Parliament complacent and comfortable voting blindly without knowing the impacts of this legislation on Canada's fiscal situation?

● (1220)

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing my work in the finance committee with the hon. member of the Liberal Party as well.

With regard to the budget implementation bill and savings measures, I clearly remember hosting a briefing for all parliamentarians, which included House of Commons members, senators and anyone belonging to their staff. A four and a half hour session was held to educate members and to answer any questions they had about those savings. A number of questions were asked about savings in different ministries that were answered at that time. Unfortunately, a number of people were missing and they may not have received the information, but the information was nevertheless provided when asked for.

When it comes to the deficit reduction action plan, we have been clear. Thanks to the work done by this government, by cabinet, \$5.2 billion in savings will be found in the area of ineffectiveness and waste in ministries.

We also have to be clear that we have collective agreements that also have to be honoured. We will not disregard the rights of union members to know upfront some of the situations that they will face. Our ministers are diligent about ensuring that they allow for those processes to take place.

We will continue to provide the information and continue to respect all aspects of the rollout of the deficit reduction action plan in time.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend for her great work as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

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I have listened to members opposite, especially members of the NDP. They have never talked about how to create wealth, but they are good at talking about how to spend money. Their solution to every problem in government is to spend more and more money. We have seen how that particular approach has taken the European economies, especially Greece, Italy, Spain and so on.

Could the parliamentary secretary please inform the House why it is so important for Canada to not only keep its financial house in order, but to make its financial position even stronger?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague, who is chair of our Manitoba caucus. It has been a thrill to work with him since he was elected in the past election. I look forward to working with him again in the future.

With regard to our economic fiscal advantage, Canada is seen as a leader because of the record we have with regard to our economy. However, we are not alone in this world. We are affected by outside sources. We are affected by things like what goes on in Europe and in the United States. We must remain diligent to ensure that our economy is protected from outside forces as much as possible. We do not want to be in a position like we see in Greece or Spain, where there has been some devastating economic news. They have had a heck of a time trying to secure the future for their citizens.

It is absolutely imperative that we deal with the economy in a very prioritized way, which is what the BIA and economic action plan 2012 would do. It focuses on jobs, growth and economic prosperity, along with other prosperity measures, for all Canadians.

• (1225)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member across often mentions that she is basing things on fact, however, she tends to cherry-pick the facts. She has mentioned the OECD report as a fact that Canada is doing well. Yet this report states that Canada is going through a mild case of Dutch disease. Total employment numbers since 2006 are lower than pre-2006 figures. When we say sluggish job growth, that is what we are talking about. We are not growing jobs.

Would the hon. member agree with the facts in the OECD that state that Canada is going through Dutch disease? Would she agree with the fact that total employment numbers are lower than pre-2006 numbers?

Mrs. Shelly Glover: Mr. Speaker, once again, Canada has the strongest job creation record in the G7, which is over 760,000 jobs. That is a fact.

When we look at measures with regard to the OECD report, I wish the hon. member would have read it. Here is a quote directly from the OECD report, “Canada weathered the global economic crisis well” and “thanks to a timely macroeconomic policy response and a solid banking sector...Canada enjoys strong institutions and policy credibility”.

The head of the European Financial Stability Board, who is also our Governor of the Bank of Canada, said just the other day, “It’s too simple” what the NDP has said. “The factors influencing our currency are more complex than one price or another” and “He rejects completely the argument of Dutch disease put forward by the NDP” completely.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make it clear that NDP objects, in the strongest possible terms, to Bill C-38, what we call the Trojan Horse bill. Here we are, regrettably, at third reading of this massive omnibus bill, consisting of 425 pages and 753 clauses. Let me be clear about what this bill would do.

One-third of the bill is dedicated to gutting environmental protection and turning back the clock on it. It would make sweeping changes to old age security and employment insurance, vital programs on which Canadian families rely. It would press the delete button on over 300,000 federal skilled worker applications for people who have been playing by the rules and waiting their turn. It would open the door to the privatization of our food safety system and would roll back the clock on government transparency and accountability for the future by concentrating powers in the hands of ministers and reducing oversight and reporting requirements. These are just a few of the measures contained in the bill, everything but the kitchen sink, all bound up in one massive package.

There is growing national consensus that this is the wrong way to make significant changes to government policies and programs. Matthew Carroll of Leadnow confirmed that “Canadians are hungry for a truly participatory democracy that works. The majority are outraged at the direction the current government is dragging our country”.

Even those who agree with some of the proposed changes are decrying the lack of proper oversight and study of the bill. Conservative commentator Andrew Coyne wrote about this Trojan Horse and stated:

We’ve no idea whether MPs supported or opposed any particular bill in the bunch, only that they voted for the legislation that contained them. There is no common thread that runs between them, no overarching principle; they represent not a single act of policy, but a sort of compulsory buffet... there is something quite alarming about Parliament being obliged to rubber-stamp the government’s whole legislative agenda at one go.

We have tried from the outset to reach out to the government and work with it to find an acceptable way to divide this bill into manageable parts for a more effective and democratic study. Our attempts were thwarted. We tried to offer amendments at the finance committee, but not one of the 53 amendments was accepted, this even in the face of testimony that seriously cautioned the government on several of its proposed changes.

Will Amos of Ecojustice testified. He stated:

There is no law that we can recall that has ever, in such a broad and structural manner, changed the federal environmental governance regime...Canadians are not ready for this. Parliament is not ready for this. There has been inadequate process to consider the transformative changes that are being proposed.

Professor Marjorie Griffin Cohen cautioned, as follows:

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What we don't often understand or look at is how various portions of the budget will interact with each other. For example, when you change the OAS and you then change the employment insurance, you're going to see that older people who are over 65 are probably going to be doing part-time and temporary work; they're not going to be able to qualify for a pension, nor are they going to be able to qualify for EI, if they aren't employed. We may be pushing a lot of people in specific kinds of groups into positions of poverty...

On the removal of the Inspector General's oversight from CSIS, and that is also in this bill, Paul Kennedy told the commons committee the following:

The cost associated with the Office of the Inspector General is a small price to pay if one wants to maintain a covert intelligence agency in Canada. The elimination of the Eyes and Ears of the Minister, if that is the course that you chose to adopt, should be accompanied by a common recommendation that future missteps by the intelligence service will be accompanied by the resignation of the Public Safety Minister. Wilful blindness as to potential problems at CSIS must carry a price. After all, responsibility ultimately rests with the Minister.

Mr. Kennedy is a former senior assistant deputy minister of public safety with 20 years of experience in national security. The Conservatives dismissed his testimony as simply wrong.

Finally, after time allocation in the committee, which left us with about four minutes of study per clause and further time allocations in the House, we were left with attempts to delete and amend the bill at report stage and every amendment was voted down by the government.

● (1230)

We urged the government to consult with Canadians about some of these massive changes, to hold hearings to meet with political and community leaders. However, the Atlantic premiers were not consulted about the impact of the proposed EI changes on their provinces and key environmental organizations were not consulted about the impact of gutting environmental laws.

National Chief Shawn Atleo of the Assembly of First Nations testified at the subcommittee. He said:

Part 3 of Bill C-38 needs to be withdrawn to take the time to work with first nations to ensure their rights and interests are reflected and will not be compromised through such legislation.

New Democrats did our best to open up the process by holding hearings across the country and encouraging Canadians to contact us by email, mail and social media, and thousands did. However, just as Canadians are realizing what is at stake, the government is determined to ram this bill through. We can only believe that the Conservatives' original intent was to pass this massive bill without most Canadians even knowing what was in it. It is abundantly clear that the Conservatives are determined to shut down debate and shut Canadians out of the plans they have for our country.

[*Translation*]

We believe we have made the process somewhat democratic, but it is still unacceptable that such major changes are being implemented without consultation or adequate oversight. Unfortunately, the impact of this so-called budget bill will be felt not just for a few years, but for decades. If the government is so confident about the measures it is implementing, why did it not promote them in last year's election campaign? Why is it so afraid of a public debate today? Why does it not want Canadians to find out what impact the proposed changes will have on them and their families? When did the Conservatives begin to fear accountability?

[*English*]

I must also emphasize that the short title of this bill, "jobs prosperity and long-term growth", more than misses the mark. The vast majority of these 425 pages have nothing to do with the budget or economic growth. In fact, some measures would create downward pressure on the income of Canadians. The proposed EI changes would quickly move unemployed workers to lower-paying jobs or else right off EI and onto welfare.

We see other measures such as the temporary foreign workers provisions already announced by the Conservative government that would require an employer to only search for a Canadian to fill a job for two weeks before bringing in temporary foreign workers who, now for the first time, can be paid 15% less than the average wage.

Economist Jim Stanford testified before the finance committee. He said:

It is an enormous shortage of jobs, not a lack of workers and not a lack of work ethic, that explains the decline in the employment rate...policies should be designed not to compel more labour supply but rather to support Canadian families in an era where there's a chronic shortage of jobs that dominates the outlook for our labour market moving forward.

We are already living in volatile economic times. Personal debt is at an all-time high of 152% of household income and yet there are nine times more in cuts than in job creation measures in budget 2012. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has cautioned that these changes will have a negative drag on our economy and, overall, unemployment would likely rise. Our trade deficit is high and growing.

To continue with Jim Stanford, he says:

There's a big difference, however, between signing free-trade pacts and actually doing something about trade. Canada's trade performance deteriorated badly over the past decade. The quantity of goods and services shipped abroad is seven percentage points lower than when the [Conservative] government took office, lower even than back in 2000....Our once-impressive trade surplus has melted into deficit.

Yet irresponsible, no strings attached budget cuts and tax cuts to the largest corporations have reduced the government's capacity for flexibility in these times. This omnibus budget bill does not address these problems. Instead, it makes them worse.

I look at my own community of Parkdale—High Park. There are people who are desperate to find jobs to support themselves and their families. People work hard, sometimes at two or three jobs, yet they cannot get their heads above the poverty line.

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● (1235)

It is a sad fact that in the city of Toronto, with all its wealth and opportunity, one in three children lives in poverty. I see other families who are making a higher income but who are paying exorbitant child care fees, many thousands of dollars on top of an increasing cost of living on everything from housing to food, but their incomes are not rising accordingly. These families see nothing in the budget to provide more affordable housing, nothing in child care, nothing to create jobs and improve their incomes in Toronto.

I see young people who would love the chance to have a decent future and to be part of the economy of tomorrow, but there is almost nothing here in skills development and apprenticeship training.

Young people now have twice the national unemployment rate. If they lose hope, our country will pay the price in years to come. If we invest at the front end, in job skills training and child care and better housing, we will all reap the benefits for years to come.

Regrettably, the government's determination to grow the prison population and purchase fighter jets at the expense of these measures takes Canada in the wrong direction. It is not just morally and socially wrong. It is economically unsustainable.

[*Translation*]

We believe that it is wrong to attempt to sneak measures past Canadians and to ram them through Parliament as quickly as possible. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said repeatedly that MPs are not getting the information they need in order to reasonably be able to exercise their power of oversight. And today, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has come forward with a legal opinion that backs his battle to obtain information about the proposed cuts.

[*English*]

We are living in uncertain times, and forces beyond our borders will likely continue to have a significant impact for some time to go.

We will have a jobs crisis, likely to get worse. We have an environmental record that has plummeted, among the worst under the Conservatives, and we have a government that repeatedly misleads Canadians to serve its agenda.

Canadians need a government committed to job creation in a meaningful way, not just talking points. We need a government that understands that economic growth and environmental protection must go hand in hand. And we need a government that not only sets up a Parliamentary Budget Office but that provides that office with the information it needs to provide real accountability for Canadians.

That is why New Democrats have been standing firmly against this undemocratic Trojan Horse bill every step of the way and that is why, today, I would like to introduce the following reasoned amendment. My reasoned amendment is as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"this House declines to give third reading to Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, because this House:

a) does not know the full implications of the budget cuts given that the government has kept the details of the \$5.2 billion in spending cuts from the Parliamentary Budget Officer whose lawyer Joseph Magnet says the government

is violating the Federal Accountability Act law and should turn the information over to the Parliamentary Budget Officer;

b) is concerned with the impact of the changes in the Bill on Canadian society such as:

i. making it more difficult for Canadians to access Employment Insurance when they need it and forcing them to accept jobs at 70% of what they previously earned or lose their EI;

ii. raising the age of eligibility for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement from 65 to 67 years and thus driving thousands of Canadians into poverty while downloading spending to the provinces;

iii. cutting back the federal health transfers to the provinces from 2017 on, which will result in a loss of \$31 billion to the health care system; and

iv. gutting the federal environmental assessment regime and weakening fish habitat protection which will adversely affect Canada's environmental sustainability for generations to come; and

c) is opposed to the removal of critical oversight powers of the Auditor General over a dozen agencies and the systematic concentration of powers in the hands of Government ministers over agencies such as the National Energy Board which weakens Canadians' confidence in the work of Parliament, decreases transparency and erodes fundamental democratic institutions by systematically eroding institutional checks and balances to the government's ideologically driven agenda.

● (1240)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The amendment appears to be in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

● (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even though the member's amendment points out a number of flaws within Bill C-38, unfortunately the amendment might defer the ultimate passage by, let us say, nine minutes or something of that nature.

It is unfortunate in a sense because the government has put into place a time allocation, which will in essence prevent any real, thorough, healthy debate, whether it is on this amendment or other amendments. The best example I could cite is that the Liberal Party introduced more than 500 amendments, which has to be a record inside this House, and the government chose only to debate a few of those 500 amendments.

Because of time allocation, the hundreds of Liberal amendments were never really debated. Yes, they were voted on. Yes, it did prolong the passage. Unfortunately, the government has not seen the error of its ways and made the changes that are necessary in order to satisfy Canadians. Those changes are that Bill C-38 needs to be thrown out and a new budget bill brought and put into place.

Would the member not agree with that simple statement?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and for his support for my reasoned amendment.

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I would just reach out to other members of the House. I have heard some members on the Conservative side argue that in order to prevent the mega quarry being built in Melancthon township in southern Ontario, they are calling for an environmental assessment, an environmental assessment that would be deleted by Bill C-38.

I would like to reach out to members on the other side, to think about their constituents, to think about their families, to think about the future of their communities and to vote their conscience to understand what the bill would mean for all Canadians, not now alone but for decades going forward, and all it takes is 13 members on the other side to vote their conscience and then we could win this amendment, break up the bill and have a proper debate going forward. The government has the power to do that. These individual members have the power to do that, and I would urge them to do so.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about environmental protection. Obviously everyone is concerned about that. Responsible resource development is important.

However, I would put this fact to the member. In 2010, natural resource sectors employed 760,000 workers in communities throughout the country, and in the next 10 years more than 500 major economic projects representing over \$5 billion in new investments are planned across Canada.

By opposing the budget with rhetoric and delay tactics, which we have seen here, what does the member have to say to groups like the Saskatchewan Mining Association and Cameco? They provide a lot of jobs in northern Saskatchewan and are concerned about eliminating duplication between the provinces and the federal government. They are concerned about overlap between the provincial and federal processes. It has cost them time, resources, money and jobs. They say the budget needs to be passed to ensure that is rectified.

Why will the member not encourage her members to get behind the budget and pass it so that we can eliminate this duplication and address the concerns of many in the industry?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. However, I disagree with the implication that somehow we are opposed to any debate or discussion about the environmental regulations. Absolutely not.

Of course we are happy to open up the process to consult with those affected, but not just the mining businesses. Let us talk to first nations and the people who work in the mines about workplace protection and communities that are affected. Let us talk to the broader public so that we are not just catering to one group or one region.

It is important that we have sustainable development of our natural resources. I think most Canadians would agree, but goodness gracious, let us not destroy fish habitat or run roughshod over sensitive wilderness within Canada of which we are all so proud.

Let us not run roughshod over our democratic institutions. Let us have a fair, open debate, consult broadly and then make a reasoned decision. That is what we are asking for.

● (1250)

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Parkdale—High Park for her excellent work on this file.

She may be aware that last week the World Health Organization declared diesel exhaust to be a carcinogen on the same level as asbestos and mustard gas. As she knows, that is a serious concern for the residents of her riding, my riding, Davenport and all of Toronto.

However, the Conservative government has proposed a bill that, if passed today, would remove human health from the list of things that are an effect of the environment. It would not matter whether the WHO has said that something is now dangerous, because if there were to be an environmental assessment under the proposed law, human health would not be part of the mix. Only fish, waterfowl and species at risk would be studied as a result of the changes the Conservatives are proposing to make. Human health would be in danger as a result of these changes, particularly in Toronto. I wonder if the member would like to comment.

Ms. Peggy Nash: I thank my colleague from York South—Weston for his excellent question and his diligent work on this file around the issue of diesel and the impact of diesel exhaust. He is quite right that in many of our communities in the west end of Toronto, we are facing the prospect of diesel trains rolling through neighbourhoods every seven minutes, past child care centres, schools, community centres and homes built near the tracks.

This dramatic densification of rail traffic is completely unjustifiable. We have been pushing that this train be electric so that it would be clean, efficient and without noise or vibration, like cities all around the world have.

However, without the requirement to consider human health as part of the environmental assessment, how would we ever capture this important, crucial element of the carcinogenic properties of diesel and the very dramatic, concrete impact that would have on communities in my riding and throughout the west end of Toronto?

I thank my colleague for his question and hard work on this issue. I would also call on my counterparts in government. If they want to do something to create jobs, to improve the environment, to build communities and to support our urban environment, then they should invest in clean trains, especially for the air-rail link in Toronto.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague across the way. A number of times she has insinuated that the changes regarding the environment in Bill C-38 are going to be harmful to the environment, when in fact they will be helpful to improve the environment.

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Regarding the assessments, there was a legislative review of the Environmental Assessment Act in the previous fall session. A number of recommended changes came from that study. Those changes are now part of Bill C-38, and they are good changes. Those changes make environmental assessments much more effective. There were a lot of inefficiencies before.

Why would the member oppose improving the environment and mislead this Parliament and Canadians by trying to make Canadians think it is going to be harmful, when in fact it will actually be very good for the environment?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, that question makes me feel profoundly sad, because if that is the kind of approach the member wants environmental organizations to take, I can see why every major environmental organization in this country is somehow deemed radical by the government. It is because they are speaking the truth by saying that what the government is doing will harm the environment, will gut our environmental protections, will harm fish habitats and our wilderness areas.

The government is eliminating the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, which was a body designed to bring together diverse viewpoints from business, environmentalists and first nations and bring people together to try to find common ground. Is that not what we should be doing here in Parliament—trying to find common ground and concrete solutions that work for Canadians—rather than demonizing environmentalists, disregarding their reports and somehow having this doublespeak that pretends what is bad for the environment is good for the environment? I do not think that is helpful.

• (1255)

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-38 amends or repeals 70 different pieces of legislation. It is 425 pages of legislative text with 753 clauses.

There has been a lot of focus on the length of the bill. In fact, my party and I are more concerned with the breadth of the bill and the range of legislative changes made by Bill C-38. In fact, that is much more important than the number of words or pages. To put this in perspective, it often takes just a single clause in Bill C-38 to repeal or introduce an entire act.

Proposed in Bill C-38, we now have an entirely new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act in clause 52. This one clause replaces decades of environmental protection and oversight in Canada.

Clause 441 repeals the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act.

Clause 447 increased the old age security qualification age from 65 to 67.

Clause 686 abolishes the National Council on Welfare.

Clause 699 repeals the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act.

Clause 711 introduces an entirely new Shared Services Canada Act.

These are just a sampling of a few of the 753 clauses contained in this legislation.

Under the Conservatives, budget bills have grown tremendously in breadth. These pieces of omnibus legislation have become more complex, affecting widely disparate subjects and putting them into a single bill. At the same time, the Conservatives are limiting Parliament's ability to examine these different topics in several ways: first, by limiting the amount of time we have to examine the legislation before rushing it through committee; second, by limiting the number of expert witnesses we can hear from at committee; and third, by limiting the debate on this legislation in Parliament.

There is another way that the government is operating at committee to try to subvert reasonable debate and quash any dissension to its views. We heard from a number of witnesses who spoke at length in opposition to parts of this legislation. National Chief Shawn Atleo spoke to our committee. Perversely, most of Mr. Atleo's testimony and the intent of his testimony were actually expunged from the report that the committee presented. Contrary to what the researchers provided, the governing members on the committee worked together to ensure that we would effectively expunge any piece of testimony that may be critical of the government's system.

The same was done with Tom Siddon, a former minister of fisheries in a Progressive Conservative government, who said that this legislation would make "Swiss cheese" out of the Fisheries Act and warned us of the remarkably harmful damage to the Fisheries Act that would be rendered by this legislation. Most of the intent of his testimony was effectively expunged from the final report.

Over 600 clauses are included in parts 1, 2 and 4 of the bill, but the finance committee had just over a week to hear from a grand total of 57 witnesses from outside of the government. Most clauses in this legislation were not properly examined by the finance committee or addressed by even a single witness. Simply put, the process to study Bill C-38 was a farce.

Unfortunately, last spring the Conservatives learned that parliamentary process does not seem at the present to matter a lot to Canadians. They also learned this in Ontario with the omnibus bills of the Harris government.

I mentioned last spring that it was this Conservative government that became the first government not only in Canada but in the British Commonwealth parliamentary system to have actually been found in contempt of Parliament by the previous Speaker and House.

• (1300)

Elections are about a lot of issues. Sometimes an issue will resonate with Canadians and sometimes it will not. In that election, for whatever reason, a lot of Canadians did not seem to be paying attention to the fact that we had a sitting government that had been found in contempt of Parliament.

The Harris Conservative government in Ontario repeatedly used massive omnibus legislation. It disrespected Parliament, disrespected taxpayers and got away with it.

The Conservatives have in some ways been positively reinforced for negative behaviour, but things are changing. We are increasingly hearing from Canadians. We are hearing from them through all forms of media, whether it is opinion letters in newspapers, online fora, or in person.

Government Orders

Last evening I was at my home in Cheverie and I took my Gator down to the end of our drive to plant some trees. A fellow on his motorbike out for a Sunday evening drive stopped to speak to me. I had not met this fellow before. He told me that he has paid a bit of attention to politics but has never been involved, but he wants to get involved now. He said this has gone too far, that the Conservative government is out of control. He said that what we are seeing in Ottawa is not a democratic government.

I hear that also from people at the farmers' market in Wolfville. They tell me that the government wants to celebrate the veterans of the Second World War who fought for our freedoms, but they want to know how the government can on the one hand celebrate the sacrifices and commitment of the veterans who fought for our democratic rights and freedoms while on the other hand attacking those same democratic rights and freedoms.

I am hearing that from people in my riding, and I am hearing from members of our caucus from across Canada that increasingly Canadians are noticing and are willing to get engaged and involved to find a better alternative.

This is not esoteric parliamentary procedure stuff that the Conservatives are trying to pretend. This strikes to the core values of respect for Parliament and democracy.

I will be speaking later about our inability to get legitimate information from the government about the legislation we are going to vote on, but suffice it to say that by limiting public debate and oversight, the Conservatives are hoping that Canadians will be too distracted by process issues to notice what they will really be doing with this legislation. The Conservatives are trying to distract Canadians with the process issues, and a lot of us have focused on the process issues. The Conservatives are quite happy about that, because they do not think Canadians really care about the democratic institutions that govern us and defend our freedoms. The Conservatives are wrong. They are betting against the goodwill, the good faith and the intelligence of Canadians in the long term.

I want to talk about a couple of the changes being made that the Conservatives are largely ducking responsibility and accountability for. One is the OAS change. The Conservatives are saying that this is really not a cut. They should explain that to a low-income Canadian who is looking forward to becoming 65 to qualify for OAS. Let us look at who will be affected by these changes.

Forty per cent of OAS recipients make less than \$20,000 a year. Fifty-three per cent of OAS recipients make less than \$25,000 a year. The Conservatives are telling Canadians that they will have 11 years to start saving a bit more money. It is pretty hard to tell people who are making \$20,000 a year that they have to save more money, and that is effectively what the Conservatives are telling a lot of Canadians.

The Conservatives are telling Canadians that they are living longer, that they are healthier. Lawyers, accountants, members of Parliament or journalists can probably work, if health permits, until 75 or 80 years of age.

• (1305)

My father was a businessman. He worked until he was 82. However, in the case of manual labourers, working in a cold, damp

fish plant on a concrete floor every day, on their feet all day; welders; physical labourers; carpenters; or pipe fitters, chances are by the age of 65 their bodies are ready for a break. There was no consideration of these people, the low-income Canadians being affected by this.

The government is quite happy that the issues around Bill C-38 have focused on parliamentary process and not on the actual issues. We have lots of time before the next election to ensure that we get back to those substantive issues with Canadians.

I am hearing from a lot of industries across Canada, and specifically in Atlantic Canada, on changes to EI, particularly from significant employers in seasonal industries, including horticulture. They tell me that these changes could wipe them out, that programs to support seasonal workers are part of the production chain of agriculture and horticulture, not just in Canada but globally. They say that any impediment to the use of seasonal workers or seasonal worker programs in the horticulture industry could wreak havoc on their capacity to be competitive with industries in other countries.

The legislation is also hurting Canada's international brand by tearing up 100,000 immigration applications. The Conservatives are imposing their unilateral decision to reduce health care transfer payment growth to the provinces and territories. They are enabling themselves to target charities with which they disagree. While they are at it, they have eliminated groups with which they disagree, including the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, Rights and Democracy, and the National Council of Welfare. What do those groups have in common? Number one, they were set up decades ago. Number two, they reported to governments and would disagree with governments from time to time. Number three, their funding was continued under both Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments, which could accept the principle that governments do not just fund organizations that agree with them. They have a responsibility in a functioning democracy to accept truth from experts, from people who spend their lives dealing with these issues, like the National Council of Welfare that understands the issues of poverty in Canada, or the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.

Most people have accepted that we cannot put in silos the economy on one side and the environment on the other, that good environmental policy can actually be good economic policy and that the jobs of the future are going to be increasingly green jobs, including areas of opportunity in cleaner conventional energy in places like the oil sands where we can develop those technologies. Why then, for goodness' sake, would the Conservatives get rid of a government council that has operated for decades dealing with this issue, just at the time when Canada has to deal with the issue of bringing the economy and the environment together?

Government Orders

Bill C-38 reduces the Auditor General's oversight of a number of government agencies. It reduces democratic oversight of Canada's spy agency by abolishing the office of the Inspector General. It eliminates a number of the government's reporting requirements on climate change and public service jobs. It makes changes that some experts are warning us are unconstitutional, like changes to parole hearings.

However, I believe Canadians are hitting a tipping point where we will no longer accept this anti-democratic style and substance of the government. For some time the Conservatives have been starving Canadians and members of Parliament of the information we need to have informed debate and to make informed decisions.

• (1310)

The Conservatives treat Parliament as an enemy, one that they try to starve of information and co-operation. They refuse to provide basic information, for instance about how much legislation would cost. In the fall of 2010, I put forward a motion at the finance committee, demanding that the government provide us with information about the costs of the F-35s and of its prison agenda. My motions were adopted, but the government continued to refuse to disclose the information. I appealed to Parliament through a question of privilege. I argued that MPs have a fiduciary responsibility to Canadians. We must know how much legislation would cost before we vote on it.

This is not just a responsibility we have as opposition members of Parliament. It is very important that the members of Parliament in the government recognize that the Conservative MPs have the same job description that we do. We have the same fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers and to citizens and to our electors to know the cost of the legislation we are voting on. To vote blindly, without even demanding that information, is to not do our job. That is effectively what the Conservatives are failing to do when they are complicit with a government that starves Parliament of this vital information. The Conservative MPs are failing to do their job. By denying us that information, the government is denying Canadians this information.

That is why we see today that the Parliamentary Budget Officer, appointed by the Conservatives, has been pushed to the limit where he is not being given information on legislation from the government. He asked for simple information on the impact of cuts over the future fiscal years. He received the response that the government cannot provide him with that information. A legal opinion came out this morning that the law the Conservatives are breaking is section 79.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act. We have a government that is actually breaking the law. This law gives Parliament, through the Parliamentary Budget Officer, free and timely access to any financial or economic data. Who brought in that law? I think it was the Conservatives. It was part of their Accountability Act. So they make the law and then they break the law.

The reality is that the Conservatives, many from the Reform Party background, rode into Ottawa on this white horse of accountability, defending the interests of Parliament against the executive, defending the interests of the taxpayers against those who would not defend their interests here in Ottawa and those who would not provide them with information on legislation. Now it is the

Conservatives who are quashing all that. The reality is that the Conservatives, who won an election promising openness, transparency and accountability, are the least open, least transparent and least accountable government in the history of Canada.

We have a responsibility. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has a responsibility to do his job. He takes that seriously. He has asked for information, not on his own behalf but for Parliament, so that members of Parliament can do their job. Our parliamentary system relies on hon. members to act honourably and it expects that members of Parliament's questions will be answered fully and completely. However, when MPs ask substantive questions to ministers or even to officials at committee, these questions are routinely evaded or ignored. Even order paper questions are now ignored. Shortly after budget 2012 was released, I submitted several order paper questions, seeking a government-wide breakdown of financial information in the three most recent budgets. I believe I am the only MP to have done this. The response from the government was basically "no". In fact, it sent me a copy of the table that I referenced in my request and asked for more detailed information. It simply sent me the table, to add insult to injury.

In disrespecting Parliament and members of Parliament, the Conservative government is disrespecting the Canadians who chose the Parliament. It is in disrespecting Parliament, and not giving us the cost of legislation, that the government is disrespecting taxpayers.

• (1315)

We will have, in the coming years, an opportunity to debate with Canadians some of the substantive and deleterious impacts of this legislation on the lives of Canadians. It is very important that we fulfill our responsibility as MPs to defend this Parliament against a tyrannical government that no longer cares about Parliament and the democratic rights and freedoms of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kings—Hants for his very fine statement.

I know that the people in his riding, in his region, are experiencing much the same thing as the people in my region.

Government Orders

In Bill C-38, there is one component that obviously affects employment insurance. In my riding, surprisingly, although seasonal workers have been vocal on the issue, they are not the ones who have been the most vocal—the employers have been. The reason is that seasonal employers train their workforce. The employment insurance reform announced in Bill C-38 could cause these employers to lose the workforce they trained, since their workforce could be forced to accept lower-paying jobs or to move in order to take a more stable job outside the region. I am sure that regions like mine or my colleague's will be caught off guard.

I would like to hear what the member for Kings—Hants has to say about the reality of the proposed employment insurance reform and the impact it will have on his riding.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the hon. member's question.

According to business leaders in my riding, there will clearly be a negative impact on businesses and their ability to survive, particularly in the tourism and agricultural industries. I am hearing that it will be very difficult for these industries to stay in business.

When I speak with business and industry leaders in my riding and elsewhere, it is clear that there was no consultation process before these ideological changes were introduced. When the government makes decisions without consulting anyone and adopts a completely ideological mindset, it creates a lot of crises—not just for workers, but also for businesses—regarding the possibility of increasing the number of jobs in the future.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is a colleague on the finance committee. We have spent quite a few hours together the last couple of weeks. We have exchanged a lot of ideas and opinions and listened to quite a few witnesses. We had 50 hours of extra committee time for this budget. That is just the finance committee. I am not talking about the 20 hours in the subcommittee. There were 70 hours of committee time committed to the budget itself. Many witnesses testified. In fact, there were so many witnesses and so much time allocated that the NDP kept asking the same questions over and over again.

I find it really interesting that he complained about the process. I think the reason opposition members are talking about process is due to the fact that the budget is such a sound and good document for the economy as a whole. The Liberals would rather talk about process because they know the budget itself is good.

My question for my colleague is with regard to environmental assessments. The premier of Saskatchewan has talked quite extensively about the one-stop shop for environmental assessments. The member must agree with this government that one-stop shop is more efficient, and that getting projects through the environmental assessment process is not only good for business but can also be done in a manner that is responsible to the environmental itself. Could he add some comments on the one-stop shop for environmental assessments?

• (1320)

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, we shall agree to disagree as to whether the process at the finance committee was a legitimate one.

Suffice to say that testimony, contrary to the government's position, was magically expunged by some invisible hand that government members were able to exert during that process.

The reality is that there are substantive problems with the budget. I mentioned a couple, including the OAS, the changes to EI, among others, and including accountability and oversight.

On the changes on environmental oversight, we have several former presidents of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, CAPP, who have said that the NEB operates well. They were saying that it has operated very well. These changes would gut that process such that the decision-making would not be at the NEB level. It would be at the minister's office level. The capacity to actually politicize the decision-making process is not good for the economy and is not good for the environment. When I say that it is not good for the economy, what I mean is that when a predictable process, which is public servants who are doing their jobs as part of that NEB approach, is taken away and it is made more political that creates some real problems.

I have no difficulty with the streamlining of environmental process and regulation. I think that can be fair and good for business and the environment at the same time. However, I do have a concern about the government's politicizing of the environmental approval process, which would be the effect of this legislation.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Kings—Hants spoke of the government's denial of information to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

However, there is another way the government is denying access to information and that is through the gutting of the community access program. Tens of thousands of people across Canada have, as their only means of access to information, an opportunity to go to libraries and go on a computer or on the Internet, which they could not otherwise afford at home. This happens in urban areas. In Guelph, 300 people a day use that program. It happens in rural areas that would not otherwise have access to the Internet.

The government has, in its wisdom, decided to gut the program and deny access to information and deny access to the Internet for some of the most needy people in Canada. It is one thing that my friend did not comment on and I am wondering if he would be willing to do so now.

Hon. Scott Brison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Guelph for his hard work on this file and his hard work as an exceptional member of Parliament for the people of Guelph and the people of Canada.

I can also say that these cuts to CAPP come at a time when the government is saying that it will communicate vital information to those Canadians who are out of work on job opportunities twice a day every day. How will it do that? It will do that via the Internet even though 30% of rural Canadians do not have the capacity to access the Internet.

Government Orders

These CAPP sites are important. I know in my riding there are lines, in parts of the day, for people to have access to these CAPP sites. On these changes to EI, the government is saying that people should not worry about it, that it will contact people twice a day. What if people do not have access to the Internet? What if they do not have a computer? The reality is that a lot of Canadians do not own a computer or cannot afford access to the Internet. A lot of Canadians are living in poverty and it is often those people to whom the government is saying it will communicate new jobs opportunities twice a day.

There is a real inconsistency and a logic gap. On the one hand the government is saying that it will cut the CAPP programs that aid low-income Canadians in their ability to access the Internet. On the other hand, it is saying that it will communicate job opportunities to low-income Canadians twice a day through the Internet. Let us try to square that one.

That is another reason that the government is off-track when it comes to helping low-income Canadians. It is another reason that I think this whole issue of poverty and income inequality is an issue the House of Commons finance committee will be studying in great detail coming up. I am looking forward to this day, as are my Conservative colleagues I am certain. These are issues that are important to Canadians. These are issues that we will delve into as part of the House of Commons finance committee in the coming months.

• (1325)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my seatmate, the member for Newmarket—Aurora.

I will begin my remarks on Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, by reminding the House about the excellent progress we have seen as a result of the government's leadership on the economy in recent months.

We saw record levels of job growth in March and April. The latest figures show that we are continuing to build upon those important gains. I have to say that number because it is so important: 760,000 net new jobs since July 2009.

Because we know it is an important priority of Canadians, our government remains focused on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. A strong economy is central to ensuring that our country continues to thrive and also allows all levels of government to provide the services that Canadians rely upon.

We also understand the importance of a fair and equitable tax system. That is why the bill includes a number of important measures to improve on certain tax credits and other issues. Overall, these measures would improve access to some important tax programs, leaving more money in Canadians' pockets so they can spend according to their needs. We think that Canadians know best and that is why we are working to support them and their families.

Some of the important tax changes from Bill C-38 are meant to improve access to medical supplies. The medical expense tax credit would be expanded to include blood coagulation monitors and their disposable peripherals so that Canadians who require these devices can access them at lower costs.

The Excise Tax Act would also be amended to expand the list of HST exempt non-prescription drugs that are used to treat life-threatening diseases. Certain pharmacists' services would also be exempted from HST in order to support Canadians in accessing these important medical supports.

As stated by its past president, Dr. Jeffrey Turnbull, during the finance committee's study of the bill, the Canadian Medical Association feels that these were very positive measures. I am confident that Canadians will agree. I am happy to inform the House of these important steps to ensure the tax system better reflects the evolving nature of the health sector and, of course, health care needs of Canadians.

Recognizing the importance of savings to both individuals and to the overall economy, our government has further put in place measures to make it easier for Canadians with disabilities to access registered disability savings plans. Our Conservative government was proud to put in place this important savings tool in 2007 and committed to a thorough review last year. Based on feedback from over 200 individuals and organizations, we are now acting to ensure that the program continues to meet the needs of Canadians with severe disabilities and their families.

The jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act would introduce a temporary measure to allow certain family members to open an RDSP for an adult who is unable to enter into contracts. It is important that all disabled Canadians can access the benefits of this program. We are taking steps to ensure that those who might need the support of family members to sign up can do so.

As we heard from Vangelis Nikias of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities during his testimony at the finance committee, the RDSP has been a successful program for families. I am proud that the bill would ensure its continued success for many years to come.

Another important measure in the bill recognizes the good work done by Canada's charitable sector. One specific change would allow certain literacy organizations to claim a rebate on the GST paid on the acquisition of books that will be given away for free. Education and literacy are key to our knowledge-driven economy, so I am happy to see these measures included.

I would also like to note that some of these books affected would undoubtedly deal with financial issues. So, hopefully, this measure would build nicely on the fine work of my colleague, the member for Edmonton—Leduc, and his efforts on financial literacy with Motion No. 269.

Government Orders

Further measures would increase accountability and transparency for charities. We understand that charities do great work in our country and we encourage Canadians to donate generously. However, we also understand that, when Canadians donate to charities, they want to know that their donation is actually being used for its intended purpose. The measures announced in the budget would provide more education to charities to ensure they are operating within the law and more transparency for those Canadians who donate so generously. In order to protect these important donations, we have a duty to ensure that Canadian charities are operating in compliance with federal law.

• (1330)

As there may have been some attention to this measure, one thing should be clarified. The rules for charitable activity are long-standing and are not being changed. We are simply taking action so that Canadians can be sure that charities are using their resources appropriately.

In addition to ensuring that our tax benefits are accessible for Canadians in supporting the charitable sector, the bill also makes important improvements to support the fishing industry.

As far back as I can remember, there have been significant concerns regarding the regulatory and legislative focus that had our protection officers buried in mounds of paperwork that often had little or no impact on the protection of fish habitat. Having to arbitrate dock locations among cottagers or travel great distances to meet with municipalities regarding a drainage ditch was part of the regulatory requirements, all the while we continued to see a dwindling of salmon returns and significant concerns about this important resource. We believe that efforts should be focused on where they will be most effective.

I will give another example. Tobiano in my riding was an important development. All approvals were in place, including DFO approval, when it was determined that a minor modification to the marina location was required. The current legislation required that the entire approval process had to begin again. In this case it caused a very significant delay and likely had critical impact on the timing of the project and, ultimately, decisions by the capital investors. Again, a very minor change created a significant and undue negative impact.

The bill proposes to amend the Fisheries Act to more effectively manage those activities that pose the greatest threats to fish. The amendments provide additional clarity for the authorization of serious harm to fish and of deposits of deleterious substances. The amendments would allow the minister to enter into agreements with provinces and other bodies, provide for control and management of invasive species and, most important, clarify and expand the powers of inspectors. These are changes that would enhance our ability to focus and protect this most important resource.

In addition to the measures I have talked about already, I want to talk briefly about health care and health care transfers because this is something near and dear to my heart. Being involved in the health care sector in the nineties, I saw first-hand how much damage was done to the communities by those reckless Liberal cuts. We made a commitment that we would get back to balanced budgets without impacting transfers to the provinces. We have taken a very

responsible approach. We understand that we all use the same health care system. We want a strong health care system and we want it to be there for our families when we need it.

For my province of B.C., the health transfer this year will reach over \$4 billion for the first time. That represents an increase of over \$1.2 billion since our government was first elected.

Across the country, health transfers have increased by over 40% since our government took office. This significant funding increase has gone a long way to help offset the damage done by the previous government. It also represents the highest level of funding the federal government has ever provided to support the provinces and territories in the delivery of health care. We are extremely proud of that accomplishment.

Going forward, our new funding formula will ensure that all provinces can continue to rely on strong and stable increases to health transfers and that these transfers will always keep pace with growth in the economy.

With so many positive measures in the budget bill, I am proud to have this opportunity to speak in support of it. I was also happy to have had the opportunity to take part in its thorough review at finance committee where we had an unprecedented amount of time to hear from expert witnesses and officials.

Whether its continued health transfer growth, support for our fisheries sector, more transparency for charities or increased access to tax benefits, I think most Canadians would agree that this bill does an excellent job of addressing their priorities. It is for this reason I will be happy to vote in support of the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act.

• (1335)

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my constituents are very worried about a new oil pipeline that is proposed from Edmonton to Burnaby. They are worried about a number of things with this proposal by Kinder Morgan.

First, they are very concerned about oil leaks and spills, as we have seen in Abbotsford, Burnaby and, most recently, in Alberta near Red Deer.

They are also really worried about expropriation of land and how these changes in the budget would affect their input into this process.

I wonder if the member could explain how shortening the length of time constituents can input into this process and maybe even limiting it so they do not have any say at all into this project is somehow protecting the environment.

Government Orders

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to talk about the Kinder Morgan pipeline, which has gone through my riding for almost 50 years. I have letters from constituents who talk about what a good corporate citizen Kinder Morgan has been and how very pleased they have been as a community and as property owners.

What is most important is that we recognize Canadians are concerned with ensuring pipeline safety. Perhaps the member did not read the budget, because within this budget there are measures that not only increase the opportunity for inspections of pipelines much more regularly, but also tanker safety. There are many important measures that deal with safety. There is a critical balance that we absolutely need in terms of pipeline safety and tankers which people are concerned about.

If the member would read the budget, I am sure he would be very glad to see the important measures that deal with the concerns he just addressed.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just heard the member talk about safety.

The closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard base is widely held in metro Vancouver to be a major mistake. This is the busiest port in Canada. The Kitsilano Coast Guard base responds to over 300 emergencies every year. The claims that this service can be replaced by hovercraft from Richmond have been discounted by a retiring senior Coast Guard employee in Kitsilano, who spoke with me on the weekend.

I would ask the member how closing the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, with the risk of loss of life that is widely believed it will cause, helps with the jobs agenda of the government.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, we certainly recognize that is a busy area, which is why there will be additional resources in terms of structures and supports in that area for the busy season.

However, we need to look at the bigger picture. We see what is happening in Europe. There are two things which we as a government have to do. One is modest reductions in all departments. We are looking for 5% to 10% in savings. Two is that we need to get back to a balanced budget. We cannot hand over a deficit and a debt to our children. Every single department has made some very modest savings that will move us in the direction of getting back to a balanced budget by 2015-16, which is absolutely critical for the long-term future of our citizens.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very important to recognize why we oppose the budget. It is not just because it contains economic measures that will not help Canadians at all but because it contains a wide range of measures that will in no way create jobs and growth, no matter what the government claims.

This is particularly true of clause 602 of Bill C-38. If my colleague has read the budget, she will have seen that clause 602 eliminates the clause of the Employment Equity Act that applies to companies bidding on federal government contracts.

Can my colleague explain how eliminating a clause that allows the government to ensure employment equity for women will create jobs and growth?

• (1340)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I sat in the finance committee and listened to officials explain in very great depth and detail each of the clauses and why they are common sense changes. We are not going to have a giant, red tape, up-front process. Anyone who has a contract with the government will need to have an equity plan as part of the contract. We are trying to reduce red tape and the burden on businesses, but we are in absolutely no way impacting the important issues around employment equity.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today to support Bill C-38, the Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act.

[*English*]

Last week the opposition tried to block the vital measures contained in Canada's economic action plan 2012, which was first introduced in this chamber nearly four months ago. Since then, Bill C-38 has received the longest House debate and committee consideration of any budget bill over the past two decades. Indeed, it was reviewed for nearly 70 hours at finance committee and at a specially created subcommittee which heard from literally hundreds of witnesses.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, last week the NDP's only concern was to delay and defeat Bill C-38.

[*English*]

It is not only our government that finds these tactics appalling, but Canadians right across the country do as well. Indeed, a recent *Toronto Sun* editorial summarized the NDP's actions as follows:

[The NDP leader's] hypocrisy and self-obsession is in full flame...vowing to delay the passing of... [economic action plan 2012] by playing silly [games]...with amendments and procedure....

Let us be clear. Economic action plan 2012 increases support for families, the backbone of communities from coast to coast. Through the introduction of Bill C-38 our government is building our strong record of support for families across the country. These measures include, but are not limited to, the creation of the universal child care benefit, the family caregiver tax credit, the children's fitness tax credit, the children's arts tax credit, and the introduction of the landmark tax-free savings account, the most important personal savings vehicle since RRSPs. These measures build on an impressive record of tax relief for Canadian families.

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Since 2006, our Conservative government has cut taxes over 140 times, removed over one million Canadians from the tax rolls, increased the amount Canadians can earn tax free, and reduced the GST from 7% to 5%. These measures have made an appreciable difference for families all across the country. In fact, they have put over \$3,100 back into the pocket of the average Canadian family.

It is little wonder that under our Conservative government tax freedom day is now over two weeks earlier than in the last year of the previous Liberal government. Our government did this without slashing federal transfers for health or education like the previous Liberal government in the 1990s did.

Unlike the opposition, we support a low-tax plan that leaves more money where it belongs, in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. In this bill, our government is committed to maintaining its strong record of supporting and standing up for Canadian families. That is why moving forward with economic action plan 2012 is so important.

Bill C-38 improves the registered disability savings plan, the RDSP, giving peace of mind to Canadian families by helping to ensure the long-term financial security of children with severe disabilities. Most importantly, the legislation improves access to RDSPs.

Due to provincial legislation currently in force in certain provinces, some people with intellectual disabilities are barred from opening RDSPs without compromising their legal status. This means that in order to access the plans, they would be required to be declared legally incompetent. This is time consuming and emotionally challenging and could result in unintended consequences for individuals and their families. This is an unfair imposition on disabled Canadians and their families and we are working with the provinces to correct this. In the meantime, Bill C-38 will allow a family member to open an RDSP on a relative's behalf without that individual being declared legally incompetent.

This measure has been very warmly received by the Canadian disability community. Indeed, listen to what Laurie Larson, president of the Canadian Association for Community Living, had to say:

[T]he Government of Canada heard the message of people with disabilities and their families across the country. These changes mean that people will no longer be pushed to undergo guardianship in order to access this plan.

• (1345)

Improving access to RDSPs is just one way that economic action plan 2012 helps support Canadian families. It also promotes more active lifestyles with continued support for Participaction and its community-based physical activity and fitness programs to promote the health of Canadian children and families. The plan also enhances the victims fund to ensure that victims of crime have an effective voice in the federal justice and corrections systems.

Sheldon Kennedy, a well-known former hockey player and victims rights activist, was pleased with this initiative and praised it by saying that this government has been listening to victims by providing funding to support recovery for victims and their families, assist with the court process, improve conviction rates and increase punishment for perpetrators.

These are not the only measures our government has taken in support of Canadian families. All across this country, parents' number one priority is the same: securing a bright and prosperous future for their children.

That is why Bill C-38 also helps to ensure that the old age security program, OAS, remains strong for future generations. Much like Canadian families, our Conservative government is dedicated to ensuring that future generations have access to an OAS program that remains sustainable over the long term.

The measures contained in Bill C-38 guide the program toward long-term sustainability with no impact on today's seniors. Economic action plan 2012 gradually raises the eligibility for OAS and GIS benefits from age 65 to 67 between 2023 and 2029. I should note that seniors who are currently receiving OAS and GIS will not see a single cent lost to these new changes. The advanced notification and phase-in period will give Canadians time to plan and prepare for their retirement and minimize the impact on vulnerable groups.

Our government believes that today's prosperity should be enjoyed by future generations. It is because of this belief that economic action plan 2012 is squarely focused on keeping Canada on track to balanced budgets, building on our outstanding record of success to date.

We all know that Canada benefits from the best fiscal position in the G7. Both the IMF and the OECD have forecast that Canada will be at the head of the pack for economic growth in the G7 in years ahead. *Forbes* magazine has ranked Canada the number one place in the world for businesses to invest and create more jobs. Also, for the fourth straight year, the World Economic Forum has ranked Canada's banking system as the soundest in the world.

However, our government believes that we should never simply be content with our past accomplishments. We must always look forward. While the NDP and the Liberals want to engage in reckless deficit spending sprees, our Conservative government is committed to returning to balanced budgets and maintaining our favourable global fiscal position.

That is why our government is so dedicated to reducing debt. It frees up tax dollars that would otherwise be used to cover interest costs. This means lower taxes for all Canadians and more money in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families.

Our plan to get back to balanced budgets is working. In the past two years, we have already cut the deficit in half. With economic action plan 2012, we are building on these existing efforts by refocusing government, improving service delivery and streamlining back-office administration to achieve over \$5 billion in ongoing savings for taxpayers.

Almost 70% of these savings will come from eliminating waste in the internal operations of government, making it leaner and more efficient. This better respects the hard-earned tax dollars that Canadians send to Ottawa.

Government Orders

Canadian families are the backbone of our country and deserve the support and respect of their government. That is why we are working hard to implement economic action plan 2012 to ensure long-term prosperity for hard-working Canadian families.

• (1350)

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member's speech and was quite fascinated by her reference to balanced and constructive spending and management of our fiscal realities by the Conservative government.

I would like her to explain the lack of proper tendering of contracts for the F-35, the outrageous price that was demanded by the manufacturer, and the failure of the government to manage our fiscal realities legitimately and responsibly.

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize that this project was initiated in 1997 by the previous Liberal government. We entered into discussions regarding the F-35 with all our allies to look at what would be the next operational vehicle for our air force. We know we have to supply our men and women in uniform with the best materials they need to go into the situations we ask them to do to protect Canadians.

While no contract has been signed to this point, we continue to look at what we can do to best acquire the vehicles and supplies for our military. We will continue to do so, working in conjunction with all our global partners.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the member's speech she mentioned the *Toronto Sun* and that it had mentioned the antics of the Leader of the Opposition. In its editorial on June 14, the *Toronto Star* said:

The opposition has rightly argued that given the scope and ambition of the proposed legislation, the bill should have been broken up and its component parts duly debated.

What does the member have to say?

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, the budget bill was introduced in the House on March 29. We are four months post that introduction. The bill has had the most debate in the House of any budget bill in the last two decades. It has also had considerable discussion in the finance committee as well as in a subcommittee that was established specifically to look at the bill. It is not that this bill has not been studied.

It is time for us to get on with getting Canada back on track for growth, jobs and long-term prosperity, to put money back into the hands of hard-working Canadians. That is what our government wants to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the hon. member; it has been two and a half months since the budget was passed. There is a difference between the budget and the Act to implement certain provisions of the budget. The budget has already been passed. We are now talking about the budget implementation bill.

Actually, I would like to go back to something that an hon. member mentioned earlier as well. I am referring to charitable organizations. Mr. Lauzière, from Imagine Canada, gave testimony

before a committee and talked about the impact of statements such as the one made by the Minister of the Environment on charitable organizations and their political activities. The minister accused groups—without ever naming them—of money laundering. In addition, just two weeks ago, the Prime Minister, his leader, said:

We're certainly trying to comb through our spending to make sure it's all appropriate. If it's the case that we're spending on organizations that are doing things contrary to government policy, I think that is an inappropriate use of taxpayers' money and we'll look to eliminate it.

I think that goes against the democratic principle whereby we allow organizations that are opposed to the government to express their views in order to set the record straight and point out flaws in government bills.

Does the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora agree with the comments made by the Minister of the Environment and the Prime Minister?

• (1355)

[*English*]

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, so my colleague knows, it is Newmarket—Aurora. Aurora residents would be very disturbed if they were left out whenever the constituency was mentioned in the House. I thank the good people of Newmarket—Aurora for electing me to represent them here.

We know that charities do very good work in our society and we are very thankful to the generous Canadians who contribute to those charities across the country. However, we also know that charities are restricted in what they can do with that money. This bill would put in place the responsibility for charities to focus on the mandate they have been given and on the charitable work they are to do in their communities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I assume that I will have about three minutes to speak at this point and that I will be able to continue after question period.

I rise in the House to speak one last time about Bill C-38, the budget implementation bill, or, as the Conservative government likes to call it, the Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act. However, this title implies the complete opposite of the kind of impact and consequences this bill will have. I would like to use my time to explain why.

Before I address the impact this will have on jobs and growth, I would like to take the time I have before members' statements and question period to talk about something the government keeps mentioning, which is the number of hours spent discussing the bill. The member for Prince Albert and some other members mentioned that we have had more time than ever before to study this budget implementation bill, in comparison to previous years.

Statements by Members

They are absolutely right when they say that we discussed the bill for about 50 hours in committee and about 20 hours in subcommittee, but what they need to realize is that the budget implementation bill amends approximately 70 acts. It modifies, amends, adds or eliminates about 70 acts. If we average out what we do in Parliament, specifically in committee, when we study a bill, we spend four or five hours discussing it, studying it in depth and looking at the scope and consequences of it.

It is important to realize that, if we are talking about 70 different acts, that means that about 350 hours of study should have been required for a bill of this magnitude. However, we barely had 70. In addition, we could not focus on any specific elements. In part 4 alone there were about 56 divisions, 56 different acts that were affected. So it was impossible for the members, as parliamentarians, to study this bill properly. I find it appalling that the government is boasting that we spent 70 hours discussing this bill when, given its size, we should have spent over 350 hours and even longer to fully understand its scope.

I want to raise another issue that the government has, yet again, refused to comment on: the fact that there is not merely consensus but unanimity among political commentators and analysts in Canada and Quebec, not necessarily on the content of Bill C-38, but on the way the government chose to introduce that content. The problem is that, at the end of the week, we will vote one single time to pass or reject, in its entirety, a mammoth 430-page bill.

I will talk more about this after question period because it deserves to be talked about. The government's approach is threatening the very foundation of our parliamentary system, our parliamentary democracy.

I will stop here so that we can move on to members' statements.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques will have 17 minutes remaining to complete his remarks.

Statements by members. The hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach Canada Day, I think it is important to reflect on some of the nationalities that have helped make Canada the great country it is.

Three weeks ago, Mississauga held its annual festival of cultures, Carassauga, and I was lucky enough to visit most of the pavilions and enjoy the people, food and music of many great cultures.

Over the past month, Italian Republic Day, Slovenian Statehood Day, Philippine Independence Day, Polish Constitution Day and the Croatian National and Armed Forces Day have been celebrated. These are just a handful of cultures I have had the good fortune to celebrate recently and just a handful of the many wonderful cultures

in the great riding I am proud to represent, Mississauga East—Cooksville.

Waves of new Canadians have constantly reached our country over the 145 years since Confederation. As we get ready to celebrate the best country in the world, let us also think about the many cultures within our great country, Canada.

* * *

● (1400)

REFUGEE HEALTH CARE

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our country has been built on the idea that we all have a responsibility to take care of one another, especially the vulnerable. However, the Conservative government is targeting this basic Canadian value with its mean-spirited cuts to refugee health care.

These cuts will effectively deny health care to refugee applicants who need to see a doctor and who have limited or no financial means to do so. Most egregiously, some legitimate refugees will be cut off from even basic medical coverage. That means a refugee undergoing emergency surgery for a heart attack at a Canadian hospital would have to pay for it out of pocket or be denied care.

Is this our Canada?

Today, doctors and other health care professionals across the country are taking action against these cuts. I call on the Conservative government to have a heart and reverse this decision before it comes into effect at the end of June.

* * *

OWEN SOUND ATTACK

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to congratulate the Los Angeles Kings on their recent Stanley Cup victory and also to recognize the Kings connection to Owen Sound.

Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound is home to the Owen Sound Attack and I am proud to say that three Attack alumni were a part of the LA Kings cup run this season. Trevor Lewis, Brad Richardson and Mike Futa all had once been a part of the Owen Sound Attack.

Trevor Lewis, who put up nine points this post-season, played his only season in the OHL for the Owen Sound Attack. Also, Brad Richardson, a key part of the Kings lineup played four seasons in Owen Sound. Finally, Mike Futa, the director of player development for the Kings, is a former Owen Sound Attack general manager. Mr. Futa has already indicated he will be bringing the Stanley Cup to Owen Sound this summer.

Statements by Members

I recently had the opportunity to attend the Owen Sound Attack appreciation barbecue and was very proud to once again see the tremendous support from the best fans in the OHL.

In closing, I would like to congratulate these three alumni and wish them and the Owen Sound Attack the best of luck next season.

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour three extraordinary young women in my riding.

Emma Archibald of Bedford, who attends Charles P. Allen High School, won a McEuen Foundation scholarship to attend the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

Terra Lanteigne of Hatchet Lake, who attends Bedford Academy, won a gold medal in the junior grade category in this year's Canada-wide science fair.

Julia Sarty of Bedford, a Gorsebrook Junior High School student, won a bronze medal in the intermediate grade category of the Canada-wide science fair.

The hard work, dedication and achievement of each of these three young people is a testament to their character. Their parents and teachers have reason to be proud. I am sure members will join me in congratulating them.

* * *

BRAMPTON—SPRINGDALE

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to highlight the remarkable participation of Bramptonians for great causes, such as iRock Pink which, led by Preet and Parminder Mangat, raised \$16,000 for Wellspring Chinguacousy cancer support centre, in my wonderful riding of Brampton—Springdale.

Bramptonians also participated in the 12th annual Race Against Racism, which is hosted by the Peel regional police each year.

On the same day, Brampton held its annual Flower City Parade, which brought thousands of families together.

I also had the opportunity to take part in Love Brampton, an event organized by over 25 organizations, which provides vital services like dental and medical for those in need.

A special thanks for Donna Burt, the project coordinator for Love Brampton, Dr. Lung from the Health Mission Outreach and the more than a thousand volunteers who made this event very successful.

I am extremely proud to call Brampton home.

* * *

● (1405)

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 2012 is the UN's International Year of Cooperatives. This is a global acknowledgement that co-operatives drive the economy, respond to social change, are resilient to global economic crisis and are serious, successful businesses creating jobs in all sectors.

The reason for their success is that they are fundamentally different from other businesses. Co-ops and credit unions use the one member, one vote system, not the one-vote-per-share system used by corporations. As a result, co-ops and credits unions serve the common need of their members, as opposed to just the need of their largest shareholders. People, not capital, control the organization.

This model has ensured that co-ops succeed at a higher rate than the private sector, without relocating jobs offshore. There is indeed much to celebrate when it comes to Canadian co-operatives.

That is especially true in my riding of Hamilton Mountain, where the Halam Park Housing Co-op just received the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada's inaugural Award for Co-operative Achievement. Halam Park is adding much-needed units to Hamilton's housing stock. In doing so, it is providing more than the just the bricks and mortar of shelter; it is offering stability, security and dignity to even more Hamiltonians.

Congratulations, Halam Park, for proving the UN right: co-operative enterprises build a better world.

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WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Mayor Wayne Emmerson of Whitchurch-Stouffville, who on Friday gave the Governor General's Horse Guards the freedom of the town.

They showed up, thousands of people, three rows deep, to welcome back the Governor General's Horse Guards to my home town. It was a unit that was founded some 200 years ago in our community.

It was a spectacular day, and at the same time I was able to present two Diamond Jubilee Medals to Lieutenant Colonel Glenn Develiadias and to Dr. John Button, two people who have contributed so much to our community.

It was a wonderful day for the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, welcoming back this historic unit to our community. It was a display of vintage military vehicles. It was just a spectacular day for the people of Whitchurch-Stouffville. I thank the mayor and the members of council for making this happen, and of course I thank my team who worked over six months to bring this spectacular military parade to our community.

I thank them, God bless Canada and God save the Queen.

*Statements by Members***SCLERODERMA AWARENESS MONTH**

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the month of June holds a special place in my heart as it does for many Canadians, because it is Scleroderma Awareness Month. My mother suffered from scleroderma and eventually passed away from complications of this painful disease.

Scleroderma is a chronic, often progressive autoimmune disease, like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis, in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissues. Unfortunately, scleroderma afflicts women three times more often than men.

I am proud that the government has invested almost \$1.5 million through a CIHR grant for the Scleroderma Patient-centered Intervention Network and in doing so has recognized the groundbreaking work of this team.

It was with great emotion and fond memories of my mother that I joined hundreds of walkers a couple of Saturdays ago in Hamilton, Ontario, for the 12th annual walk in the park for scleroderma.

Funds raised support the search for a cure, a day that cannot come too soon.

* * *

JOHN MICHAEL CLARKE

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Hamilton were saddened this past week to learn of the passing of John Michael Clarke, and I certainly was one of them.

John Clarke was a veteran of World War II, who following the war served as president of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 58, for 10 years. John was also chairman of the Hamilton veterans committee.

He was well known in Hamilton as a proud Canadian who worked to ensure veterans had a strong presence at all of Hamilton's citizenship swearing-in ceremonies for new Canadians. Among his other good works, John chaired Camp Maple Leaf, an organization that sends children to summer camp.

John's close friend, Johnny Bissell says of John,

I have known John for several years and never met anyone more inspiring in his tireless willingness to volunteer and assist any organization.

I knew John Clarke personally. I very much respected him as a friend. I was honoured by his support for many years, and I will miss John Clarke.

* * *

PACIFIC COAST HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the centennial of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association. The Patrick brothers, Frank and Lester, established this league in B.C. with the Vancouver Millionaires, the Victoria Senators and the New Westminster Royals.

The Patrick brothers' hockey innovations over the years included the assist, the blue line, the goal crease, the forward pass, the boarding penalty, numbers on jerseys or sweaters, as they were

called sweaters at the time, the playoff, and they allowed goalies to fall to the ice to make a save.

As a Vancouverite, I am proud to say that Frank Patrick's innovations remain and are still an important part of the NHL rule book today.

This little upstart league also brought Vancouver its first Stanley Cup in 1915. It was the PCHA that helped make hockey the game that is loved by Canadians nationwide.

I am happy to mark this centennial and, as a Vancouverite, am hoping that the Stanley Cup finds its way back to the west coast soon.

* * *

• (1410)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, democratic values are the reason I ran as an NDP candidate and the driving force behind my day-to-day work in Honoré-Mercier and here in Ottawa.

Last week, we participated in a voting marathon to stand up for the interests of Canadians. The Conservatives rejected every single amendment presented in the House of Commons. They also treated the votes as an inconvenient interference in their exercise of power, but the truth is that it is our job as members of Parliament to represent the people.

A majority government should never stand in the way of democracy. In 2015, Canadians will demonstrate their opposition to the Conservative government's undemocratic changes.

* * *

[English]

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Brain Injury Awareness Month is recognized nationally every June in order to raise awareness of the effects and causes of acquired brain injury across Canada.

Automobile accidents, sports injuries, cycling accidents, falls, strokes, tumours, aneurysms and other non-degenerative conditions are all leading causes of acquired brain injury. There are no drugs or techniques that can cure a brain injury. Prevention is the only cure.

Since 1985, the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association has striven to prevent brain injuries and to improve the lives of survivors and their families.

Today, I rise in this place to bring attention to the great work that the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association does in my home province. I encourage all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the importance of Brain Injury Awareness Month.

*Statements by Members***THE VANCOUVER CANADIANS**

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many, the summer begins with the season's first pitch. This summer, my home team, the Vancouver Canadians, which I am proud to say is also the 2011 Northwest League champion, will throw its first home pitch this Wednesday at the beautiful Nat Bailey Stadium in Vancouver.

The Vancouver Canadians are the Northwest League affiliate to the Blue Jays, but they do much more than just support Canada's number one team. The C's franchise hosts an annual Thanksgiving food drive for the Salvation Army. It ensures every child has a chance to step up to the plate with confidence through its Vancouver Canadians Baseball Foundation.

If members happen to be in Vancouver this summer, I invite everyone to come down to the Nat, eat a Fungo hot dog, enjoy our dancing grounds crew and, with a little luck, get to watch a grand slam by the great Balbino.

Let us play ball.

* * *

HEALTH

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months, my constituents have been speaking out, understandably upset that bogus asylum claimants receive better health care coverage than Canadian citizens.

Our Conservative government has listened and taken action to restore fairness by making sure asylum claimants no longer receive better benefits than Canadian taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the NDP opposes these sensible changes. It wants Canadian taxpayers to provide braces, glasses and prescriptions, even for failed asylum claimants who refuse to follow our laws and leave Canada.

As we all know, Canadian taxpayers do not get these same health benefits paid for themselves or their families.

I urge all Canadians to write to the NDP leader and make their voices heard. Tell the NDP it is wrong for opposing these important changes.

* * *

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some denial on that side of the House about the implications of Bill C-38.

Last Thursday, on a local radio station, the member for Nanaimo—Alberni lamented the closure of the Ucluelet communications centre and the Kitsilano Coast Guard station.

However, instead of taking responsibility, the member blamed “bureaucrats in Ottawa” for these closures.

Ironically, he made these remarks less than 12 hours after he voted on the Trojan Horse budget bill, the very bill shutting down these stations.

When government MPs cut services in Ottawa, they should at least have the courage of their conviction to defend them at home.

However, Bill C-38 represents more than just cuts to Coast Guard services, cuts to OAS and cuts to health care. It represents the erosion of the once strong and independent voices of Conservative MPs.

As we approach the end of the session, I am hopeful more Conservative MPs find their riding voice and speak out against these cuts. Maybe one day, with some practice, they will be able to use that voice in Ottawa.

* * *

● (1415)

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister is in Mexico today for a key G20 summit.

Reflecting on Canada's leading economic strength and job growth during the economic recovery, our Prime Minister is bringing important advice. He will tell world leaders that economic growth and fiscal discipline are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they go hand in hand. He will emphasize that Canada's low taxes, balanced stimulus and deficit reduction measures have worked.

More and more the world is looking to Canada as a positive example of successful economic leadership. Indeed, in the words of the OECD last week, “overall, Canada's performance has been very good in recent years”. We attribute that to good “macroeconomic and structural policy settings”.

Here is what Iowa governor Terry Branstad said only days ago:

“...in the '80s and early '90s... Canadian financial institutions weren't as healthy as ours. And their taxes were higher. Now... Their financial institutions are healthier and their taxes are considerably lower. Their federal corporate tax—

The Speaker: Oral questions.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY**

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again the Conservatives are trying to hide the truth about their Trojan Horse budget. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has told the Prime Minister's Office that they are breaking the law by refusing to hand over information to Parliament. Now the PBO's legal counsel, among the most respected in Canada, have told the Prime Minister the same thing, saying, "The 64 departments that have not yet provided the requested information to the PBO are not acting in compliance with the act". This is the Prime Minister's own accountability act that we are talking about.

Why is the Prime Minister breaking his government's own accountability law?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the government will continue to report to Parliament through the means that have been used for many years. They include the estimates, the supplementary estimates, quarterly reports and the public accounts. Based on our current collective bargaining arrangements with our employees, we are working with the departments to inform unions and employees of any affected changes. We think we owe it to them to tell them first before they learn about it on television.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they are breaking the law.

[Translation]

The President of the Treasury Board said that he could not give specific information about the cuts because of the unions. Yet the unions have written to the Clerk of the Privy Council specifically asking that that information be made public. MPs are about to vote on this omnibus bill at third reading without having all pertinent information, and even government members are starting to complain. By hiding this information, the Conservatives are wilfully breaking the law. That is an order that only a prime minister can give.

When will the Conservatives start respecting law and order?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we had unprecedented debate about budget 2012 in the House and in committee. We sat for more than a full day, 24 hours, discussing, debating and voting on the bill just last week. We will continue to have more debate on this important legislation.

What we cannot debate is the reality that this government is on the right track when it comes to the economy. The Prime Minister, right now, is meeting with world leaders, and they all look to Canada as an island of stability. That has happened because of the fiscal measures taken by this government, and we are very proud of them.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the law is crystal clear. The Federal Accountability Act requires that members of Parliament be given "free and timely access to any financial or economic data in the possession of the department". That is the law. Financial and economic data sounds

like the sort of thing that Conservative members might like to see themselves before they vote on the budget.

Why is the Prime Minister showing his own MPs such blatant disrespect?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is this government that held unprecedented consultations in preparing budget 2012. It is a plan for long-term economic growth and prosperity. It has low taxes and balances the budget, and those are absolutely key and essential to creating a good economic climate.

Those of us on this side of the House consulted for many months leading up to that budget. We have had an unprecedented amount of debate in Parliament and committee, and we saw last week, more than 157 times, the House vote full confidence in the measures brought forward by the Minister of Finance for job creation and economic growth. He should respect that as well.

● (1420)

[Translation]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise that the Conservatives are hiding information on the budget. Cuts to services are going to be worse than previously announced. More jobs will be lost and government services will be jeopardized. By refusing to share this information, the Conservatives are asking their own members to cast a blind vote. Legal opinions are clear: the Conservatives are breaking the law.

Why are the Conservatives refusing to properly inform the Parliamentary Budget Officer? Why so many blind votes?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to report to Parliament by the normal means, including the estimates, quarterly financial reports and the public accounts process. As was clearly shown in Canada's economic action plan 2012, we have found fair, balanced and moderate savings measures to reduce the deficit.

[English]

We have a plan to make sure that we continue to grow jobs and economic opportunity in this country and we are in the midst of implementing that plan.

* * *

PENSIONS

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that the facts have a well-known anti-Conservative bias. However, even though it is on the chopping block, the very last Statistics Canada report on labour and income dynamics that was released today shows that over the last few years, seniors' income has declined and the number of seniors living in poverty has increased.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives' cuts to old age security and the guaranteed income supplement only hurt seniors more. Why are the Conservatives ignoring the facts and punishing seniors with this Trojan Horse budget bill?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have done just the opposite. We have helped seniors become better off. Through our tax cuts—and there have been over 150 of them in the last few years—380,000 seniors are no longer having to pay tax. That is money that they are keeping in their pockets. We have also increased the guaranteed income supplement by record amounts in the last 20 years.

We have done a lot to help seniors. Unfortunately, the NDP has voted against every one of those initiatives to help our seniors be better off.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is an officer created by Parliament. This office was promoted by the government as a new way of adding to accountability and transparency, so when the government says that it is doing all the things it normally does, well, the government has not adjusted to the “new normal”, which is that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has a right to free and timely access to economic and financial data.

The simple question to the government is this: why is it showing not only contempt for Parliament but contempt also for its own backbenches, for the Parliamentary Budget Officer and for the law?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when this government sought election this past year in May 2011, we came forward with a solid economic plan to create jobs and opportunity. Part of that was to reign in government expenditures and to live within our means. The other part was to grow the economy to create more jobs.

We will continue to report to Parliament through the estimates, the supplementary estimates, the quarterly reports and the public accounts and we will continue to be fully accountable to this House.

What the leader of the Liberal Party needs to do is join this government and be focused on job creation and long-term economic growth. That is the real priority of Canadians.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have only been gone for three days and I am already getting an offer from the government.

However, I can assure members that unlike the Leader of the Opposition, this does not come from me but from the government. Let the record show that.

[Translation]

The problem is this: this is not an extraordinary request. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has the right to have access to the information. However, the government is refusing to give him that information. The Reform Party of Canada was elected to ensure that the executive was accountable to Parliament.

What happened to the Reform Party?

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this party is the party that was elected on a plan for job creation and economic growth. We are focused on delivering that for Canadians. We have seen the creation of more than 750,000 net new jobs since the recession ended. It is that type of focus, commitment to job creation and economic growth that has made Canada an island of stability.

We will continue to report to Parliament through the normal means, whether through the estimates, the supplementary estimates, public accounts, or quarterly reports. We will continue to provide Parliament with the important work that it needs to undertake.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. The government is denying the fact that it created a new job, the Parliamentary Budget Officer. The government created it by reforming the laws affecting Parliament and parliamentary scrutiny. That was not simply coming from the opposition; it was coming from the government.

How can the minister stand in his place when he was the minister then and pretend that there is no such person as the Parliamentary Budget Officer? The Parliamentary Budget Officer is not fiction; it is a real job that requires real scrutiny. Why does the government not—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will undertake to ensure that we meet all of our obligations under collective agreements, ensure that unions and employees are informed in a timely manner and ensure that the results of these are communicated appropriately to everyone.

When we brought in the Federal Accountability Act, it was designed with one big goal: to clean up the ethical mess that was left by the previous Liberal government and the influence of big money and big lobbying. Thank goodness Canada has come a long way since those very dark days under the previous Liberal government.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we go from ethical breaches to behind closed doors.

The Prime Minister has taken the unusual step of sending his chief of staff to negotiate for Canada on the trans-Pacific partnership. We know that Canada has been asked to make substantial concessions to be part of the TPP, and Canadians want to know if the government has now agreed to drive up drug costs with longer patent protection, weaken intellectual property rules or sell out milk and egg producers who rely on supply management to make ends meet.

What did the Prime Minister and his chief of staff give away to get the Americans' endorsement?

*Oral Questions***PRIVACY**

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question is sheer nonsense.

As a Pacific nation, Canada's interest in joining the trans-Pacific partnership is consistent with our active, ongoing and growing presence in the Asia-Pacific region. The Minister of International Trade has met with his counterparts from all nine TPP countries, and all have welcomed Canada's interest. We look forward to helping develop a 21st century agreement that benefits all the TPP countries, and Canada will be an ambitious partner at the TPP table.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how about a trade deal that benefits Canadians? The fact is that the minister just appointed a panel of trade advisers without one single defender of supply management. Three out of ten are actually opposed, and John Manley even called supply management "an obstacle".

To make matters worse, if Canada agrees to U.S. demands on intellectual property, our prescription drug bills will skyrocket. Can the government assure Canadians that it has not sold out affordable medicine as the cost of joining the TPP?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the NDP does not support free trade agreements in any way, shape or form anywhere in the world. It simply does not support trade.

Here is the issue. Maybe the hon. member does not want to listen to the government side, so maybe he should listen to Wally Smith, president of the Dairy Farmers of Canada. Mr. Smith said:

Supply management has not stood in the way of Canada's ability to successfully negotiate trade agreements in the past and it is unlikely to do so in the future.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, having watched the Conservatives dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board, the rest of our agricultural sector, not surprisingly, is concerned about international pressure to undermine supply management so that Canada can join the trans-Pacific partnership.

The profitability of livestock, milk, egg and poultry producers is at stake.

The question is simple: has this government sacrificed supply management in order to join the trans-Pacific partnership, yes or no?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should have listened to the last question, but I do not mind repeating it.

It is very clear. Supply management has not stood in the way of Canada signing any of our free trade agreements with any country in the world. We continue to support supply management.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, quietly and without telling Canadians, Canada Border Services Agency has installed new surveillance equipment to eavesdrop on travellers in airports across the country. The Conservatives did this without even consulting the Privacy Commissioner, which they are required to do by law. As a result, we do not know how these recordings will be used and stored or how long they will be kept.

We are all for making airports safer, but this will give the minister access to a mountain of private information. Will the minister tell the House how this blanket spying on Canadian travellers will make our airports or our borders more secure?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada Border Services Agency operates customs-controlled areas for screening international travellers arriving at airports across Canada, including monitoring video and audio in order to detect and prevent illegal smuggling. I assure the member that the privacy rights of law-abiding Canadians are respected at all times.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there has been no evaluation of the consequences for travellers or workers.

Canadians have the right to know how their private conversations will be stored and used and if they will ever be made public.

Of course it is a question of security, but it is also a question of the right to privacy.

Will the Conservatives put this project on hold until there is an actual assessment of its impact?

[*English*]

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the privacy rights of law-abiding Canadians are respected at all times.

I also want to point out that two years ago Justice Major completed the Air India report. Our government responded with the Air India report action plan which focused on key areas, including combatting the financing of terrorism, streamlining the prosecution of terrorism offences and protecting air travellers.

We will continue to take steps in line with the recommendations of Justice Major.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, eavesdropping on conversations should not be happening at airports; it should be happening inside the Conservative Party.

Then, at least, we would have an idea of what happened with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister's falsified documents, or use of front men, during the election campaign. Now people working for a company owned by the cousin of the hon. member for Peterborough are saying that they gave money to his campaign, money that they got back with a \$50 bonus.

In the face of this deluge of scandals and ethical lapses, is he going to step down from his duties while he is under investigation?

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 gave all the documents to Elections Canada almost four years ago. The documents were audited and verified by the agency. The hon. member has not been contacted by Elections Canada since.

But while we are on the subject of donations to political parties, the hon. member now has a chance to rise and tell the House whether, after his donation of \$3,700, he still supports Québec Solidaire. Will he do so? I will accept his answer.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it must be a real pain for him to have to sit on his behind and listen to someone else give meaningless answers for him.

The parliamentary secretary's campaign runneth over with false documents, front men and who knows what else, for goodness' sake. And now the hon. member for Peterborough is taking a leaf out of the President of the Treasury Board's book. When he was caught with his hand in the secret G8 kitty, someone answered for him too.

Does the parliamentary secretary realize that he cannot remain in office while he is under investigation? He is not answering, not doing any work, as it is. Replace him.

[English]

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 has already filed, explained and had audited all of the documents related to his election filing.

However, what the hon. member across has not done is explain why he gave \$3,700 to Québec solidaire, a party that states in its own declaration of principles that “Québec Solidaire Opts for...Sovereignty”. It is the hardest line separatist party in Québec. The hon. member even gave donations to this party while he sat in the federal caucus of a supposedly federal party. I am simply asking him to stand up and say that he no longer supports Québec solidaire and that he will not give it any more money.

•(1435)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Conservatives raised the issue of donations because

nobody on our side is being accused of a kickback scheme, unlike the Conservatives.

Mr. David Anderson: Your whole party.

Hon. James Moore: Except you were.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, this has gone on and on. Last week we learned about fraud and forgery in the Peterborough election scandal. Now we are learning about this alleged kickback scheme for donations. Yet the Prime Minister seems to think that he will just damn the torpedoes and ride this one out. It is a question of his judgment. Does he really think that Canadians would believe that he was not aware of these damning court documents? When was he aware—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

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 claims that the NDP is facing no existing allegations of breaking electoral financing laws. He might be right because his party has already been found guilty of the allegations that were outstanding against it. It had to admit that on two separate occasions it broke the law, once to funnel money to a left-wing pressure group and on another occasion to accept illegal donations explicitly outlawed under the Accountability Act from a union.

I am just asking for him to stand and explain this. How much illegal money did his party take and how much has it given back?

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again I appeal to the member for Peterborough. He has a pretty lousy defence attorney because the issue here is the fact that he is being investigated for concealing and misrepresenting spending. He is being investigated for fraud and forgery. Now there are allegations of a bonus-for-bucks kickback scheme. Could he just move the Nepean member out and explain whether or not he has spoken to the Prime Minister, whether the Prime Minister is backing him, and why the Prime Minister is not asking him to step down while this ethical cloud hangs over his head?

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 in question filed all of his documents almost four years ago with Elections Canada. That agency confirmed those documents. They were audited and verified many years ago. The member has still not even heard anything from the agency to this day.

By contrast, the NDP admits now to having accepted illegal donations from union bosses and admits that it had to give some of that money back. I am just asking that those members come clean now, stand up and tell us all how much illegal money they took and how much they gave back.

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary is facing the highest personal election fines amid allegations—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Avalon has the floor.

Oral Questions

Mr. Scott Andrews:—allegations of thousands in unlawful spending and the filing of a false return. Now, employees of his cousin's company have come forward and signed affidavits saying that they were paid to help the company pump illegal donations into the member's campaign. Shockingly, the member continues to act as the Prime Minister's personal parliamentary secretary and ethics spokesman above all else.

Will the government at the very least support a motion to have the member appear before the ethics committee so we can get to the bottom of this?

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, it is obvious why that member would want to discuss this in a parliamentary committee. As he knows, such committees being creatures of parliament are extended parliamentary privilege, meaning he can level any false allegation he wants there without facing any of the consequences that normal Canadians would face when they speak outside the walls of Parliament.

Last week I challenged the member to repeat his false allegations outside this place. In great braggadocio he claimed that he was going to run out and do it. Instead, we had nothing but radio silence from the member all weekend long. I have to admit though, that was rather merciful of him.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister allegedly exceeded the election spending limits and submitted a false declaration. His cousin's employees declared under oath that they were paid to have their company illegally finance this member's campaign.

Will this government fire him? Will the government support our motion calling on the member to testify before the House ethics committee?

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 already handed over all the documents to Elections Canada nearly four years ago. The documents were verified and confirmed. Since then, he has not been contacted by Elections Canada regarding this situation.

• (1440)

[English]

The hon. member for Avalon again last week promised that he was going to storm outside and repeat the allegations that he made. Then he became curiously quiet, which is very unusual for him and merciful for us.

I would ask him to stop using parliamentary privilege as his security blanket as he makes these kinds of serious allegations.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under our system ministers should be in charge of their files and accept

accountability for their results. It used to be that, failing that, they were removed from cabinet, but now, on the most important of files, the trans-Pacific partnership, the Minister of International Trade has been replaced by the Prime Minister's chief of staff.

Why has the Prime Minister humiliated his trade minister on the international stage? Why has he placed a person in charge who is not accountable to Parliament?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): What sheer nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

As a Pacific nation, Canada's interest in joining the trans-Pacific partnership is consistent with our active, ongoing and growing presence in the Asia-Pacific. The Minister of International Trade has been very active on this file. He has met with all nine of the TPP countries and all have welcomed Canada's interest.

As a full and ambitious partner at the table, we look forward to helping develop a 21st century agreement that would benefit all of the TPP countries.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Enbridge's oil spill response plan is obviously deficient. That is really not surprising considering the Conservative government's laissez-faire attitude toward pipeline safety.

The National Energy Board admits there has been an increased trend in the number and severity of incidents in recent years. Yet the Conservatives are ramming through the budget bill that would repeal the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and would allow cabinet to overrule expert advice on pipeline safety.

Why is the minister willing to put Canadians at risk?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the northern gateway project is currently before a joint review panel, which will study all aspects of the proposal to ensure that it is safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

Our officials analyzed the plan and agreed that the proposal was safe for the environment with certain mitigation measures. This is precisely the purpose of the review and it happens in the case of every review. Our government is further increasing pipeline safety by devoting significant funds to increasing inspections by 50% and doubling the number of audits.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians would have more faith in what the minister was saying if the National Energy Board did not fail to follow up on violations 93% of the time.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives are gambling with Canada's west coast, and now we hear that down in Rio, they are renegeing on their promise to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. Basically they are doing whatever their big oil friends want them to do. Is there anything that this minister would not do for his big oil lobby friends?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleague that Canada is committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, at least as a member of G20. Our position at Rio has not changed. However, I will also remind my colleague that Canada will not, in the development of the outcome documents, surrender sovereignty over either our environmental policies or responsible resource development.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, instead of advancing sustainable development, Canada is once again being mocked internationally for its attempts to ruin all progress toward environmental protection. Canada's negotiators in Rio received the fossil award for their all-out efforts to gut a text calling for the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies.

The Conservatives have said—and still say—that they were in favour of eliminating these subsidies, but, as usual, they are saying one thing and doing the opposite.

How can the minister justify maintaining these subsidies?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is negotiating in good faith on fossil fuel subsidies and across the range of conference issues.

Canada has already provided a useful contribution to Rio+20 by sharing a number of policy tools and best practices that had been developed and implemented in Canada. I could run through the list if my colleague would ask another question. One of those accomplishments involves the establishment of a federal sustainable development strategy.

•(1445)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not what the environmental organizations are saying. It is the oil and gas lobby calling the shots, not the ministers.

The Conservatives have completely lost control of the development of our natural resources. In 2010, Enbridge, which wants to push through the Northern Gateway project, submitted a clearly inadequate oil spill response plan.

According to the National Energy Office, reported incidents involving pipelines are increasing in both number and seriousness. The interests and the health of Canadians are clearly threatened. What is the Conservative solution? Reducing environmental assessments and subsidizing fossil fuels. How—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under current legislation on responsible resource development, our government will invest more than \$160 million to improve environmental protection, marine protection and pipeline safety by doubling the number of inspections—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months my constituents have been writing to my office, understandably upset, that bogus asylum claimants receive better health care coverage than Canadian citizens. Our Conservative government has listened and taken action to restore fairness to the system. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the NDP is against these important changes.

Can the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism tell this House why the NDP is wrong for thinking failed—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I have asked hon. members before to hold off on their applause until the member has finished asking the question.

The hon. member for Scarborough Centre has the floor.

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, I thank the NDP for applauding me. I really appreciate it.

Would the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism tell the House why the NDP is wrong for thinking that failed asylum claimants deserve better health care coverage than Canadian taxpayers, including our seniors who fund these very same benefits?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Canada and Canadians are proud of our tradition of humanitarian protection for refugees. We resettle one out of every ten resettled refugees worldwide. We are increasing the support we give them through the refugee assistance program. We are increasing the number of resettled refugees who we accept. However, when false asylum claimants come here and they have had the benefit of our fair and generous legal system and their claims are found to be unfounded, they should not be receiving taxpayer funded health care benefits that are better than those available to taxpaying Canadians.

Yes, we have a humanitarian obligation to protect people, but we also need to treat all Canadians equally.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the more hearings there are before the Military Police Complaints Commission, the more examples we hear about inadequate assistance being provided by National Defence to soldiers and their families, as was the case with Corporal Langridge. The corporal admitted to having suicidal thoughts, but no one would help him. He should have been placed under preventive monitoring, but instead he was told to go back to work as though everything were fine.

Why does the minister refuse, despite these revelations, to submit all documents to the commission?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a very tragic case that is working its way through the Military Police Complaints Commission, a process that we have not only funded through the regular budget but to which we have given additional funding so the Fynes family could have independent counsel. There are issues, of course, of solicitor-client privilege that are well established by the courts, just as privilege here in the House of Commons is there to protect communications.

This case will be decided by the Military Police Complaints Commission in a fair and arm's-length process. It is unfortunate that members in this place have chosen to politicize this very tragic case.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister referred to solicitor-client privilege as justification for refusing to hand over all documents. He said that the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled repeatedly on the issue of solicitor-client privilege.

Who is the client in this case? It is the Minister of National Defence himself.

The Supreme Court has never issued a ruling ordering a minister of the Crown to stop investigations that are in the public interest, so why is the minister hiding behind an excuse that simply does not hold water?

● (1450)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. Who ruled on this issue?

[English]

I will quote for the hon. member what Mr. Justice Binnie of the Supreme Court of Canada said in the blood case in 2008. He was crystal clear, to use the Leader of the Opposition's phrase, "Solicitor-client privilege is fundamental to the proper functioning of our legal system". That is in fact the case.

While I am on my feet, I hope the House will allow me to express, on behalf of all members present and all Canadians, our prayers and thoughts for Matthew Schuman who was very critically injured in a shooting in Edmonton last week. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister's own lawyers at the Military Policy Complaints Commission have admitted that the department is withholding documents and have said that it is not willing to give them up. However, it is the minister who is the client and it is up to him to waive the privilege and release the information. The Department of National Defence has delivered a board of inquiry report to Ms. Fynes that blamed her for her son's suicide.

Does the minister not feel any sense of accountability for this? Why does he continue to make excuses?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Well, Mr. Speaker, there he goes again talking about evidence in an ongoing hearing here on the floor of the House of Commons. He is a lawyer. He knows better. He knows that Parliament has been unequivocal in expressing its support for the Military Police Complaints Commission and its support for privilege, as have the courts. He knows this full well. This is interference on his part now. He is trying to drag this out under privilege here in the House of Commons. It is quite ironic, does everyone not think?

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is what it has come to: a minister who is refusing to release legal documents and who denies the facts as they have been presented to the commission. He will not even admit that this family has been abused by the system, and now he is hiding behind a legal principle that he knows does not prevent him from releasing the information.

Has he no shame? Why can he not do the right thing in the interest of fairness?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Imagine, Mr. Speaker, hiding behind the Supreme Court of Canada in a long-held solicitor-client privilege precedent.

We have co-operated with the Military Police Complaints Commission. We have provided additional funding in this very tragic case. I have met personally with Ms. Sheila Fynes on this issue. This is a very tragic case involving an individual who took his own life.

What is very disturbing is that the hon. member and others seem prepared to make this matter political. He is becoming Parliament's ambulance chaser.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, health care workers in lab coats and ordinary Canadians are unified across Canada today denouncing the government's decision to strip refugees of much of their health benefits, including insulin and emergency surgery.

An Afghan man who worked for the Canadian military in Kandahar before resettling his family here in Canada as government sponsored refugees now says, "I need to decide if my kids should suffer hunger or let my wife go without her medicines".

How can the government turn its back on the core Canadian values of compassion and caring?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member has it all wrong. The reality is that, under our reformed interim federal health program, resettled refugees will receive the same comprehensive health insurance that all Canadian permanent residents receive from their provincial governments. What they will not receive are supplementary benefits that Canadians do not get.

Canadians have told us that they do not think they should be forced to pay through their taxes for supplementary benefits for refugees that Canadians, including low-income Canadians, do not get.

What is it that the member does not understand about basic fairness? Yes, all Canadians should get quality basic health care, but we should not be choosing refugees alone to get taxpayer-funded supplementary benefits, and we stand by that.

* * *

● (1455)

PRIVACY

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned over the weekend about microphones being installed to record conversations at Ottawa airport, as well as others. Canadians are right to be concerned about their own privacy.

My question is for the Minister of Public Safety. Before I ask the question, I would like to remind him that in no way am I on the side of any terrorist cell or child pornographer, so I will continue with it.

According to his statements earlier, the minister only read from his website, but I would like him to answer specifically. Will he refer this issue to the privacy commissioner and to the proper parliamentary committee for scrutiny?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the privacy rights of law-abiding Canadians are respected at all times. I would indicate that two years ago Justice Major completed the Air India report and made certain recommendations about protecting air travellers and the country of Canada. If the member wants the privacy commissioner to look at any practices inside the CBSA in this respect, I would invite him to make that request. I do not think CBSA has anything to hide.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we cannot put a price on a human life. Today, the NDP is supporting the cause of thousands of doctors and refugees across the country who are condemning the Conservatives' irresponsible cuts to the refugee health program. These cuts are putting lives and public health at risk. Doctors are worried about the additional long-term costs.

Will the minister listen to the medical community and reverse these careless and dangerous cuts?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, with the changes to the interim federal health program, asylum seekers and

resettled refugees will continue to receive basic health insurance. That same level of service is available to all Canadian taxpayers. We are ending supplementary insurance, which is not available to Canadians.

Does the NDP think that visitors and refugees who have been turned down by our legal system should receive supplementary benefits in addition to the basic insurance?

[English]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister's attitude is shameful. Sitting here, I am wondering if we should believe the minister or the doctors? I will take the doctors any day.

On this side of the House we believe that no one in Canada should have to choose between food and health care. No one should have to wonder if their sick child will be denied treatment because of the balance of their bank account. Canadians expect leadership to improve access to health care, not senseless cuts to limit it.

Today we stand with doctors and refugees across the country and ask when the minister will reverse these cuts.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP, this government stands with Canadians, Canadians who pay taxes to provide generous benefits to refugees. We will continue to do so. We will continue to meet our humanitarian obligation to provide the same basic package of health care insurance to the vast majority of asylum claimants and to resettled refugees that are available to taxpaying Canadians through provincial health care programs.

What we will no longer do is provide supplementary extra benefits that are not available to taxpaying Canadians. Nor will we provide health insurance to failed rejected asylum claimants who should no longer be—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

* * *

[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with Iran beating its political prisoners and innocent Syrians enduring the Assad regime, Canadians expect the United Nations to devote its time and resources to serious violations of human rights.

And yet, in a speech this morning, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights felt the need to criticize Quebec's Bill 78, which was democratically adopted by an elected assembly.

Can the minister tell the House how Canada is reacting to these disturbing comments?

Oral Questions

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government respects the jurisdiction of each province, and especially the right of the Quebec National Assembly to make its own laws for its own territory.

We have a robust judicial system here in this country, and citizens are able to contest laws if they think they are unconstitutional or otherwise flawed. It is quite strange that the high commissioner would say such things, given the situations in Syria, Iran, Belarus and Sri Lanka.

Although some NDP members have participated in the student conflict, we believe—and hope—that the NDP will join us in denouncing the statement by the high commissioner and affirming the right of the province to adopt its—

• (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the much ballyhooed seven-point action plan for the F-35s is now down to six points and a maybe.

Apparently, the minister does not want to disclose the price of the F-35 because “we want to get it right”, this time.

I have two questions. First, does that mean that the minister never did get it right in the first place? Second, does the minister accept that the American price of \$137 million per plane will in fact be the Canadian price?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): No, Mr. Speaker. What it means is that we are following the recommendations of the Auditor General and he recommended that the Department of National Defence table updated cost estimates.

We have gone further than that. We have said that we want those cost estimates to be independently validated.

The National Fighter Procurement Secretariat recommended, on Wednesday, that it be given more time to provide a complete and independently verified update. We agreed with this approach and have given the secretariat more time to do its work.

* * *

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP): Mr. Speaker, every year, thousands of immigrants choose to make their life in the city of Laval. It is their home port.

Yet the Conservatives want to make life more difficult for all current and future claimants. Laval needs immigrants in order to keep developing. With Bills C-38 and C-31, the Conservatives are putting the brakes on Laval's prosperity and economic development.

Why are they attacking immigrants?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that question is rather special. Indeed, the government has noticed that immigration in Canada is at an all-time high and is the highest per capita in the developed world.

Quebec selects its own economic immigrants under the Canada-Quebec agreement on immigration. That being said, Bill C-31 is not about immigration. It addresses the abuse of our asylum system and human smuggling.

Do the hon. member and the NDP believe that Laval's economy depends on bogus asylum claims and illegal immigration? I do not. I believe that the people of Laval agree with this government: we need to fight human smuggling and the abuse of our asylum system—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans.

* * *

[English]

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Library of Parliament is an institution that goes back to the 1790s when the legislative libraries of Upper and Lower Canada were created.

To this day, the professionals of the Library do exceptional work to facilitate our tasks as parliamentarians.

[Translation]

The library houses an outstanding collection of books and documents that illustrate Parliament's rich history, as well as our country's majestic geography and enviable economy.

[English]

With that in mind, could the government House leader please give the House an update on the status of the search for the next parliamentary librarian?

[Translation]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Ottawa—Orléans for his excellent work and for his support of libraries and librarians.

I am pleased to announce that today the government nominated Sonia L'Heureux as the new Parliamentary Librarian. Ms. L'Heureux is currently the Assistant Parliamentary Librarian and provides an exceptional and professional service to parliamentarians. She is the perfect person to run the Library of Parliament. We are pleased that she has accepted this nomination.

*Points of Order***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives did not respond to all of the questions regarding the employment insurance reform because they slapped a gag order on all steps of the process and prevented proper study in committee.

I will give them another chance to explain.

What will happen to someone who loses his job and is forced to accept a job at 70% of his salary, when he then loses that job? Will he be forced to accept another 30% pay cut? Where will the cheap labour spiral end?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is economic growth and job creation. What we are going to do is help unemployed workers find jobs. This will be better for them and for their families.

I have to wonder: while we want to help people find work, why does the NDP not want to help people work?

* * *

• (1505)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are obsessed with their many austerity measures, but they are refusing to tell us where and how the most draconian cuts will be made.

We have learned that cuts to embassy staffing will force people to wait nine months instead of three for the visas they need to adopt children from the Philippines. Quebec families that were at the final stage of the process have just been informed that they will have to wait many more months for the children they are so eager to adopt.

How can the government justify causing such a terrible situation and forcing families and orphans to pay the price for its ideological cuts?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, frankly, I do not know what the member is talking about because there has been a huge increase in immigration and the number of visas at our Manila office in the Philippines.

Over the past three years, Canada has received more immigrants from the Philippines than from anywhere else, and we have increased our service levels accordingly.

I believe that the hon. member is absolutely wrong.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

DECORUM DURING VOTING ON BILL C-38

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Thursday evening, I rose on a question of personal privilege to say that two members had directed a Nazi salute against the Prime Minister when he stood to vote. I did not name the individual members as a matter of courtesy because their gestures

followed a very long day of votes. Also, I did not mention the Liberal Party by name, since I did not believe then and do not believe now that the members' behaviour would be acceptable to members of that party, in particular its interim leader, nor indeed to any party in the House. My purpose was to comment on an utterly unacceptable incident which I personally found to be exceptionally offensive, and to preclude it from happening again.

However, after I spoke, the member for Malpeque rose to say that he had merely waved at the Prime Minister. Then on Friday an article appeared in *The Guardian* in which the member stated that there were no salutes from his side and that he was peeved and insulted. He also said that not naming anyone created a controversy. Furthermore, the article referred to comments in the House from the member for Bourassa and the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, who said I was blaming the entire opposition by not naming the individuals.

While I had not wanted to prolong this, the member's denial and his and other members' demands for identification of the individuals involved compel me to respond. It was in fact the member for Malpeque and the member for Vancouver Centre who raised their arms in a rigid position at a 45° angle, clearly the gesture of a Nazi salute. There was no ambiguity. When I saw it, I said "disgusting" in their direction several times and they did not ask what I found so offensive. Later, when I rose on my question of privilege, the member for Vancouver Centre left the House, only to return later to stand for awhile behind the curtains in the corridor.

There are members in this House whose relatives fought and died for Canada in the Second World War and others whose relatives perished in the Holocaust. Such a vile and universally condemned gesture is particularly shocking in this place of honour and tradition. The heat of partisanship never justifies a vicious personal attack that sullies the reputation of our parliamentary democracy.

I had hoped the members responsible would have apologized to the House on Thursday, or at least remained silent and then apologized to me privately. That would have been the decent and smart thing to do. Since this was not to be, I call on them to apologize now. Doing the honourable thing would permit us all to move on.

• (1510)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would agree that such a salute, as the member said, would be vile and unacceptable in this place. I would agree with that. However, as I said the other night, there was no such salute from me. I sat in my chair and I pointed at the Prime Minister. That is what I did, and I pointed exactly like this. It was not a wave and it was not and should not have been construed as a salute. No such thing happened on my part. I cannot answer for others in this place. If I had made that gesture, I would have recognized that it was wrong and I would have apologized to the member, because I agree 100% that such a salute should not be made in this place. I accept that.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reluctantly stand in this House to say that I too saw the action of the member opposite and unfortunately it was not as he describes it now.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[Translation]

CERTIFICATES OF NOMINATION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 111.1, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a certificate of nomination, with biographical notes, for the proposed appointment of Sonia L'Heureux as Parliamentary Librarian. I request that the nomination be referred to the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament.

* * *

[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 response to 25 petitions.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to the orders of the day.

The Speaker: 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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1555)

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

*(Division No. 443)***YEAS**

Members

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

Actions and words, even if accidentally done, elicit emotional responses. I believe that the actions as they would have been interpreted by any reasonable person seeing them would have been seen as the minister describes. They defile the memory of the Holocaust and are something which we in this House would find reprehensible. If the hon. member did not intend to communicate what was in fact communicated by his actions, I would ask that he apologize for how they would be interpreted because it was clear in the way it was presented that anybody would see it as a gesture that would be unacceptable in this House.

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the allegations made by my friend, the Minister of Natural Resources, are very troubling. Let us recall that it was a rather unusual session which came at the end of 24 hours. It is something that we all take very seriously. We all know the significance of the salute to which the minister is referring. I want to say two things.

First, no one in this House, in this party or any other party, would condone such an act or would expect such an act to go without an appropriate apology. I would also apply that to people who compare their opponents to Hitler. I would also apply that to people who refer to members, like the member for Mount Royal, as an anti-Semite. I would also apply that to members who, in leaflets throughout the last couple of years, have said that members of the Liberal Party of Canada, including its interim leader, are somehow anti-Israel. I would include all those things in saying they are indeed reprehensible.

Second, what we have today is a clear statement from the member for Malpeque that he in fact did not make any such gesture. Something could have been misunderstood or misinterpreted. He has clearly indicated that. He is somebody whose record and history in this House and his work on behalf of the people of Canada would belie any such effort on his part. I think his word should be taken for what it is: his word. That is the way this House has always operated and that is the way this House should continue to operate.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I sit directly behind the two hon. members who have been accused in this matter, the member for Vancouver Centre and the member for Malpeque. I was not watching them every second, but I do know that when the hon. member—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am finding it difficult to continue. I will try again in a minute.

● (1515)

The Speaker: I will take a look at what was said Thursday night. I have heard from both the member for Malpeque and the minister. If there is anything that the video can help shed light on, then I will get back to the House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. This is not a subject for debate. I have indicated to the House how I will handle it and I will come back to the House in due course.

Government Orders

Calkins	Cannan	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Carmichael	Carrie	Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Chisu	Chong	Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Clarke	Clement	Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Daniel	Davidson	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Dechert	Del Mastro	Easter	Eyking
Devolin	Dreeshen	Foote	Fortin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra	Freeman	Garneau
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Garrison	Genest-Jourdain
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher	Giguère	Godin
Galipeau	Gallant	Goodale	Gravelle
Gill	Glover	Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Goodyear	Gosal	Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Gourde	Grewal	Hsu	Hughes
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn	Jacob	Kellway
Hayes	Hiebert	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Hillyer	Hoback	Larose	Latendresse
Hoeppner	Holder	Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
James	Jean	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Liu	MacAulay
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent	Mai	Marston
Kerr	Komarnicki	Masse	Mathysen
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	May	McCallum
Lauzon	Lebel	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Leaf	Leitch	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Lemieux	Leung	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Lizon	Lobb	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Lukiwski	Lunney	Mulcair	Murray
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Nantel	Nash
Mayes	McColeman	Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
McLeod	Menegakis	Pacetti	Papillon
Menzies	Merrifield	Patry	Pécllet
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Pilon	Plamondon
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock	Quach	Rae
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon	Rafferty	Ravignat
Obhrai	Oda	Raynault	Regan
Oliver	Opitz	Rousseau	Sagamash
Paradis	Payne	Sandhu	Savoie
Penashue	Poilievre	Scott	Sgro
Preston	Raitt	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	St-Denis
Rajotte	Rathgeber	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stoffer
Reid	Rempel	Sitsabaiesan	Thibeault
Richards	Rickford	Stewart	Tremblay
Saxton	Schellenberger	Sullivan	Valeriote — 122
Seeback	Shea	Toone	
Shiple	Shory	Turmel	
Smith	Sopuck		
Sorenson	Stanton		
Storseth	Strahl		
Sweet	Tilson		
Toet	Toews		
Trost	Trottier		
Truppe	Tweed		
Uppal	Valcourt		
Van Kesteren	Van Loan		
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 — 154		

NAYS

Members

Allen (Weland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Coderre	Côté
Cullen	Cuzner

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PAIRED**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: As the Deputy Speaker promised the House when she initially ruled on this matter, I am now prepared to rule substantively on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North on Tuesday, June 12, in relation to the allocation of hours in the motion by the hon. government House leader to allocate time at report stage and third reading of Bill C-38. As members will recall, the motion called for an additional 10 hours of consideration at report stage and 8 hours at the third reading stage.

The Chair wishes to thank the hon. government House leader, the hon. opposition House leader and the hon. member for Cardigan for their interventions on the matter.

Government Orders

[Translation]

The hon. member for Winnipeg North has argued that the number of sitting hours that can be allocated to a given stage of a bill pursuant to Standing Order 78(3) must, at a minimum, mirror the number of sitting hours in effect when the time allocation motion is moved and applied. This week and last week, depending on the day, due to the adoption of the motion for extended sitting hours, that could be up to 14 hours.

The hon. House leader of the official opposition and the hon. member for Cardigan have echoed that view, claiming that the intent of the Standing Order is that a time-allocated debate have as a minimum duration of one sitting day, however long that day may happen to be, as per Standing Order 78(3)(a) which states:

...that the time allotted to any stage is not to be less than one sitting day...

[English]

For his part, the hon. government House leader has argued that the minimum number of sitting hours that can be allocated to a given stage of a bill pursuant to the same Standing Order need only be equal to the shortest day possible, in his view, 2.5 hours.

In the Chair's opinion, a close reading of the Standing Order and relevant precedents will show that none of the arguments advanced have exactly hit the mark.

[Translation]

A review of the best and most relevant precedent available, that of 1987, cited by the government House leader, illustrates well the equilibrium that the Chair always tries to achieve in cases of this kind. Let me explain.

[English]

The government House leader stressed that on that occasion in 1987, four hours were allocated for report stage and a further four hours for third reading on a government bill during extended sitting hours in June. He added that he believed, "Mr. Speaker Fraser likely interpreted the length of the shortest available day to be the minimum time required by the Standing Orders".

● (1600)

[Translation]

However, it should be pointed out that in 1987, the sitting hours of the House were very different, and this is of critical importance if we are to extrapolate a rationale for what occurred.

[English]

In 1987, the House sat Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Fridays. If one were to subtract from these sitting times all the time allotted to statements by members, question period, private members' business and, in those days, lunch hour, 18 hours were left for the consideration of government orders in a normal sitting week. That number divided by the number of days in the week, five, yields an average of 3.6 hours per day. In my view, it is reasonable to conclude that this is where the four hours comes from: in other words, to reason that, on that occasion, in moving time allocation, the government of the day appears to have rounded up to the nearest hour.

[Translation]

In fact, on June 11, 1987, at page 7001 of *Debates*, Mr. Mazankowski, in giving notice of his intention to move time allocation, stated: "I give notice that I will be moving at a later sitting...that four hours, the equivalent to one day's sitting, shall be allotted to the further consideration of report stage of the bill and four hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage."

[English]

This was in keeping with an earlier example on November 13, 1975, at page 9021 of *Debates*, when Mr. Sharp in speaking in debate on the motion to allocate time stated, "This motion allocates another five hours of debate, equivalent to at least another full sitting day". That the two ministers, while specifying a specific number of hours, indicated that these were equivalent to a sitting day is consistent with the current interpretation that requires at least one further sitting day when allocating time under Standing Order 78(3).

Normal sitting hours for the House are at present 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Mondays, 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Fridays. Applying the same calculation to these hours by accounting for statements by members, question period and private members' business leaves 23.5 hours for the consideration of government orders in a typical week in 2012. That number divided by the number of days in the week, five, yields an average of 4.7 hours per day. Rounded up to the nearest hour would make it five hours, which is coincidentally exactly the number of hours used with regard to third reading of Bill C-25.

Accordingly, the Chair finds that the allocation of hours to report stage and third reading of Bill C-38 is in order since it respects the terms of Standing Order 78(3). Should future instances arise where arrangements pursuant to this Standing Order are contested, the Chair will continue to be guided by this method of calculation.

I thank hon. members for their attention.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before statements by members and question period, I briefly explained why Bill C-38 is antidemocratic. There are several reasons. As I explained, we were given very little time to debate it despite the government's claim that 70 hours of study in committee was plenty of time. The bill amends, adds or repeals 70 acts, which would take some 350 hours—four to five hours per act—based on the committees' traditional practices. That is not what happened.

Government Orders

In addition, the scope of this bill is immense. In 2009, the budget implementation bill was over 500 pages long—552 pages to be exact. However, every clause in the 2009 budget implementation bill related to the budget. There were amendments to the Income Tax Act, sales and excise taxes, the customs tariff, employment insurance, financial system efficiency and so on. Every item in the bill was related to the budget. That is not the case with Bill C-38.

Not only did we not have enough time to deal with such a vast bill, but we also had to deal with a number of provisions that had absolutely nothing to do with the budget, which causes a specific problem.

If I have time at the end of my speech, I will add some interesting quotes.

However, it is interesting to note—and I insist on doing so—that the way the government proceeded has really created a consensus that crosses party lines. Both left and right are against the way the government presented the budget in an omnibus bill, a kitchen sink bill.

Let us come back to the economy. In fact, as we know, the bill is called the Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act. However, when you get right down to it, it is exactly the opposite. It is important to understand that the 2012 budget tabled in March, which has already been passed, even though the government does not seem to remember that, talked about \$5.2 billion in cuts and the elimination of 19,000 jobs. This will have major repercussions. It is an austerity bill that will have recessionary consequences. That is why the Jobs, Growth and Long-term Prosperity Act is ill-advised, or at least the title is.

Let us talk about growth. The Parliamentary Budget Officer made an estimate using the same model as the Minister of Finance did. He did not pull it out of his hat. There is nothing new about it. For his projections, he uses the same methods as those used by the Department of Finance and the Minister of Finance. By adding in the elements of the 2012 budget, the Parliamentary Budget Officer came to the conclusion that we could expect 0.9% less growth than the potential we might have expected. So that means that if we had been expecting an increase of 2.5% in the GDP, for example, we will get an increase of only 1.6% in the GDP instead. That will be a problem in the future because a reduction in growth like the one the Conservative budget will entail will also have an effect on the number of jobs. In that context, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, still using the same model as the Minister of Finance, estimates that, in 2014, 102,000 jobs that could have been created will likely not be, and will therefore potentially be lost.

In that sense, the government's bill does not promote jobs. It does not promote economic growth. The effect will be the opposite.

A number of provisions in Bill C-38 will result in downward pressure on salaries and will have terrible consequences for jobs. I will describe four in particular. We all know that the bill contains many provisions. It has 753 clauses, after all. In the time I have, I will focus on four aspects that will have harmful effects on the economy.

The first is employment insurance. There is nothing much about it in Bill C-38. Two items that define suitable employment are being

eliminated, specifically the reasons for which a claimant may refuse a job without fear of losing his benefits. Two specific aspects are being eliminated. The first is that he can refuse work if it is not in his profession. The second is that he can refuse work if it is of lower quality than his previous employment.

● (1605)

Why are we eliminating those two clauses? It is to give the minister the discretion to draw up regulations that will make up the rules of the game. By giving the minister this discretion, we end up with a situation where the rules of the game can change without the consent of Parliament and its elected members. That will be in the hands of the minister.

Actually, I think she was feeling the heat because she had to justify those regulations. She refused to explain, and so did the Minister of Finance. She had to justify herself and explain what the provisions would be at a news conference. Those provisions kill jobs. The Conservatives are going to, or are likely to, force unemployed workers, who are laid off and are entitled to employment insurance—be they seasonal or other workers—to take a job at 70% of their previous salary or risk losing their benefits.

That in itself is an incentive for companies to lower salaries. A negative effect could very well be that companies will let employees go, in order to be able to rehire them perhaps by offering them 70% of their previous salary.

There are also other negative effects.

The question was put to the member for Madawaska—Restigouche in the Rimouski media. The journalist's question was very simple and very enlightening. The hon. member was asked to imagine a situation where someone loses his job and is forced to take a job at 70% of his salary and is then laid off again. Does that mean that the bill would force that person to potentially accept employment at 70% of the 70% he had before? The answer from the minister of ACOA, who is also the member for Madawaska—Restigouche, was very clear: if we follow the logic of the bill, yes. That is why we have minimum wage laws.

We already see that this particular provision of the bill is going to drive down wages. Another consequence of this bill is that employers who hire people for seasonal jobs for various reasons—and there is still seasonal employment in my riding, in my region, as is particularly common in eastern Canada—risk losing the workforce they trained, because they will want greater stability, because they will not be interested in hiring people for two or three months, even at 70% of their wages. Generally, employers want to have a permanent workforce.

Government Orders

Another component of the bill is the elimination of the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. This act allowed construction employees working on government contracts to enjoy standards comparable to the rest of the industry. We know that in the construction industry, federal contracts are tendered. So the fact that wages had to be protected ensured that all companies were on a more even playing field. Now, with the disappearance of this act, companies will be able to arrange it so their employees are paid quite a bit less in order to meet the specific conditions and successfully bid on government construction contracts.

This means that there is no more real incentive for companies to ensure that their employees are well paid and that working conditions are respectable. This is yet another part of Bill C-38 that will end up driving down the wages and living conditions of Canadians.

Another element raised by my colleague during a question is the elimination of the Employment Equity Act provision, which obviously ensures that for the same work, women and men can be paid the same. What we need to realize is that with the bill, companies doing business with the federal government and subcontractors will no longer have to comply with the act.

Now, the government tells us that it will be in the form they will have to fill out. They will have to put in provisions; nothing is going to force them. What the government is being asked to do is allow companies to regulate themselves. We know very well that a company's main motive is to maximize profits. This will be done on the backs of women working in these companies that will potentially receive federal government contracts. This is just another example of wages being driven down.

Lastly, a measure that will occur later on, something that has been talked a lot about and something the government has never given a crystal clear justification for, and that is increasing the age of eligibility for old age security from 65 to 67 in 2023.

• (1610)

With this measure, anyone 53 years of age and under will end up paying the equivalent of \$12,000 per person per year for the two missing years. We are talking about approximately \$25,000 per couple.

It will be the middle class and less fortunate Canadians who will end up paying for these measures. This is serious. If we look at the evolution of salaries in Canada—people watching at home will probably be very interested to know—employees these days earn an average salary, but the average salary is not necessarily a good indicator. Large salaries will often bring that figure up, but that is not necessarily reflected in the standard of living.

The best indicator to assess salary levels is the median salary, which is the point at which 50% of Canadians earn more and 50% of Canadians earn less. In 2010, the median salary for all Canadians was lower than the median salary in 1981. The median salary is calculated in inflation-adjusted dollars. The country has grown richer since 1981, but not all Canadians have benefited from that.

The government loves to pat itself on the back for our economic performance, but we are headed in the wrong direction. This has been acknowledged by the International Monetary Fund, which

estimates that in 2012—the current fiscal year—the Canadian economy is headed for 152nd place in the world. There will thus already be implications for Canada's performance and its competitiveness in the future.

We have an income inequality problem, and this is where I was going with the question of median salary. It was stated that the top 1% of salaries now make up 24% of income in Canada. This has been mentioned often over the past two years. Concentrating income in such a narrow band has quite a negative impact on investment and the real economy. Up to a certain point, people with that much money can consume. They will even consume luxury goods.

However, ultimately, everything they do not consume will mainly go toward trying to generate a return by investing in capital markets. We are not talking about investing in capital markets to support the real economy; they will invest in the casino financial market, the one that creates its own bubbles, either real estate bubbles or stock market bubbles. In this respect, the real economy is left behind. What matters now is the financial economy.

The federal government budget is set to grow this bubble. Since wages are shrinking, Canadians as a whole will not benefit. This will cause problems with the growth of the GDP, which is measured in part by consumption.

What we are doing today is really forgetting the lessons that we learned during the Great Depression. We are moving in that direction once again. What is interesting is that the difference between our salaries today, the gap between rich and poor, is almost the same as it was before the Great Depression, so before the 1930s. The government does not seem to be aware of that.

As a result, the government is ignoring all the indicators that should be pushing it in the right direction so that it can develop policies for all Canadians. However, that is not what the government is doing at the moment. It is creating policies that will stand in the way of the poorest, most disadvantaged and, in many cases, the unluckiest Canadians. Bill C-38 is a good indication of that.

I would like to quickly come back to another key element of our opposition to this bill. I spoke briefly about it: it is the undemocratic nature of a bill that is 435 pages long, includes 753 clauses, and modifies, amends, adds or eliminates close to 70 laws in a single vote, which will take place this week.

When I said that it created a consensus among policy analysts and commentators, I meant among everyone, from left to right. A number of columnists in Quebec and across Canada have spoken out against the way that the federal government is operating.

• (1615)

I would like to quote Andrew Coyne who made the following comments in a Postmedia article right after the budget implementation bill was introduced:

Government Orders

Not only does this make a mockery of the confidence convention, shielding bills that would otherwise be defeatable within a money bill, which is not: It makes it impossible to know what Parliament really intended by any of it. We've no idea whether MPs supported or opposed any particular bill in the bunch, only that they voted for the legislation that contained them. There is no common thread that runs between them, no overarching principle; they represent not a single act of policy, but a sort of compulsory buffet.

This was written at the end of April. He was back on the attack to comment further on the consequences of the direction the Conservatives are taking at this time.

On June 13, so just last week, he had this to say:

[English]

...we can look forward to a future in which Parliament would be reduced to two votes of consequence per year — one to rubber-stamp the government's spring agenda, a second to cover the fall. This is how it happens. This is how it has happened: the more powers government acquires at the expense of Parliament, the harder it is for Parliament to resist still further encroachments, or even to recall why it might. And if somebody doesn't stop it, somewhere, this is how it will continue.

[Translation]

These extremely wise words clearly explain the problems we are facing right now.

Another journalist, Dan Gardner, summed up the fundamental danger of the Conservatives' approach with this bill—and he did it really well in under 140 characters on Twitter. He said:

[English]

“I'm prepared to say it's no longer a parliamentary system. It's a presidential system, minus checks and balances”.

[Translation]

That is what we are seeing here now, with the anti-jobs, anti-growth, anti-prosperity bill that has been presented as a package for us to vote on in its entirety without sufficient time to study the consequences of each of its provisions.

As I was saying, although we have studied the bill for 70 hours in committee and in subcommittees, if we had spent five hours on each of these bills, as is customary in the House of Commons, we would have spent 350 hours.

Thus, the government is trying to keep us in line. We must—of course—oppose that, not only because we are opposed to the bill and its provisions, which are, as I said, anti-jobs, anti-growth and anti-prosperity, but also because of the way the government is doing this. That is why we stood up and presented the amendments in the House. That is why we voted for 22 hours.

In conclusion, I will quickly say that many of my colleagues think this is a bill that will change the face of Canada for a generation. I do not subscribe to that view, because in 2015 we will take the place of the current government and we will do away with most of these measures.

• (1620)

[English]

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the member quotes Andrew Coyne's observation, I will quote the *Toronto Sun* that said:

As Europe stands poised on the brink of a disastrous economic wildfire that could blacken the world, [the] NDP leader[s] hypocrisy and self-obsession is in full flame.

...vowing to delay the passing of [economic action plan 2012] by playing silly buggers with amendments and procedure....

This is nothing but grandstanding.

This is a budget designed to create jobs and inspire economic growth, and it comes to the House of Commons at a moment that can only be described as the 11th hour of a global economic conflagration....

Right now, there is only one enemy in our fight to protect Canada from the repercussions of Europe's burning.

And it's [the NDP leader]....

This is inarguable.

While the member can quote someone who speaks to democracy, the member also belongs to a party that unequivocally decided to vote against it before its members even read the budget, so I do not think that was exactly a representation of democracy.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I can do nothing but laugh at that statement.

With respect to the budget, the hon. member already knows full well that, for starters, we had eight hours to read it in camera before giving our opinion. Then, we voted on the budget itself, and we are currently voting on the budget implementation bill, which includes a large number of provisions that have nothing to do with the budget. Third, she is quoting the *Toronto Sun*. I have not read the article in question. It is probably the only newspaper, the only statement, that was in favour of the government's approach.

I mentioned Andrew Coyne and Dan Gardner, but I could have spoken about John Ivison and John Ibbotson, people who do not generally support the NDP's politics but who have great integrity when it comes to Parliament and respecting the democracy we are currently developing. These people spoke out against this way of operating. I could name plenty of others, including Pierre Duhamel, in Quebec. The *Toronto Sun* article is really the only one that supports the government. I am not necessarily surprised, knowing its editorial leanings. However, I must salute the integrity of most of the commentators who criticized the way the government is operating.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the number of pages in Bill C-38 and the number of bills that it would change and impact make it very much an anti-democratic bill and completely unprecedented. This Conservative majority government has a different type of attitude in the way in which it wants to manage the House, which is most unfortunate.

Government Orders

There are many issues, but I want to make reference to one specific issue, and it is the world-renowned Experimental Lakes Area. The government is hoping to save \$2 million. There will be an impact on water research, scientists, fish habitat and water quality. The government is now looking at getting rid of it completely. There are those specific things that this budget would impact and then there are the bizarre things that, through the back door, the government is bringing in, such as wiping out environmental legislation and neglecting and being cruel to immigrants who are being processed.

I am wondering if the member would agree with me and members of the Liberal Party that the best way to fix this bill is to take it back to the drawing board and bring in legislation that is in fact a budget implementation bill because, as this bill currently stands, it is the farthest thing away from that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with the hon. member. The official opposition and the third party have combined their efforts to divide this bill up so that we can study its key parts.

In the 2009 budget implementation bill, which I believe was 552 pages long, most of the provisions were not fundamental reforms to our public policies, but in this budget implementation bill, they are. The environmental assessment should have been studied in much greater depth, not over 10 days, during four or five compressed meetings. I am quite familiar with the situation.

I was actually talking about the budget that I considered to be detrimental to employment and growth for the reasons that I mentioned. We could also say that it is detrimental to science, because some aspects clearly show that the government is trying to minimize the contribution of scientists. Not only is this true for the legislation itself, but also for the decisions that were made. As the hon. member mentioned, the Maurice Lamontagne Institute, near my riding, is also feeling the Conservative government's wrath.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saenich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has put his finger on a problem we have had repeatedly in these debates, which is that hon. Conservative members appear to confuse Bill C-38, which is before us, and the budget itself. Earlier today in debate, a parliamentary secretary said that this bill had been placed before us March 29. That is clear confusion. This bill was placed before us April 26 and the budget was March 29. They are not the same thing. In the same way, the *Toronto Sun* was misinformed, as if this is somehow holding up the economic action plan. If the economic action plan is to remove the Inspector General from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, I wish we had time in the House to find out how they are connected.

In point of fact, this illegitimate, monstrous bill represents 40% of the legislative agenda of the House of Commons in the last year with totally inadequate debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, that also raises an interesting question.

As everyone probably knows, I am a member of the Standing Committee on Finance. We spent about 50 hours studying those

provisions. It was really odd and surreal; some experts talked about employment insurance and then the next expert talked about the Inspector General of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. Then we talked about the Fisheries Act, followed by old age security. So we did not really have an opportunity to focus on one particular issue.

In my opinion, one factor in particular really raises some questions about the government's approach. Specific legislation will be created on the interoperability of Canadian and American police forces in Canadian territorial waters. In co-operation with the RCMP, the FBI could make arrests in Canadian waters.

The government said this had to be adopted now, because it had to do with an international treaty, a long-standing agreement that had to be ratified. The Senate and the House have tried to ratify it on two separate occasions. The government could have introduced this in a separate bill following the 2011 election so that the issue could have been studied independently, but it did not do so.

Now it is telling us that time is running out and that we must absolutely pass it. Yet the government could have done so six, seven or eight months ago. It has no one to blame but itself for its failure to do so.

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem with the NDP members is that it is not just on economic matters that they filibuster. We had a bill before this House with respect to opening up the barriers so that producers can bring wine across the borders and they actually filibustered and caused that to be delayed.

The member for Kildonan—St. Paul had a bill to protect some of the most vulnerable men, women and children and they delayed that bill, so it is not just on economic issues.

The hon. member said that we should talk and we should debate for hundreds and hundreds of hours. Does he actually think that the global economy will sit around and wait for the New Democratic Party so that its members can talk among themselves about how great they are and how good their non-economic policies are? Is he not ashamed of the fact that the NDP has just become a sad, pathetic protest party with absolutely no policies? The fact is that what they are—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think we need to maintain a level discussion. The words “sad” and “pathetic” are pitiful. The member should stick to the facts when we are number one in the country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Chair would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to quickly come to his question.

Government Orders

•(1630)

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. The NDP is number one at delaying, obfuscating and ensuring that the economic policies which create jobs do not get through.

I am wondering how long the hon. member thinks we should hold back economic progress in this country so that the NDP members can debate among themselves and with their big union bosses.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where to begin.

How nice that the parliamentary secretary thinks he can rewrite history to say that the NDP is going to filibuster or speak out on this. No, the NDP only does that when we have good reason to do so. The NDP opposes not only the provisions of Bill C-38 but also its undemocratic nature and the manner in which it was introduced.

I called this the anti-jobs, anti-growth, anti-prosperity bill, and that is exactly what it is. The parliamentary secretary must realize that we need to have these debates not only for discussion in this House, but for all Canadians. They have a right to know that decisions are being made transparently and responsibly. They have a right to understand the debate on the various issues. That is what the government refuses to do.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The last question should have gone to the NDP. It was my mistake in the rotation. Therefore, I will take one more question from the NDP.

The hon. member for York South—Weston.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this bill is part of a larger pattern, a pattern of hidden agendas. It was not in the campaign, in the Speech from the Throne or in the budget, but now we find out about it as a result of the budget implementation bill. It is also part of a pattern of attack on Canadian working people.

I want to talk about the 30% wage reduction for those who are coming off EI. A 15% across the board wage reduction in any occupation in Canada that a temporary foreign worker will come and work in and something like a third of the jobs that the Conservatives keep talking about that have been created are actually being held by temporary foreign workers, not by Canadians.

Then there is the federal contractors' fair wage policy, the federal contractors' employment equity policy and the move from age 65 to 67 without a move to allow those people to continue to work. The federal labour code actually permits employers to force people to retire at age 65, not at age 67, as the government wants them to do.

I believe this is part of a significant pattern of attacking working people in Canada. Would the member like to comment further on that?

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, the member gets it. The government does not.

[*Translation*]

In my speech I mentioned that this is an anti-jobs bill. In fact, the budget itself will directly eliminate 19,000 jobs. If we include the provisions that are not in the budget, but that are consistent with the undermining efforts already started by the government, it is closer to

over 30,000 jobs. It is anti-growth because the government's policies, in both the budget and the budget implementation bill, will lead to a 1% drop in the GDP.

The government brags about its accomplishments. It says that we urgently need to continue going in the same direction as this bill, but this does not make any sense for all Canadians, especially those who are working, but also those who, unfortunately, are currently not working for reasons very often beyond their control.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, the Guaranteed Income Supplement; the hon. member for Winnipeg North, Air Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is again an honour to be able to stand in this place to debate the bill and to speak in support of budget 2012. Today we are here debating, at third reading, Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act.

This past weekend I had the opportunity to attend an event in southern Saskatchewan. Many people came up to me and said they bet I was happy that the budget is now passed, that the implementation bill is passed and that it is all over. I explained to them that, although we got through report stage and we dealt with the amendments, we have not completed it yet, we have not finished voting on this. They said, "You mean you've got to go longer on this?"

For all those who may be watching, many know that most members of Parliament from all sides of the House were up for 41 hours. There were 21 or 22 hours of voting, but when we look at the clock, most were up for well over 40 hours during that span, and it is not finished yet.

In fact, this week before we rise for summer break, we will be sitting until midnight every night and there very well could be a vote later this evening. And so, it is not completed yet.

Why? It is because the opposition, in the last report stage, brought 871 amendments before this place. The Speaker had to advise the opposition that the rules and practice of this place do not lend themselves to taking 871 consecutive votes and so he cut them back to 159.

Today, again, we get to debate the implementation of the bill.

The budget was tabled March 29. This House has been debating it for close to three months. The finance committee has held special meetings, subcommittee meetings, as per the request from the opposition. Together, all these committees have held more than 70 hours of meetings and have heard from more than 100 witnesses who came in front of the committee to testify.

Bill C-38 has had more debate in Parliament than any other piece of legislation for the past 20 years.

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As the member of Parliament for Crowfoot, in Alberta, I could say a great deal in support of budget 2012 and Bill C-38.

Speaking positively, I can begin my remarks by assuring my constituents and all Canadians that our Conservative government has committed, in this budget, to maintain health care transfers to the provinces at record levels. We have made this long-term commitment.

Where I come from, we do not soon forget the type of budget that the former Liberal government brought forward to this place, which balanced the federal books, and we applaud it for that, but did it on the backs of taxpayers and, in large respect, it did it by cutting \$20 billion to the social and health care file.

We have said we are not going to do what the Liberals did.

My constituents have told me that access to quality health care service is one of our most important priorities. Especially in a rural area, we want to make certain it is stable.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on any further, I should have mentioned before that I will be splitting my time with my good friend from York Centre.

My constituents know that health care is important. This budget and our government answers to the idea of long-term funding that would be assured to the provinces.

As the government, we know that in the short term we must provide the policies that would lead to the fiscal conditions necessary to foster a strong health care system that would serve all Canadians over the long term. A strong economy is where Canadians can find work that would allow them to pay their taxes to the federal government and to the provincial governments, so that many of the programs and services they rely on will be able to deliver for them. Budget 2012 would establish the policies that would maintain the services our government provides and ensure that they are sustainable.

There are a large number of initiatives in Bill C-38.

• (1635)

How would Bill C-38 take short-term measures to ensure long-term sustainability? There are a number of examples. First, it would do so by streamlining the process for the approval of energy projects. This one topic we could speak on at great length, especially for provinces with a growing resource sector. It goes even further than that because it would allow for jobs to be created across the country.

The budget implementation bill will spell out how it would help Canadians to find jobs and to create new jobs. We can stand in the House and the opposition will say that we are not doing anything to help Canadians find work and we will stand up and talk about the 700,000 jobs that have been created in this economy. Having a strong economy is the key to being able to find work for most Canadians.

The budget would help remove redundant or extra layers of bureaucracy. It would take the Department of Fisheries and Oceans out of the creeks and watersheds of the Prairies and focus its work on the fish habitats on our coasts and in our lakes. I was not going to speak specifically to this point, but I think I want to because when I

go out and visit my county councils and my municipal councils, especially in the rural municipalities but even in some of our towns and smaller cities, they talk very pointedly about this being their number one issue.

People might chuckle, but it used to be that when we went out years ago, most of these rural councils talked about the importance of strychnine, because of gopher and rodent control there. That was their issue. Second to that was the issue of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and even navigable waters, because every time they wanted to do even some minor project two and a half hours from Calgary, they would have to bring someone out just to give it a check of approval. Then they would have to bring another department out to do a check of approval. The councils complained that we were killing them with red tape and asked us to do something. I am thinking of Wheatland County and Stettler County, I believe, from which I received letters asking me to do something about this.

The opposition comes and says they are killing the fisheries. That is not a fact. That is rhetoric. We are delivering requests that Canadians have made to this and former governments over the years. We are responding in Bill C-38.

Obviously, I support the budget. I looked at some of the amendments. When we have 800 and some amendments we are not going to read through all of them, but I did look at some of them. I found it disappointing. It was blatantly obvious that what the opposition members were trying to do was not make the bill better. They would say we cannot make the bill better, so we have to scrap it, but they were going to try to amend it. Basically what they were doing was simply stalling everything they could. Of the amendments I read there was nothing really helpful to specific sections of the bill. They were all basically just trying to stall at every juncture. They were trying to change every point the government was trying to accomplish in the bill.

The opposition parties had their opportunity to go forward with their political high-tax, high-debt agenda. They offered their plan to Canadians in April 2011, and in May Canadians voted our Conservative government to a strong majority position in the House. Canadians wanted us to get the job done.

Some of the opposition members are suggesting we have gone too far. I chair a committee, and I sat through the last Parliament. Although I think most committees are working fairly well, and I will give the NDP and Liberals credit where it is due, in the last Parliament we would do a study and we would sit through the whole time and at the last possible moment they would come in and completely change the report, not to what we said, but they pushed their agenda through.

This here is not the type that tries to push something through. This was debated more than any other budget implementation bill in the past.

• (1640)

We were elected to govern and we intend to govern. We intend to govern in the best interests of all Canadians. It is a tough task. How are we going to satisfy everyone? The bill is not going to be stalled only for the sake of stalling.

Government Orders

A lot of governments are gridlocked right now. This government does not want to be gridlocked, but we do want strong, wholesome debate. We have had it; now let us move on with the vote.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my Conservative colleague talk about people in rural areas and the environment. He said he has heard from people in municipalities, councillors and so on, who told him to get rid of all the red tape. They did not want a guy from Calgary coming down to sign a piece of paper and go back. I hope the person from Calgary was not just coming in to sign a piece of paper. I hope he was doing his job and looking at whether the part about the environment was right or not. Is the member not worried about that?

People will feel free to do anything. Some will want to start a business, never mind the environment, never mind the red tape, never mind listening to the experts. They will just go ahead and do it.

The population will not accept that. People will not accept an environmental assessment not being done, and that is what the bill would do. Bill C-38 proposes to bypass any environmental assessment, which is not good for our planet and is not acceptable.

• (1645)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, let me assure my friend from the New Democratic Party that is not the government's intent. We would not support it if it meant there would be no environmental review, if it meant people could do whatever they wanted, as he has just suggested. I dare say the member would not find anyone on this side of the House who would accept that. That is not what this legislation proposes to do.

Bill C-38 would ensure that no conflicting departments would be doing separate reviews. When there is a project, there would be an environmental review, there would be an environmental assessment. Many of these deal with small culverts, small projects that in the past have been handcuffed. The red tape did not stall a lot of the projects, but it added a huge cost for our municipalities.

We want to see that environmental assessments are done, but not one environmental assessment and then another environmental assessment and then another department with an environmental assessment. We want to see one project, one assessment, and then we can proceed. That is how jobs are created, that is how an economy is kept strong, and that is how we encourage our municipalities to better the communities in which Canadians reside.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is true that environmental assessments were conducted at two levels, both provincially and federally, and that a number of departments were involved in the process. However, the federal departments had already been grouped under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

In cases where there are problems that fall exclusively under federal jurisdiction, for example with respect to the protection of fish species, will the provincial government, which wants to immediately launch a very specific project, be able to respect the environmental assessments that used to be conducted by the federal government?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be part of a government that is encouraged and proud of the significant steps it has taken to enhance responsible resource development.

Augustana, a small satellite university of the University of Alberta, is in Camrose in my riding. During the last election campaign many of the environmental students there stopped by my constituency office with questions for me. Some of them ended up being good supporters of mine. When I asked them where they would be working when they finished, most of them said they wanted to work for oil companies or resource companies so they could be certain that the proper environmental assessments and standards are adhered to. Most young environmental students do not end up working with some environmental group that protests every project to ever come along, regardless. Most of them want to work for resource companies so they can see that the wise environmental practices are carried out in those companies.

I want to assure the hon. member across the way that we are proud of what we want to do.

The member talked about the fishery. We want to see the fishery grow, but we do not necessarily want to see the department in downtown Calgary grow.

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in favour of Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. The budget we introduced on March 29 is a moderate budget that keeps us on a strong fiscal track to balance the budget by the 2015-16 fiscal year.

On the weekend I was reading a story, *Chicken Little*, to my young daughter. In the story, a leaf falls from a tree and lands on the little chicken's head, and the chicken thinks the sky is falling. My daughter was very intrigued by this story, and we started to talk a little about it. I was curious about the origins of the story.

We went on to Google, looked and did a little research. We found that there is such a thing as a Chicken Little syndrome. I have to say that the first thing I thought about when I read about Chicken Little syndrome was the NDP. I dug out a definition. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, Chicken Little syndrome is “one who warns of or predicts calamity especially without justification”.

That pretty much describes what the NDP is all about. It seems to be frozen in perturbation. What I mean by that is if we go back in the NDP history, back to J. S. Woodsworth, to Coldwell, to Douglas, to these great giants who were leaders, they—even Hazen Argue, the only NDPer ever appointed to the Senate, although he did switch to be a Liberal upon appointment—worked with the governments of the day. They were not destructive entities within the House. They did not oppose for the sake of opposing.

I had a number of calls from constituents over the end of last week and throughout the weekend. They said to me, “Mark, what is the opposition up to?”

Government Orders

When I was canvassing last year, on this side of the House we promised the people we would go to Ottawa and would sweat and bleed for them. We would work our hearts out for the people. We would not play games of process and procedure.

This is what the NDP does. The NDP and its Liberal partners stop us from doing the work of the people, the people who sent us here in a strong, stable, national Conservative majority government. The NDP members talk about how they did not have enough time to examine the budget. I sit on the finance committee, and we had 50 hours of debate on the budget. We had a subcommittee that looked into the budget for 20 hours.

If we combine the total hours of debate on the previous seven budgets, this budget has received twice as much debate. Absolutely, wow. The member for Burnaby—New Westminster consumed 13 hours reading Twitters from his mother, and he restricted 27 members—

• (1650)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. In all fairness, I love fantasy and fiction as much as anybody, but the member needs to be careful about what the member for Burnaby—New Westminster was talking about. It was the failure of the budget. I want that on the record. This member is just making things up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): That is not a point of order.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member across the way has just brought up this point of order, but in fact he constantly heckles, and I am having great difficulty hearing my own colleague. I would ask that he respect the parliamentary procedures of the House.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I was listening to him. That is why I stood up to tell him he had to correct the record, because he was making big—

• (1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please.

The hon. member for York Centre.

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, I will move on.

The budget is built on four pillars. One of them is trade. Since 2006, we on this side of the House have negotiated nine free trade agreements. We have a number of others in the hopper, free trade agreements that the NDP opposition opposes each and every time.

Free trade, as we all know, creates jobs, and Canadians want jobs. We have provided, since July 2009 and the end of the recession, 760,000 new jobs. We are the only country in the G8 that has recovered all of the jobs lost during the recession.

The second pillar is resource development. We are stripping away needless regulation, needless red tape, so that projects can get approved in a timely manner, because if they do not, the investment goes elsewhere.

The NDP does not care about that. They were down in Washington just a few months ago saying, “Forget about the oil sands. We think we should shut that down”.

The third is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please.

Before I go to the member for Timmins—James Bay, I would like to remind all hon. members that disagreeing with something that another member has said is not in itself a point of order. The last time the member rose on the facts that had been raised.

I am not prejudging this time. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the issue is about misrepresenting facts in Parliament.

That is what we are here to do. The Conservatives call us out all the time if they think we are off the line. I am asking him to speak truthfully, as opposed to misrepresenting facts in the House. That is something we all have to respect. We cannot just make things up and attribute them to people. That is an abuse of his position.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would ask all hon. members to obey the rules of Parliament. That said, disagreement over the facts is considered debate.

I would ask the hon. member for York Centre to continue.

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, the third pillar is major investments in research and development and the fourth is the immigration system. We are going to redesign the immigration system so that it meets the needs of the 21st century workforce here in Canada. It is going to meet labour needs.

There has been some talk about the OAS. The OAS is not an entitlement and it is not the CPP. It is a social program. We are sustaining the OAS for younger people so that when it comes to reap the benefits of OAS, it will be there for them.

I will read an extract that I found recently. I will attribute the source in a moment. It is called “Meeting Canada’s Demographic Challenge”:

The Canadian population is growing older—first, because our birth rate for the past three decades has been below replacement rate. And second, because the post-war baby boom is about to hit retirement age. The implication of this is significant—fewer workers supporting more seniors. By 2015, Canada’s domestic labour force will actually start to shrink.... This transformation entails everything from increased demands on health and other public services to potential skills shortages in key sectors across the country.

This is from the 2006 “Securing Canada’s Success” Liberal Party platform.

The Liberal Party claims that we do not have a demographic challenge; well, the Liberals seemed to recognize one six years ago.

It is clear that when we on this side of the House see opportunity, for us it is equality of opportunity. On the other side of the House, they see opportunity of condition, opportunity of outcome. We want to create jobs for Canadians, investment for Canadians and a quality of life for Canadians that is second to none in this world.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have pointed out that Bill C-38 is a real Trojan Horse. I would like to remind the hon. members of what a Trojan Horse originally was: it was a ruse to deceive an enemy. With Bill C-38, Canadians are being deceived.

Government Orders

This government claims that its budget focuses on job creation, but everything in the bill demonstrates the opposite. Last April, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that the Conservatives' austerity budget would result in the loss of 43,000 jobs and would slow Canada's economic recovery.

Can the hon. member tell us why he continues to talk a lot of nonsense about job creation when the outcome will clearly be a loss for our economy?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the opposition member is missing here. The World Economic Forum, the OECD, *Forbes* magazine and every recognized major economic institution around the world has said that Canada is the best place to do business, has the strongest economy of the G8 and is the strongest in job creation. There have been 760,000 net new jobs that have been created since July 2009. I really do not know what the opposition is missing here.

We have a plan that is working. Our Prime Minister is down at the G20 in Mexico right now, and world leaders are asking him what Canada's secret is.

I was in business before I got here. I was in Hong Kong and I was in the business of getting people to come in and speak. Two years ago, in Hong Kong, they wanted to know what Canada's secret was and why we were doing so well. They said they needed to know.

It is practical, on-the-ground business experience that the NDP certainly lacks. I encourage them to get some.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how this member and the member before him talked about Bill C-38 as a bill that has been here for hours of debate and that for that reason it should be passing. However, what the members did not point out is that the bill is fundamentally flawed.

Put simply, the fundamental flaw is that it is not a budget bill. Yes, on paper it is a budget bill, but in reality it brings in numerous changes to 60-plus pieces of legislation that the Conservative majority government is trying to sneak through the back door.

My question to the member is related to the member for Kootenay—Columbia. This Conservative member went to his constituents, sat down with them and then, after having a discussion, came up with the revelation that, yes, it is a bad bill. There might be a dozen or so Conservatives who agreed with that. The problem is that the Prime Minister will not allow those members the freedom to express themselves. In fact, he implies that the backbenchers did not have a say on the bill.

My question to the member is this: did he have a say in this bill before it came to the legislature? Did he consult with his constituents? Are they like the Prime Minister's constituents or like his colleague's from British Columbia?

Mr. Mark Adler: Mr. Speaker, let me just read out some acts: the Auditor General Act, Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada Act, Broadcasting Act, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador Additional Fiscal Equalization Offset Payments Act, Canadian Environmental Protection Act, Canada Post Corporation Act, Employment Insurance Act, Public Sector Pension Investment

Board Act, the Department of Human Resources Development Act, and there are many more.

What do they have in common? They were all amended in the Liberal budget of 2005.

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just because some people may say that the contents of this omnibus bill, Bill C-38, are admirable does not make the use of it any less offensive. Bill C-38 clearly is being used to slide past Parliament controversial amendments to a number of pieces of non-budgetary legislation. Equally important, if not more important, it was done to slide them past the Canadian public without allowing adequate scrutiny or due diligence. Let us be clear. The Conservatives are doing this so as to minimize the political damage to their government.

Let us consider for a moment a few items contained in Bill C-38 which on their own would have been problematic for the Conservative government.

Just one issue is the raising of the age of eligibility for old age security from 65 to 67. Had this change been given the airing it deserves, it clearly would have become a larger flashpoint with most Canadians than it had been already while neatly tucked inside Bill C-38. On that point, in my time in Parliament I have never seen such blundering and mishandling of a trial balloon as happened with the changes to OAS eligibility. It began in Davos when the PMO media notes contained a reference to a potential change to OAS. Then after the opposition questioned the minister daily for a full week, finally the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development gave indications there was some need for something to happen to OAS. Finally, after 10 days, the Minister of Finance spoke, saying something was likely to happen, but not before 2020 or 2025. Of course, during the time lag before anybody from government had the decency to respond, there was a firestorm from seniors that somehow their incomes would be cut. Then of course seniors got mad, as they learned their kids would have to work two additional years.

I remind government members that OAS is not a pension. OAS is a retirement security payment to protect seniors from literally starving. One has to ask what would have become of these changes had they been given stand-alone consideration in a single bill before the human resources committee.

Equally concerning to thousands of Canadians are the changes within Bill C-38 that move to make it harder for seasonal workers to claim EI on a repeating basis as their seasonal type of work demands.

Government Orders

I personally believe that the Conservatives' limiting the length of time environmental reviews of major construction projects can be drawn out may well be considered wise in Conservative circles, but I ask, does anybody here truly believe that the one-third of Bill C-38 that deals with the environment should not properly be in a bill or bills of its own? Having said this, I also believe the Conservatives have significantly underestimated Canadians' commitment to the environment. Surely no one in this House of Commons believes Canadians can be fooled simply because major environmental changes are tucked inside an omnibus budget bill.

The very existence of Bill C-38 suggests that the Conservatives believe Canadians are so dumb as to not realize this is all being done solely to minimize public awareness and avoid criticism. This Herculean act of misjudgment, will certainly come back to haunt each and every Conservative who votes for Bill C-38. Just as the Conservatives drove the agenda on the gun registry for 20 years, using it over and over to raise millions of dollars, Bill C-38 has now handed their opposition the very same type of issue going forward to the 2015 election.

In a solely political sense, I would have to say that the Conservatives' use of Bill C-38 in such a comprehensive manner is an especially terrible use of an omnibus law-making bill. Bill C-38 contains in excess of 750 clauses and amends nearly 70 laws.

One area alone affected by Bill C-38 which I believe has yet to strike home with Canadians is the changes in the oversight of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS.

● (1705)

Bill C-38 removes the office of the Inspector General of CSIS and passes the responsibility of that office to the Security Intelligence Review Committee and the minister. Canadians, at least the ones my age, will remember when CSIS was formed in 1984. It was formed because a so-called dirty trick squad of the RCMP had crossed the line and was ultimately disbanded. When CSIS was created, the position of Inspector General was created to avoid a similar failure at the organization as the one that had happened with the RCMP.

In the shadowy world of counter-intelligence and in light of the shadow of the 9/11 tragedy, the oversight of CSIS is all the more essential. It should not be surprising to anyone in this place that a government that wants to hide its massive changes to Canada's laws on protecting the environment from Canadians in an omnibus bill just might want CSIS' secrets to remain in that secretive world.

What is amazing to watch is how so many good people across the way have allowed themselves to become party to the omnibus bill. How can they so easily set aside in their minds what is right and proper about the parliamentary system? How can they take partisanship to such a new low? They do not have to agree or even remotely accept what the opposition parties think, but they have decided that their opinion is so solid and so right, that the changes contained in Bill C-38 are so urgent that they must forgo proper committee and expert scrutiny.

The parliamentary system evolved for a single purpose and that was to protect the rights of the Canadian people, rights first enshrined by the Magna Carta nearly 1,000 years ago.

The consolidation of power within the PMO is not a new thing in this place. Pierre Trudeau used it. Mike Harris used it in Ontario. Does anybody recall the minister of education in Ontario, John Snobelen, in the mid-1990s? He was the minister who was caught on camera saying his government had to create a crisis in education in order to advance its right-wing agenda.

It is strange how those who evoked the great ideals of government accountability and transparency during the 2006 election are violating those very promises with Bill C-38.

Parliamentary language rules prevent me from declaring the Conservatives for what they have become, but I can say that Canadians are already doing just that. Of course, instead of humbly accepting well-earned criticism and withdrawing Bill C-38, we will shortly see them follow through with its passage, all the while hiding a gross abandonment of their parliamentary responsibilities to the Canadians whom they represent behind the bill's title: jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. That title is one of the most offensive misuses of that particular language ever seen in this place.

Even if some changes to the environmental law proposed in Bill C-38 may be warranted, that fact has not been established. Yes, it would be inconvenient for the government to deal with its proposed changes in a public session with expert witnesses. Would that be because the Conservatives cannot get experts to back their assertions, or could it be because expert scientists already clearly do not support the Conservatives' views on global warming and the degradation of our children's environment is okay because it generates enough profit?

When the official opposition puts the hard questions to this group of Conservatives, we often hear them bellow and roar a variety of responses that may in the short term relieve their stress but do little to relieve their responsibility for the travesty they are taking part in here today.

There is a mantra we hear that big government is bad, that it spends too much, that low taxes are the only way. The same people will say they always pay their bills and that they are honest citizens. They may well be, but they are wrong about a couple of things. Canadians are willing to pay for the services they receive. They simply want transparency and accountability for those costs.

Does that sound familiar? It sounds like 2006 again. It should. Governments, it has been said, are not defeated; they, in their actions, defeat themselves. Just as the gun registry bill led the Liberals to their defeat in 2006, I predict that Bill C-38 will become the turning point that leads to the end of the Conservative government in 2015.

Government Orders

•(1710)

Can any of the Conservatives across the way tell me how changing the access to EI would help Canada's unemployed? Can anyone across the way tell me how removing the Auditor General's examination of 12 agencies would somehow help Canadians? Can anyone tell me how forcing Canadians to work two years longer would help them? Can anyone across the way tell me how changing the environmental laws to reduce environmental assessments a hundredfold would somehow help Canadians?

This Conservative government, with its reckless excessive corporate tax cuts and the HST cut, has taken \$30 billion a year out of the income of the federal government.

I recall when I first started my working career what was being said was "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay". I lived my working career by that saying, and I still do.

Because I believe in health care, because I believe in a good retirement security system that protects our seniors, because I believe we are responsible for those who cannot take care of themselves, I have never once complained about paying my taxes, but I have complained about how they have been spent over the years.

Yes, I support government accountability and transparency. The question that remains to be seen is if the Conservatives in this House still do.

•(1715)

I will move now to a summary. Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, goes far beyond tax and monetary measures to make changes to dozens of policy areas, including the environment, natural resources and human resources.

All of the opposition parties were clear in the finance committee. We believed we should not have been asked to vote on a budget bill that grants cabinet the power to make far-reaching regulatory changes as seen within Bill C-38. Bill C-38 has 400-plus pages. I want everyone watching at home today to clearly understand that this is just the beginning. There will be yet another budget bill in the fall.

Here are a few points. First, there is a near total environmental overhaul in Bill C-38 that does not belong in a budget bill. The government wants a one project, one review environmental system so it is repealing the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and replacing it with the Canadian environmental assessment act 2012. I want to stress that it would reduce assessments a hundredfold. That type of decision does not belong with the finance committee.

The bill also sets out limits for completion of reviews. The minister would have the power to shut down a review panel if he thought it would not finish on time. What is on time? On time is when we give the proper study to protect the environment for our children and our grandchildren. How can anyone say that this belongs in a budget bill? This particular type of decision needs the due diligence supplied by a comprehensive review by experts and by the committee that is tasked with such a review, not five minutes of questions at finance committee.

One day in finance committee when we were reviewing Bill C-38, we had witnesses. One wanted to talk about genetically modified seeds, another one the environment, another one the fisheries, and it went on. We had seven people sitting there. Each one had a serious topic. We got to ask five minutes of questions. Where do we even start with that comprehensive panel? We went through panel after panel with the same type of problem.

Consider the EI definition for suitable work. That does not belong before the finance committee. Anyone here clearly knows it should have gone before the human resources committee. Bill C-38 would remove the definition of suitable work from the Employment Insurance Act and give the federal cabinet the power to create new regulations about what constitutes suitable work and reasonable efforts to work. The bill gives no details about what the new criteria would be.

How does the decision on removing the oversight of the Auditor General belong in a finance bill? After Bill C-38, the Auditor General would no longer be required to annually audit several agencies, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Northern Pipeline Agency and the Canadian Polar Commission. These agencies would submit annual financial reports to the minister instead. I said this at committee and I will say it again here today: how does putting the fox in charge of the henhouse create jobs and prosperity?

Backlogged immigration applications would be eliminated. Among the amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, there is a move to wipe out a backlog of 280,000 applications under the skilled worker program. Skilled workers are particularly what western Canada is screaming for. That list would be wiped out. Applications made before 2008 would be deleted. The Conservatives are gracious though, they would refund the fee. They have just taken away people's dreams of coming to Canada and being a part of and contributing to this great country.

•(1720)

At the finance committee, we heard a very compelling intervention on these immigration changes from the member for Newton—North Delta. She asked the committee to consider, and I will ask the people here today, "How do these changes which will destroy the dreams of people who trusted in Canada somehow create jobs and prosperity? How in the world can this be justified within a budget bill with the claim that it will improve our prosperity?"

The Fisheries Act changes contained in Bill C-38 do not belong at a finance committee. Where is our expertise at finance to deal with the fisheries? It is very clear where that belongs.

Government Orders

Bill C-38 would shut down several government-funded groups and agencies, including the National Council of Welfare, the Public Appointments Commission, Rights and Democracy, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal, and Assisted Human Reproduction Canada.

It would create a new social security tribunal to hear appeals on decisions made by old age security, employment insurance and other programs. It would create a Shared Services Canada department.

When we stop to consider the breadth of what is happening here, if we really pause and look at the 400-plus pages, the 700 clauses, there are areas of the bill that require expertise in given areas that are not areas of responsibility of the finance committee, areas that clearly belong with human resources, immigration and other places.

What is happening in this place is the removal of the trust that Canadians have given us, each one of us. We were all elected to come here for one purpose: to stand up and scrutinize the government, and to work with the government to provide the due diligence on governmental laws and legislation necessary to ensure that the changes being made are the best possible changes for the people.

We hear members on the other side talk about working together. In the same motion they turn around and limit debate or they come out with a bill like this. A bill like this hand-ties all members of Parliament to the place where they cannot do the due diligence that they are responsible to do. I ask the members on the other side of this House to reconsider what is being done, to stand up for Canadians they claim to support and represent, and do the due diligence.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked about the changes to EI in Bill C-38 and how they would benefit the people who are collecting employment insurance benefits. Bill C-38 would increase the ceiling at which earnings are clawed back from the benefits on EI. Someone who is on claim, officially unemployed but doing a job not quite at the level he or she was employed at previously, can still earn money and earn more money as a consequence of the bill.

How is being able to earn more money while on claim a bad thing? How is it not a benefit to the employee?

• (1725)

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, it may shock the member, but I actually think that is a good provision. I think there are a number of good provisions contained in Bill C-38.

However, because they are masked in the fashion they are, because they have been slid under the table where people cannot give them the scrutiny, we will never know. The provisions are not allowed to go to the appropriate committee to be looked at, for us to do due diligence. So we will never know. What is worse is that Canadians will not know until it hits them.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the issue of the ability of members to scrutinize this legislation. I thought the member's comments were well placed.

The member will be familiar with an exchange of correspondence between the Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Clerk of the Privy

Council. The Parliamentary Budget Officer asked for financial and economic data for 82 departments and agencies. He was blown off by 74 of them, and 8 responded.

Now the Parliamentary Budget Officer is having to take the government to court to fulfill the government's Bill C-2 in 2006, the accountability legislation. The ironies are resplendent. We have spent more than 24 hours voting in the last week. We were not only tired, but now we are also voting blind. How is it that members of Parliament, let alone the PBO, can scrutinize legislation, if in fact the government just blows off the Parliamentary Budget Officer?

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a good point. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is at arm's-length from this place. He was put there by the Conservative government to help with its accountability and transparency and it shut the door on him. He is closer to the Canadian people now than he is to the government, because he is standing on guard for the Canadian people.

When people talk about deregulation and red tape, I am reminded of my favourite country singer Kris Kristofferson who has a song entitled *The Law Is for Protection of the People*. It is time for the Conservative government to follow the law that it created.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his fine work in the House of Commons. I would like to ask him a question on OAS. All of us in the House know that only the poorest of the poor seniors are entitled to OAS. Even the deniers on the other side of the House know that is a fact.

Why does the hon. member think that the Prime Minister went to Davos to announce the change to the OAS and did not campaign on that issue during the last federal election?

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, I do not profess to read the mind of the Prime Minister, but I do understand that the Prime Minister is somewhat of an expert on tactics.

Anybody who considers this change understands that the Canadian people would be strongly concerned by it. People now under the age of 54 would have to work two years longer. People on Ontario disability who would have received a modest boost at the age of 65 would not receive it until 67. People who, God help them, have lost their jobs and are on welfare would have to wait two more years to get it. Would the member want to raise that in Canada?

The reality is that the total, abysmal mishandling of that situation and the fear that it caused Canadians from coast to coast is reprehensible. The reality is that it took 14 days for the government to come to the House with a clear message. Seniors had two weeks. Some misunderstood the message and thought they were going to lose their pensions. That was a total disregard for their feelings.

Government Orders

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I do not often agree, but we sit on finance committee together and I certainly appreciate his work there.

I want to focus more on the NDP's argument that certain issues only belong in certain committees. If we are dealing with OAS, we have to deal with human resources committee. If we are dealing with environment, we deal with environment committee. Finance committee should not be dealing with these issues.

As my colleague knows, the budget implementation act follows the budget and the budget follows prebudget consultations, which have just started again at finance committee. When we do prebudget consultations, we hear about OAS, retirement savings, employment insurance, and we hear from all sorts of environmental groups. Does my colleague think we should restrict the prebudget consultations and not hear from any of these groups? Over 400 of them presented at finance committee. They expect their views to be reflected in the prebudget report, then in the budget and then in the budget implementation act. If they are restricted at this end in terms of which committee they should go to, is my colleague now suggesting that we change the whole gamut with respect to prebudget consultations and make them more restrictive?

• (1730)

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that those briefs we hear at the prebudget hearings that apply to other areas, like fisheries, be shared with those committees. I would suggest that any legislation that comes out of those hearings should be the prerogative of the group within that ministry, with that minister, to put forward.

Finance committee should not be the catch-all for everything. An omnibus bill like this does not serve Canadians well. The reality is that it needs more due diligence than we can provide within the context of finance committee. Many hours of work were done, but the limited focus that we could apply did not allow us to dig down in the manner we should have. Anybody can judge whether or not our questions are of good quality or low quality, but it belongs with the expertise of fisheries committee, or it belongs at HRDC committee. It does not belong in finance.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Crowfoot took the position that none of the amendments were meant to improve the act. I am picking up on a point also made by the hon. member who just spoke.

I want to make it clear that the amendments that I put forward honoured the government's intent to streamline and shorten the hearings. My amendments proposed to continue the 24 month limit on a panel review of an environment project. I added an important amendment. If the proponent is dragging out the time, the clock stops. A large oil company, for instance, could not say it did not get its environmental assessment report done on time, it took 18 months, so the rest of the intervenors have 6 months to study the project.

Much is wrong with Bill C-38. One of the most egregious things is the failure of the House of Commons, with only 12 hours of witnesses before the subcommittee that dealt with both environmental assessment and the Fisheries Act, to even scratch the surface of the damage that will be done.

Mr. Wayne Marston: Mr. Speaker, I am in agreement with the member on this point. There are a lot of disadvantages to sitting as one person from a party, but one of the advantages is that the member was allowed to give those kinds of proposals in the House.

We gave over 61 very focused amendments at the finance committee. Each and every one were defeated by government members. Again, if we had people who were more expert on the given topic, on the given part of the legislation, they may well have come to a different determination. We had people who were focused on putting through a particular bill, and that is their job.

However, the job of an MP goes much further. The job of an MP is to do the honest due diligence. Part of the job that we are all failing on these days is working together to make legislation better. We have to take down the walls in this place. We have to start to work together. It is not what comes out of the PMO that runs the Parliament of Canada. It has to be the work of this body.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and contribute to the debate on the third reading of Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act.

Bill C-38 would implement the measures announced in the March budget speech. My comments this afternoon will focus on several of the themes contained in that budget, and those are the need to return to fiscal discipline, reduce the size and cost of government, reduce deficits and eventually pay off the Canadian debt which is in excess of \$590 billion and counting.

Certainly the Canadian economy is the envy of the industrialized world, with healthy job growth, a manageable rate of unemployment and comparatively low levels of debt. However, this is not to state that Canadians can be complacent about either our debt or our economy. The recovery is fragile and the situation in Europe is even more so.

As countries in Europe, specifically Greece, Spain, Italy and even Great Britain, have demonstrated, growth in public sector spending in excess of growth of the economy cannot continue forever. High deficits will inevitably lead to higher interest rates and exchange rates, capital leaving the country and higher taxes in the future.

High debt mortgages our country's future and imposes higher taxes on future generations that are forced to pay for the current borrowing. This is the ultimate violation of the principle of no taxation without representation.

I forgot to mention at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

Government Orders

Several months ago, I attended a conference in Ottawa put on by the Manning Institute, Preston Manning's Conservative think tank. The Manning Centre has published credible research indicating that a vast majority of Canadians are becoming less dependent on government. In fact, 66% of Canadians expect less of their government, except in core areas of government services such as in public safety. Canadians are increasingly becoming more reliant on themselves, their families and volunteer organizations such as churches and as a result they are becoming less reliant on government.

Sadly, part of this is due to Canadians' perception of government's inability to actually solve any of their problems. As Ronald Reagan famously said, "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help". Regardless, I believe that self-reliance is a positive trend.

Stimulus spending notwithstanding, the cost and size of the federal government is bloated and I would suggest bloated unnecessarily. Between 1999 and 2009, the Canadian population increased by 11%, but the federal government's civilian workforce grew by 35%. Meanwhile, public-sector compensation grew by 59% as compared to only 30% in the private sector. Canada is fortunate to have an outstanding civil service. However, if balanced budgets are to be achieved, all sustainable trends must be addressed.

Any business which has experienced human resource shortages in its own business, and we have a lot of them in Alberta, knows all too well the competition from the public sector, with attractive wages, benefits and pensions, adds to the difficulties a private business has in attracting and retaining qualified labour. We simply cannot continue to grow government in the way that we have been.

I will talk about some specific areas where the federal government must engage in cost containment to avoid a system that becomes so expensive that it will eventually collapse under its own weight. These costs would be contained by measures taken in Bill C-38.

The first is the old age security system. The old age security system is funded through tax revenues and is premised on there being enough taxpayers to support retirees. However, by 2030, the number of Canadians over the age of 65 will increase from today's 4.7 million to 9.3 million. Two demographic trends that exacerbate the issue are that Canadians are living longer and our fertility rates have steadily been declining. When OAS was first introduced, life expectancy for Canadians was 71. Today it is 82. Consequently, the cost of OAS will increase from \$36 billion per year in 2010 to \$108 billion by 2030. Meanwhile, by that same year, the ratio of taxpayer to retiree will be 2:1, down from its current 4:1. This trend is clearly unsustainable and must be addressed now in order to avoid a catastrophic collapse of the entire system.

Second, Canada must seriously look at many of its social safety net mechanisms, given their increased cost and ultimate unaffordability. In my view, no problem is more troubling than our current system of employment insurance.

• (1735)

In Alberta and Saskatchewan employers cannot fill tens of thousands of high-paying jobs and are often forced to seek expensive temporary foreign workers to fill everything from skilled jobs in the

construction and pipeline industries to service jobs in the hospitality and restaurant industries.

However, in other parts of the country hundreds and thousands of Canadians are collecting employment insurance, many for parts of the year, every year, for decades. In fact, employment insurance, by its very design, incents unemployed workers to do just that: to go on and off employment insurance rather than seek out stable employment elsewhere.

In the areas of the country with the highest unemployment, the qualifying period for employment insurance is the lowest. This, in my view, represents one of the worst failures of the modern welfare state. In an attempt to reduce income equality and regional disparity, the government has actually created a system which discourages human resources for moving to parts of the economy that are operating more efficiently.

Those who can work should work. Bill C-38 makes it clear that unemployed Canadians are expected to find a job when and where it is reasonable to do so. Safety net programs such as EI were designed as temporary insulators from unemployment, not as a substitute for employment. Dignity is enhanced not diminished when reliance on EI is replaced by gainful employment.

I just want to mention a word about environmental protection because much misinformation has been proffered concerning the government's concern or alleged lack of concern for environmental protection.

Clearly, Canadians deserve the cleanest air, water and environment possible. However, Canadians also value jobs and a functioning economy. In fact, over the next 10 years, more than 500 proposed new projects, representing potentially \$500 billion in new investment, will be under consideration in Canada.

Currently, developers undertaking major projects must navigate a complex often repetitive maze of regulatory requirements and processes. However, by providing predictable timelines for project approval, Bill C-38 would streamline and rationalize the environmental approval process. This is key. Canadians should not confuse quantity and length of the environmental approval process with a quality environmental approval process. Bill C-38 would prevent long delays that kill potential jobs, investment and stall economic growth for projects that would not have any negative environmental impact.

Bill C-38 fulfills the government's commitment to practise fiscal discipline and return to balanced budgets. Although short-term debt is tolerable and sometimes even necessary, excessive long-term debt is incompatible with long-term economic growth.

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Currently, \$30.9 billion, almost \$31 billion, or 11¢ of every tax dollar, is paid on public debt charges, otherwise known as interest. Accordingly if we had no public debt, and therefore no interest charges, we would be running essentially balanced if not surplus budgets. Alternatively, for those members how are interested in program spending or social engineering, had there been no public debt, there would be an additional \$31 billion available for spending on whatever programs are important to them.

Government cannot, in the long term, sustain economic growth through public spending. Canadians spending left unchecked has not led to economic growth anywhere. It is quite the opposite. Extreme public debt has led to crises in Greece, Italy and Portugal, economic downturn and political deadlock in the United States and extreme austerity measures in Great Britain.

However, some Canadians believe that we are somehow immune from such basic economic realities. Worse, there appears to be a real disconnect between government and the taxpayers who we represent.

Fiscal Conservatives understand that the government has no money except for that which it taxes from its citizens and corporations. Fiscal spendthrifts erroneously believe that the government magically like fairy dust has resources of its own and therefore can generously spend on all projects and all programs without consequence. Government does not create wealth. It merely redistributes wealth. It only spends resources taken out of the private economy.

Government programs and Public Works can and do sustain demand in the short term, but they also monopolize available resources, taking them away from private business and resulting in the eventual slowdown of our economy. Accordingly the best long-term economic stimulus is for government to reduce its spending, pay down its debt and let resources be allocated in a sustainable method through private investment.

The great Margaret Thatcher once said, “And, you know, there is no such thing as a society”. She went on to say:

There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour...people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations, because there is no such thing as an entitlement unless someone has first met an obligation...

• (1740)

The next time a member of Parliament asks if a certain program or project is a necessity and affordable, we should ask two questions: Who is entitled? Who has the obligation to pay? We will soon learn that the answer is one and the same.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, part of this budget is streamlining environmental assessment. I know his riding sits at one end of a pipeline and my riding sits at the other end of a pipeline. I wonder if the member, like many of his colleagues, supports the new Kinder Morgan pipeline running from Edmonton to Burnaby?

• (1745)

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows I represent a riding, the northwest part of Edmonton and parts of St. Albert, which is immediately north and west of Edmonton.

Pipelines are, of course, the conduit to how Alberta gets its energy resources to market. Subject to environmental approval, which is a key condition, subject to there being no adverse consequences to the environment, I support pipeline projects. I support Keystone and I support gateway. I support any pipeline that safely and economically can get Alberta's energy resources to the market.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the passage I heard during the speech was simply to say program spending or social engineering.

The first question is a two-part question. Does the member consider health care or even public broadcasting as two examples of social engineering?

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Mr. Speaker, I believe that health care is a service that Canadians demand and expect, and that all governments are inclined and, at this point, legally obligated to provide.

When I referred to social engineering, I certainly did not have health care at the top of my mind. As the hon. member will know, this government has formulated a new formula with respect to the health care accelerator that goes to the end of this decade. I forget the exact details, but it grows by 6% for a few years and then by the rate of GDP after that.

Health care, I believe, and I think most members believe, is a human service that all Canadians expect and that all governments, including this one, will provide to Canadians.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for his intervention.

The jobs, growth and long-term prosperity bill would implement our budget. The document is 490-odd pages. I would expect a budget implementation bill to be more than 12 pages long.

Hidden in here, oh goodness, let us look at page 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, et cetera, responsible resource development. That was no surprise. No wonder it is going to be debated in a budget implementation bill.

Could the member comment on the importance of the responsible resource development and how it is no surprise we have been debating this since March 29?

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Mr. Speaker, the budget implementation bill is subtitled, “the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act”.

As the member knows, and as most members know, the Canadian economy is diversified. Currently one of the big strengths of the Canadian economy and the part that insulated Canada from much of the worst of the recession in 2008 was the energy resources largely, but not exclusively, located in western Canada.

Government Orders

Responsible resource development, concomitant with environmental protection, is a big factor within the government's response to dealing with a fragile economy, and therefore there should be no surprise in my view that that is contained within this legislation.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if Canadians want clean water drink and clean air to breathe, why would the government remove human health from the definition of environmental effects to be studied in an environmental assessment? The only study now, according to the government, is for fish, birds and species at risk.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my comments, one should not confuse a quantity and length of environmental regulation with quality of environmental regulation. One can have a thorough, complete and fulsome environmental debate in front of one tribunal as opposed to having a number of piecemeal tribunals looking at different parts of the puzzle.

I would suggest that, at the end of the day, having one comprehensive review will lead to a more clear and consistent result than having numerous, voluminous and often repetitive processes.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to Canada's economic action plan 2012 through the budget implementation act, Bill C-38. I thank the hon. member for Edmonton—St. Albert for sharing his time with me today.

Canada is emerging from the global economic recession. The economy's strengths provide an opportunity for the government to take significant actions today that will fuel the next wave of job creation and position Canada for a secure and prosperous future. Economic action plan 2012 sets out a comprehensive agenda to bolster Canada's fundamental strengths and address important challenges confronting the economy over the long run.

Specifically, this plan supports entrepreneurs, innovators and world-class research. Our government will increase investments in research and development and in streamlining and enhancing the scientific research and experimental development tax incentive program, including shifting from indirect tax incentives to more direct support for innovative private sector businesses. We will also enhance the access to venture capital financing by high-growth companies so they can have the capital they need to create jobs and grow.

Further, we are making changes in Bill C-38 to ensure responsible resource development so that Canada may take advantage of the natural resource opportunity we have that benefits all regions of the country, including Mississauga. Many businesses rely on a strong and responsible resource sector to sell their goods and services. By creating an efficient regulatory system, we can provide effective protection of the interests of Canadians while minimizing the burden on business.

The city of Mississauga is one of the most multicultural cities in the world. We have residents from hundreds of countries of origin who call Mississauga home, and we are happy to have them. What is even more exciting is that many of these people work in companies that do business around the world, rely on strong trade relationships and provide import and export services worldwide. That is why I am

very pleased that our government has the most ambitious trade expansion plan in Canadian history.

We know that free, fair and open trade is good for Canadian business. We know that Canadians can compete with the best in the world and we can win. We know that signing free trade agreements with countries around the globe give Canadians fair and better access to international markets.

I am pleased to see that we are reforming the immigration system to place a strong emphasis on skilled workers, investors and job creators who want to come to Canada and make a strong economic contribution. The temporary foreign worker program will be realigned to better meet labour market demands and we are making significant improvements to the foreign credential recognition process.

I am also pleased to report that Bill C-38 extends the hiring credit for small business for another year, providing up to \$1,000 for one year to encourage the hiring of new employees.

Like every Canadian family, the federal government, too, must relook at how it spends hard-earned taxpayer money and constantly ensure both value for money and spending on the most important priorities. This budget focuses on eliminating waste in the internal operations of government and making government leaner and more efficient, totalling about \$5.2 billion in ongoing savings. This represents just 2% of total program spending by 2016-17. With this and other initiatives, I am pleased to report that we remain on track to balance the budget over the medium term as promised.

Canada must ensure that its social programs are not only relevant for the times but also cost-effective for taxpayers. Bill C-38 proposes changes to strengthen and support the employment insurance program and old age security.

• (1750)

With respect to OAS, no government in recent memory has done more to support Canadian seniors than this one. I was pleased, in the first budget on which I was able to vote in this House, that our government brought in the largest one time increase in the guaranteed income supplement in over 25 years. Further, our government continues to provide support to the old age security program to existing recipients and those near retirement at current levels with no reductions or changes whatsoever.

Government Orders

However, we have a responsibility to ensure that the OAS system is protected for future generations and not just simply pass the buck to some other government down the road. That is why we are moving forward with a prudent, responsible and proactive change to the OAS by slowly raising the age of entitlement from 65 to 67 by 2029. The number of Canadians over 65 will increase, from 4.7 million today to 9.3 million by 2030. The cost of OAS will rise from \$36 billion to \$108 billion. Meanwhile, the number of taxpayers who will pay for OAS will go from four today to two in 20 years. Even though this decision may not be popular, it is simply the right thing to do to ensure the long-term sustainability of the OAS system for generations to come.

This budget also continues its support for families and communities. It would improve health-related tax treatment under the GST-HST, strengthen Canada's food safety system, provide enhanced support for the victims' fund, improve the wage earner protection fund and improve the registered disability savings program.

I will conclude by quoting the Minister of Finance in his budget address of March 29:

We see Canada for what it is and what it can be—a great, good nation, on top of the world, the True North strong and free. Our government has been inspired by this vision from the beginning. Today we step forward boldly, to realize it fully—hope for our children and grandchildren; opportunity for all Canadians; a prosperous future for our beloved country.

I am pleased to report to the House that I will be supporting Bill C-38 at third reading and ensuring that economic action plan 2012, jobs, growth and long-term prosperity, becomes a reality.

• (1755)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it a bit strange listening to all of this, especially when the Parliamentary Budget Office said that there was no financial or budgetary reason to make changes to the OAS, and past ministers, including Conservatives, are saying that attacks on the environmental assessment is just wrong and stop.

Then I heard my colleague say that hitting the delete button on close to 300,000 skilled workers would actually make improvements in bringing more skilled workers into this country.

How does my colleague think hitting the delete button on 287,000 skilled workers who have waited in line and have played by the rules made by the government would help provinces like Alberta and B.C. get the skilled workers they need right now.

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that this government inherited a system that was a complete mess from the previous Liberal government that had played the game of, “We promise you a spot. We promise you a job in Canada. Just sign up and we'll get it processed”. It just did not happen.

We have had a number of years now where we have had to deal with the problem. It has grown. We made a decision, as a government, that we would reassess the foreign worker program, that we would redo it, start it over again and allow people who want to reapply to do so right away and have their application processed in a timely manner. It was completely unfair to keep hundreds of people on a waiting list that was not getting any better because of the previous government's mismanagement of the file.

• (1800)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just finished reading *The Guardian*. I do not know if my colleague reads it or not, but it talks about the urgency around the world to get a new environment agreement. This is a British newspaper, but it specifically mentioned Canada as a country that cannot be trusted because of the Conservative government's attitude. *The Guardian* talks about how the Conservatives break international agreements and have a reputation now of undermining environmental standards. We see that all through this budget.

I want to concentrate specifically on the decision to attack the Freshwater Institute. Not only Canadian scientists but international scientists have decried that as an attack on science that is going to undermine our capacity to manage our freshwater resources. The government has shut down the round table on the environment. However, we now find out that it is going to cost millions to actually shut the program down, so my question to my hon. colleague is this: why would the government spend millions to shut down a world-class program when for less it could keep it open? Where is the fiscal sense?

Mr. Brad Butt: Mr. Speaker, part of our government's review of various agencies, boards and commissions was to make sure that those organizations and the services being provided were actually doing what they were mandated to do and to make sure that what they were doing in 2012 was still relevant.

What we found with many of these agencies, especially the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, was that after 25 years, the mandate that the organization had over that period of time was not reflective of the needs and advice that we as a government, and the general public, wanted in 2012. As a result, yes, some decisions were made to close some things or to reduce their services, and in others to create new, purposed bodies that would make more sense and have more relevance to 2012.

That is the package. Obviously you folks do not support it. We believe it is the right way for Canada to move forward in an efficient and effective way to continue to deliver strong environmental sustainability to the people of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is the hon. government House leader rising on a point of order?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table documents that are the government's responses to Questions Nos. 642, 644 to 649, 651 and 652.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The House thanks the hon. House leader for the intervention and for the tabling of said documents.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on budget Bill C-38.

Government Orders

I wish to advise you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

[*English*]

When our Conservative colleague was talking about some of the panels or organizations that the Conservatives had stopped giving money to on the environment, the simple reason is that if they criticize the Prime Minister, that is it; they lose their funding.

The Prime Minister went to another country and said clearly that if somebody criticizes the government's work, they would lose the funding the government gives them. That is the only plain answer. There is no other answer.

This is a government that does not like to be criticized. It is as simple as that. Canadians know it, and they will make a decision one day on who they want to run the country.

[*Translation*]

The problem with Bill C-38 is that it is a budget bill that contains a lot of things that have nothing to do with the budget.

According to this government, the previous government passed things in its budgets that had nothing to do with budgetary matters, but just because one government has done it does not make it right. Why have a budget bill if all sorts of things are going to be hidden in it?

I am sure that I am not the only one who has not read the budget's 421 pages. Few members of the House can have read it, not even government members. This budget hides all kinds of things. One day, people are going to wake up and realize what it all means.

I would like to bring up a number of points. The Conservatives say that 50 hours to support or to attack the budget are enough. They feel that it is plenty of time, but it is funny that hon. members on the Standing Committee on Official Languages have been studying the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality since September.

Take the 150th anniversary in 2017. Committee members have been studying the 150th anniversary celebrations since September.

In this case, the Conservatives have introduced 70 amendments to existing laws. I will give a few examples, for instance, the Employment Insurance Act. In the past, if there were changes to EI, they would usually be studied by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Thus, people in industry and workers across the country would come before the committee as witnesses and tell us how they would be affected by these changes. For example, with this bill, people will have to travel an hour from their homes if work is available. The government will be reasonable, it seems: refusal would depend on the job being suited to the worker, and that sort of thing.

Moreover, the government is getting rid of the board of referees. I am not sure if people understand this completely: 1,000 people across Canada sit on the boards of referees that decide whether the Employment Insurance Commission has made a good or bad decision. EI claimants have always had the fundamental right to appear before a board if they have been denied EI benefits.

Each board of referees is made up of three people: one represents the employer, one the employees and the third is supposed to be independent.

● (1805)

These people examine all the facts before them and decide whether or not the commission has made a mistake. If, like the commission, the board of referees rejects a claim, then the employee can appeal to an umpire. Conversely, if the board of referees agrees with the employee, then the commission can appeal to an umpire.

It is a transparent system where people can seek justice and accomplish something. The government is now doing away with the board of referees and the umpires. It is in Bill C-38.

Are the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada—who rises every day to tell us how good the employment insurance system is—and the Conservative government doing justice to workers covered by a program that belongs to workers and employers? The government does not give a single penny to the program. Now that the penny is being eliminated, we will be saying that the government does not give a single nickel to this program. It is paid for by the employees and employers.

They pay for insurance in the event of job losses. The government is now eliminating the board of referees and umpires and replacing them with 38 people who it will appoint. Honestly, that scares me.

I remember that, when the Mulroney government made changes in 1988 and in the 1990s, Canadians took to the streets. They did not accept the changes of Brian Mulroney's Conservative government. I remember that, in 1996, when Jean Chrétien was in power, Canadians did not accept the changes. They took to the streets.

We can imagine what it will be like when there are only 38 people in Canada to handle these cases. They will never be able to take care of all the cases deemed inadmissible by commission officials.

Conservative MPs are going to wake up when they get numerous calls to their offices from people who will be telling them that they are not entitled to employment insurance benefits and who will be wanting to know what their MP intends to do. I am eager to see how the Conservative MPs will respond to those people. If they do not do justice by them, they will then wonder why people are taking to the streets.

The other aspect concerns the age of eligibility for old age security, which is increasing from 65 to 67. I listened to what my Conservative colleague said.

● (1810)

[*English*]

He said the Conservative government does not want to pass the buck to somebody else or the next generation and that we have to look after the retirement of people from 65 to 67 to make sure we have money for them. Well, it has been proven that there will be money for their retirement, and the Conservatives are saying they do not want to pass the buck? They will be passing the buck to the provinces.

Government Orders

The people who really need the old age pension are the ones who do not have any pension. They did not work for an employer that gave them a pension plan. Many worked hard physical jobs in a number of areas. As an example, I have seen women working in fish plants where there are 3,000 people working in one area. They can take their retirement at 65, and I honestly cannot see them working until the age of 67.

[Translation]

People who work in factories, for instance, do not have pension funds when it comes time to retire. There are no pension funds for these people. Who will be hit even harder? The women who work in these jobs. These are jobs without pensions. These people will not be able to retire, and the government is deciding that they will continue working until they are 67. If they cannot continue working, they will have to turn to social assistance, and the provinces will be the ones to pay.

The government says that it does not want to pass the cost off to future generations, but it is passing it off to the provinces. The provinces do not have the resources to assume the cost.

All of that is hidden in Bill C-38. The government is absolutely not honest. When it talks about creating 720,000 jobs one day, 740,000 jobs another day or 760,000 jobs yet another day, the government is not talking about the 19,000 jobs it is eliminating in the public sector that help people every day.

For these reasons, we cannot vote for Bill C-38. It is not a good bill, and the government has failed in its duty to represent Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. He seems to have a much clearer vision of what is actually in the bill than the Conservatives and some of the stuff we heard earlier from them. They were talking about how senior citizens in this country were creating such a dead weight on the system that it was all going to collapse. We know the attack by the Conservatives on OAS is an attack on the poorest of seniors, the people who do not have savings or RRSPs. They will have to work until age 67. The Conservatives did not campaign on that, but they are now bringing it in.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the government's numbers were made up. Ever since then the Conservatives have been denying the Parliamentary Budget Officer access to information. The Conservatives broke the law by denying Parliament the ability to do its work, to do due diligence, to ensure that people, senior citizens for example, are not unfairly targeted by the government.

Could my hon. colleague tell me why he thinks the government has made up this fiction about senior citizens being a dead weight on our tax system when OAS is sustainable? Could he tell me why the government has gone to the lengths of breaking the law to deny the Parliamentary Budget Officer access to information and keep him from doing his work?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what workers have done to the Conservatives to make them hate them so much. For example, we saw what happened with Air Canada. We saw the arbitrator go towards the employer this week. We saw what happened at Canada Post. When Canada Post was ready to give its

employees a 2% increase, the Conservative government brought a bill to the House which gave them a 1.5% increase. What did the workers do to the government to make the Conservatives hate them so much?

I have never seen the government go after big business. As a matter of fact, the government gives big business a tax break. When it comes to the workers though, the government just looks them in the eye and bingo they are gone. What is wrong?

We are here to make laws, yet the Conservatives break the law. They have been breaking the law day after day. The Conservatives have no conscience when it comes to Parliament, to what our democratic institution is all about. They have been like that since they became a majority government. They do not care. They have a big bulldozer and they ride over everybody. Now they are—

• (1815)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. Questions and comments. The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not in the House for a good part of the debate, but based on the question by my hon. colleague across the way, I can imagine there is considerable angst about the fact that we are proposing to change the rules as they relate to OAS way down the road. The opposition continues to paint this as if we see some crisis. There is no crisis. We are planning in advance to avoid a crisis. Why would members opposite not agree that we can plan in advance to avoid a crisis so we have a sustainable program going forward?

My colleague said that we are against workers. Our government has had a track record for the last number of years of economic action plans that have resulted in a tax reduction for the average family of \$3,100. How could the member possibly suggest that we are against ordinary Canadians?

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Speaker, when I see people at Canada Post losing their jobs at a call centre and the government creating jobs with independent private sector groups where people are paid \$12 an hour, that is a hit to the workers. The government closed down a call centre in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Individuals were being paid over \$20. The government opened one in Bathurst where people earn \$12 an hour.

Canada Post was ready to give its employees a 2% increase. The government passed a bill, and that member voted for it, giving them a 1.5% increase.

What did the workers do to the government that makes it hate them so much? It is unbelievable.

Look at the pension plan in France right now. Instead of raising the age to 67, the government brought it down to 60. We can see the difference. There is a difference because that government has a conscience when it comes to the people. The Conservative government does not have a conscience when it comes to the people. You just drive a bulldozer over all of them and you will pay a price very soon for that.

Government Orders

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

Resuming debate, the hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to once again thank the staff and pages for all their hard work last week and indeed throughout the year. Without them this place would not function and we owe them a debt of gratitude. I thank them all.

New Democrats have fought this Trojan Horse budget bill every step of the way. We proposed that this massive and unprecedented 425-page bill be split into separate sections to permit proper study of its substantive measures, but unfortunately for the people of Canada, the Conservatives refused. Now we hear from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that legal advice provided to him has determined the government is in fact withholding savings measures and is not just breaking the law and contravening the Parliament of Canada Act but is also breaking the Federal Accountability Act.

In response to this omnibus bill, the NDP caucus organized alternate public hearings in Ottawa and other cities across the country in May of this year to ensure that Canadians' views were indeed heard. I attended the hearings in Ottawa and I also hosted one in my riding. We heard many witnesses outline their concerns about this massive budget bill and how it impacted their lives, their jobs, the environment and Canada as a whole. The picture they painted was not pretty.

We tried to make this bill better at committee and report stage. We introduced hundreds of amendments that would have corrected the most egregious parts of Bill C-38. We wanted to take the sting out of this legislation and make it better, but the Conservatives defeated every one of our amendments. The votes that took place last Wednesday were a testament to the opposition's resolve and the dire need to make changes to Bill C-38, yet all amendments were just ignored and even openly mocked by members opposite, so here I stand once again in the hope that we can drive some sense into members opposite.

This budget implementation bill is supposed to implement the budget, but it goes far, far beyond what was outlined in the recent federal budget. Quite simply, it is profoundly inappropriate for any government to put so many sweeping changes in so many different areas to more than 70 pieces of legislation as this bill does. It is bad public policy. It is becoming abundantly clear that the government members opposite are trying to hide from their obligation to provide responsible oversight. Rather, they seem determined to avoid accountability.

I have spoken to this bill previously and in those remarks I have outlined the impact this bill will have on the retirement of future generations. We know that changes to old age security will have the biggest impact on the poorest people. Sadly, senior women and those with disabilities will be most affected. While the Conservatives claim it is necessary, the reality is that OAS is sustainable. It is sustainable now and in the future. We can absolutely afford to ensure all seniors are free from poverty and live in dignity in their retirement. A secure retirement is about making smart choices and intelligent practical investments. I say to the government that it

makes much more sense to invest in people, our seniors, than in unnecessary megaprisons, expensive fighter jets and unaffordable tax breaks for profitable corporations.

The choices made in this so-called budget bill will have a dramatic impact on the Canadian landscape. I want to highlight a few of the choices the government has made.

The Conservatives claim that budget 2012 is about job creation, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that this budget will cost 43,000 Canadians their jobs. In fact, the budget actually plans for unemployment to rise.

Speaking of unemployment, Bill C-38 concentrates power in the hands of the minister in regard to what constitutes a reasonable search for work or suitable employment for those on employment insurance. Unfortunately, the bill does not provide any details about what the new definitions of "suitable employment" or "reasonable search" might be, but we have already seen the minister freelancing and defining "suitable employment" in a manner that will hurt hundreds of thousands of Canadians. The government is asking Canadians to just trust the minister.

EI is funded by Canadian workers and Canadian employers. EI belongs to them. It is not government money, yet the government believes it is all right to force many of those unemployed workers to accept a 30% pay cut in work outside their field. This is unacceptable.

• (1820)

Another decision made by the Minister of Finance is to gut environmental protection regulations. Canadians want their government to take action to fight climate change and protect our environment. Instead, Bill C-38 reduces Canada's accountability on the world stage by repealing the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act. By dropping out of Kyoto, Canada will no longer be required to report on its emissions. By bowing out, the Conservatives have made us the laughing stock of the rest of the world.

In fact, a full one-third of Bill C-38 is dedicated to environmental deregulation. The government is doing all the negative things it announced in the 2012 budget and more. Bill C-38 delegates environmental assessments to other authorities, including the provinces. Once again the government is downloading federal costs and responsibilities onto other levels of government.

The bill also takes aim at environmental groups. It amends the rules for determining the extent to which a charity has engaged in political activities. It grants the Minister of National Revenue the authority to suspend a charity's privileges with respect to issuing tax receipts if the charity, according to the minister, devotes too many resources to political activities. This attack on charities is in part aimed at environmental groups that have actively opposed the government's reckless inaction on the environment.

Government Orders

Bill C-38 also has consequences for our fisheries. It changes the rules around fish habitat protection and the deposit of deleterious substances in fish-bearing waters, and it weakens regulation regarding disposal at sea. Our oceans are already at risk, and the government is determined to make things worse.

Let me remind the government that as members of Parliament, we are stewards of this country and its environment. It is our job and our absolute obligation to protect that environment for future generations. By passing the bill, we would utterly fail in this task. The changes to environmental regulations will most tragically impact future generations.

Perhaps the most egregious part of this Trojan Horse bill is its size and scope. Its flagrant disregard for democracy and accountability is breathtaking. Within Bill C-38 also lies the single largest move to restrict accountability by way of the broad reduction in the oversight powers of the Auditor General. The Conservatives claim that the Auditor General requested these changes, but the reality remains that his office was impacted by the government's austerity agenda.

The Conservative government is so hell-bent on cutting spending that it is willing to roll back government oversight on key areas like food safety. Imagine, reduced oversight by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the agency that ensures the safety of the food we feed our families.

The bill also eliminates mandatory Auditor General oversight of financial reporting on 11 other key agencies: Northern Pipeline Agency, Canada Revenue Agency, Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, Exchange Fund Account, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Canadian Polar Commission, and Yukon Surface Rights Board.

There are many more issues with the bill, but I do not have time to outline them all. No one does.

I do, however, wish to point out one more very troubling issue. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said repeatedly that MPs are not getting the information they need in order to reasonably exercise their power of oversight.

How can we as members of Parliament in good conscience vote on a bill for which we do not have all of the necessary information? As I already said, the Parliamentary Budget Officer requested a legal opinion and it showed that the government is breaking the law of Canada.

I fear for democracy in this country. The bill is designed to strip away accountability, increase ministerial powers and hide financial data. It is an affront to the democratic process. It seeks to hide within the confines of budget implementation a wide array of things that will undermine our country.

● (1825)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult listening to that speech coming from this member because as I am sure members will recall—and if they do not, I will remind them—that this is a

member who was actually a cabinet minister in the Ontario government in the nineties, which actually ran one of the highest, fastest deficits in the history of the province. It almost bankrupted the province, but thankfully, the Conservatives took stewardship later on and righted the ship.

However, in its time in office that Ontario government actually unilaterally shredded the collective agreements of hundreds of thousands of Ontario workers, forced them to take days off, cut their salaries without even asking them and rammed that through.

My question for the hon. member is this. Why does she and the NDP hate workers to the extent that they would actually rip up their contracts, as was done when that member was a minister of the crown? Why does the NDP dislike families so much that it would vote against tax cuts for our families, the GST? Why does the NDP hate seniors so much that it would vote against the GIS?

Is she not embarrassed that the NDP is nothing more than a protest party that stands for nothing?

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that this member has finally had the courage to ask that question of me instead of into some blank space, because I was indeed a member of that government.

Let me tell him just some of the history. Brian Mulroney, and members may remember him, brought in a free trade agreement. At that time, he said there would be training money for Ontario and there would be all kinds of support for all those unemployed workers.

Five hundred thousand job losses later, there was nothing for the workers of Ontario. There was no training. In fact, that government reduced employment insurance to the point where people were being forced onto welfare. We had welfare rolls that we could not manage.

Then, to add insult to injury, that same Mulroney government decreased the amount of transfers.

It was a very difficult time, thanks to Conservative governments.

With regard to all the other things that he seems to think were important, I have a very concise response, too. We would have been fine if there had been no Conservative government in this country—

● (1830)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member is rising on a point of order?

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify. The reason they stripped the workers of their rights back then was that we brought a free trade agreement in that has created—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. That is not a point of order. We are into debate as to the facts and, of course, that is a principle in the debate as it goes.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

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[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for her remarks. As she pointed out, this massive omnibus bill goes way beyond the budget. Once more, the Conservatives are trying to rush their bill through without letting Canadians study it carefully, let alone the hon. members here. To make things worse, they are trying to include changes that will reduce transparency and democracy even more. Can the hon. member comment on this affront to our democracy and to parliamentary debate?

[*English*]

Ms. Irene Mathysen: Mr. Speaker, what is happening to our democracy is absolutely terrifying. This is 425 pages of so-called budget implementation and no opportunity to fully respond. This is 72 pieces of legislation that are being changed. An undertaking like that should be considered over months and years, not in a matter of days.

The Conservatives are pleased that they have given all these hours. Yes, they have given hours. However, an ordinary budget implementation bill is about 30 or 35 pages long.

The current government has committed a travesty against the people of this country.

Fortunately, there is an opposition. New Democrats are standing up for our country, our democracy and the people who are counting on us to save our social safety net and protect them from what can only be called unfair austerity and a deliberate destruction of what we value.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to voice my strong support for Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, which would implement key measures from economic action plan 2012.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Prince Albert.

In an uncertain global economy, our Conservative government has a positive, forward-looking, low-tax plan for jobs and growth, a plan that is working and has served Canadians well. Since we first introduced the economic action plan, Canada's economy has been among the strongest in the western world. Indeed, Canada's economic record has every reason to make Canadians proud. Since July 2009, employment has increased by 760,000, the strongest record for job growth among the G7 countries. Even better, close to 90% of those jobs created since July 2009 have been in full-time positions and about 80% are in the private sector. Canada's GDP is now significantly above pre-recession levels, again the best performance in the G7. These are the facts.

Our opposition colleagues do not like to listen to us share these facts, but they might want to listen to those from the rest of the world and what they are saying about Canada's economic record and how Canada has weathered this economic storm.

Both the IMF and the OECD forecast that we will be among the strongest economic growth nations in the G7 over this year and next. For the fourth year in a row, the World Economic Forum rated Canada's banking system as the world's soundest. *Forbes* magazine has ranked Canada number one in its annual review of the best

countries for business. Three credit rating companies, Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's, have reaffirmed their highest AAA ratings for Canada.

The praise from independent observers does not stop there. Indeed, listen to what Iowa Governor Terry Branstad recently told *CBS News* in the U.S. He stated:

...in the '80s and early '90s, a Canadian dollar was only worth 65 cents to the American dollar. Canadian financial institutions weren't as healthy as ours. And their taxes were higher. Now their dollar is comparable with ours. Their financial institutions are healthier and their taxes are considerably lower. Their federal corporate tax is only 15 percent. So I think we can learn from Canada. Not follow the European example of spending and spending and getting ourselves into such a tremendous financial mess....

Clearly, as the quote suggests, Canada's economic resilience reflects the actions of our Conservative government that we have taken to date, such as lowering taxes, investing in research and development, rebuilding Canada's infrastructure, reducing red tape and promoting free trade and innovation.

However, we all know there is more to be done and we cannot be complacent in our success.

Despite solid job creation since July 2009, too many Canadians are still looking for work. We also know that the global economy remains highly fragile, and all the more so due to the recent economic developments in Europe. That is why economic action plan 2012 focuses on the drivers of growth and job creation—innovation, investment, education, skills and communities—underpinned by our ongoing commitment to keeping taxes low and returning to balanced budgets over the medium term.

In the Waterloo region, the capacity of our economic engines has been enhanced. Our airport, our post-secondary institutions and our high-tech business incubators are all better positioned today than they were, thanks to the efforts of this government to rise above the noise and focus on the economy.

Moreover, we also know that balancing the books is important to maintaining a healthy economy, something the opposition just does not seem to understand when it is advocating for big government and bloated bureaucracies. Quite simply, eliminating the deficit in the medium term is our goal. We will maintain and enhance our Canadian economic advantage now and for generations to come so that our children and grandchildren can benefit from a strong Canadian economy. On the other hand, the opposition wants to leave our children and grandchildren a massive credit card bill.

Balanced budgets are important not for their own sake but for what they make possible for governments to accomplish. Reducing debt frees up tax dollars otherwise absorbed by interest costs, which can then be reinvested in what matters to Canadians, like health care, public services or lower taxes.

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• (1835)

This keeps interest rates low, encouraging businesses to create jobs and invest for the future. It signals that public services are sustainable over the long term. It strengthens the country's ability to respond to economic shocks such as the recent global financial crisis and challenges such as population aging. It preserves the gains made in Canada's low-tax plan, fostering the long-term growth that will continue to generate high-wage jobs for Canadians.

Perhaps, among the benefits I have mentioned, low taxes are the most tangible evidence of our good economic governance, guided by the principle that Canadians should keep more of their hard-earned money. We understand that taxpayers willingly and honestly provide a portion of their hard-earned income to fund health care, social programs and other vital services that benefit all Canadians, asking only in return that governments manage their tax dollars wisely and everyone pay their fair share.

That is why our Conservative government is committed to taking aggressive steps to close tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to take advantage of hard-working Canadians who pay their fair share of tax. That is also why our Conservative government took key steps in economic action plan 2012 to eliminate billions in wasteful, inefficient and duplicative spending.

Specifically, economic action plan 2012 and today's act would move to ensure responsible management of taxpayers' dollars by refocusing government and programs, by making it easier for Canadians and businesses to deal with their government and by modernizing and reducing the back office.

One of the highest-profile ways we would accomplish this is by modernizing Canada's currency by gradually eliminating the penny from Canada's coinage system, something almost every Canadian agrees was long overdue. In contrast to other coins, taxpayers lose money on every new penny produced by the Royal Canadian Mint, as the cost to government is 1.6¢ to produce each new penny. The estimated cost to the government of supplying new pennies is approximately \$11 million each year.

Other countries, such as New Zealand, Australia, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland and Sweden have all made smooth transitions to a penny-free economy. Again, this was long-overdue, a long overdue example of a common sense change that would benefit Canadian taxpayers.

In the words of Brett Wilson, a leading Canadian entrepreneur best known as a former panellist on CBC's *Dragon's Den*:

It comes down to the economics of creating these things.... If it costs a penny and a half to make a penny, the more you make, the more you lost. It is just dumb business.

These are measures that deliver results to Canadians, measures that do respect taxpayers' dollars

I am proud to say that our Conservative government has a record that is second to none when it comes to spending tax dollars responsibly, allowing our government to keep taxes low. That is why the overall federal tax burden is the lowest it has been in 50 years. This is the lowest tax burden in 50 years.

Bill C-38 further demonstrates our government's commitment to responsible use of tax dollars. With a comprehensive and forward-looking agenda that would deliver high-quality jobs, economic growth and sound public finances, economic action plan 2012 would allow Canada to meet these challenges and emerge from them stronger than ever, today and into the future.

As my local daily paper, *The Record*, noted, economic action plan 2012:

... is a moderate, intelligent and visionary plan to preserve a progressive, prosperous Canada in a global landscape filled with both upheaval and promise.

And for this reason it is the most ambitious and important federal budget in a generation.

Obviously, there are so many more positive things included in economic action plan 2012, and unfortunately my time has almost run out. I would love to spend a little more time explaining all these great things to Canadians, but in the end, I urge all members of the House to support economic action plan 2012. It would be good for Canada and especially for our children and grandchildren.

• (1840)

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of our children and grandchildren, one of the things we hope to do on this side of the House is to leave the planet cleaner and better for our children and grandchildren.

Unfortunately, Bill C-38 would remove environmental oversight from the landscape, from federal responsibility, and would limit the number of environmental assessments.

The most troubling thing, and one to which no one has given us a straight answer, is that it would remove the requirement of a federal environmental assessment to study human health. How does that improve the end result for Canadians, and in particular for our children and grandchildren, if all we are looking after is birds and fish? What about us? What about our children and our grandchildren? The Conservative government has removed the requirement to study human health from that bill.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, my colleague inadvertently answered the question himself when he said that we had removed a number of environmental assessment actions. It does not make sense to have three or four environmental assessments on the same project. We have a policy that once that environmental assessment is completed, it is complete. We do not need to have another agency come in and reassess that project.

On protecting the environment, the misinformation coming from the other side on this is really not helpful at all. In fact, we are strengthening the environmental protection, putting timelines on the need to get these environmental assessments done in a timely manner so that when a company comes into Canada and wants to create a project which will create jobs, within a specific timeline it will have a "yes" or a "no" answer. It still may be no because it is too damaging.

However, there has to be some certainty for companies so they can plan and produce the jobs that our country so desperately needs.

• (1845)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the member, I could not help but reflect upon the Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien era. When the Conservatives took over the reins of power, they needed to recognize that we had a healthy economy, that we had a budget that had a huge surplus, well into the billions of dollars, and that in fact at a time in which the recession did not exist, they turned that healthy surplus into a deficit situation.

When we talk about budgets, budgets are about priorities. This year the government has demonstrated its priorities. It says that it wants more members of Parliament, more politicians, which I would argue goes against what the member's very own constituents would want to see. At the same time, it is reducing the number of civil servants.

Would the member not agree that the budget is in fact about priorities, that the government was wrong to increase the number of MPs at the same time, in the same year, in which it would cut back on 19,000 civil servants—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone in Canada thinks it is fair for Winnipeg North, for example, to have a population of roughly 79,000 or 80,000 represented by one MP and another MP sitting on this side has over 200,000 constituents to represent. Where is the fairness in the that? Of course Canadians want us to address this inequity.

However, I want to go back to the point he made in his opening comment. Only a Liberal could make conjecture that somehow paying down \$37 billion of debt is a waste of taxpayer money. Only a Liberal could imply that using \$52 billion of the EI funds that were specifically for EI and squandered in the general revenues was somehow good management.

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the opposition did not like to share facts. He might be a little off there. The NDP member for London—Fanshawe goes back to her riding and never misses an opportunity to stand behind a fake cheque or show up to cut a ribbon when we fund the great projects that the member actually has voted against in the House. That happens all the time.

Again, this year in this budget we have \$1.1 billion for science and technology. Would the member encourage the opposition to vote for science and technology?

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his great leadership on the science and technology file and also on his leadership on the FedDev Ontario file. This has been amazingly successful in creating research and development opportunities, not just in my riding but across Canada.

One example is the Conestoga College research and development. Conestoga College partners with industry and business partners. They come to Conestoga College with a problem. Conestoga

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College's engineers, students and staff help that business solve the problem. In the process, the student gets the opportunity to work in business, in a real life environment, and the business gets the expertise of a new engineering student. It is a win-win.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House at third reading in support of Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-prosperity act, and the important steps it takes to implement Canada's economic action plan 2012.

Specifically, I would like to discuss the many ways that today's act would strengthen Canada's immigration system

We all recognize that Canada needs a flexible and efficient immigration system. Practically speaking, we need an immigration system capable of addressing the very real labour shortages faced by communities right across Canada, especially in my home province of Saskatchewan.

As Chris Dekker of Enterprise Saskatchewan has noted, "Labour shortages and demands are the No. 1 barrier to doing business in Saskatchewan". It is no longer a provincial NDP government; it is actually labour shortages.

The degree of labour shortages has forced the provincial government to undertake numerous creative recruitment efforts, such as a recent skilled worker recruitment mission in Ireland, led by our Premier Brad Wall and numerous Saskatchewan businesses. I have to give them credit. They went out and looked for the skills that their employers needed and talked to people who were looking for jobs. What a way to bring them together. I give the premier credit for going to Ireland and recruiting those people.

To assist the good work of the province, our Conservative government has made significant progress in recent years to refocus our system to reduce backlogs, reverse wait times and improve the timeliness of the services we provide.

These reforms ultimately ensure that Canada's economic prosperity is our system's number one priority.

For example, we have placed a high value on attracting newcomers to Canada with the skills and experience to meet our economic demands. However, we need to do more. We must deliver transformational changes to the immigration system that will better generate economic growth and long-term prosperity for Canadians.

We envision a just-in-time system in which the entire process for a skilled immigrant to apply to come to Canada, be accepted and admitted, and become gainfully employed would take only a few months instead of many years. To achieve this vision, we must first address the legacy of the large backlog of applicants under our federal skilled worker program.

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We took measures to address the dysfunctional federal skilled worker backlog of 640,000 persons that was allowed to fester under the previous Liberal government. However, the fact remains that we still have a backlog of nearly 300,000 old federal skilled worker applicants.

I am pleased to inform the House today that economic action plan 2012, along with today's act, would help us to reform the immigration system, so it aligns more closely with our economic needs and so it achieves better results, both for newcomers and for Canada. These reforms, I note, have been warmly welcomed in Saskatchewan and beyond.

Canadian Home Builders' Association president Ron Olson of Saskatoon has applauded economic action plan 2012's immigration reform saying, "We have urged the government to address the growing shortage of skilled people required to build and renovate homes. We're pleased that the budget tackles this issue".

Listen to what Janice MacKinnon, a former NDP finance minister in Saskatchewan, had to say, "[As] somebody from Western Canada...our biggest problem are labour shortages. We have projects that can't proceed because they can't find the skilled workers. The changes they're proposing [in economic action plan 2012] to immigration matter to us so we can get the immigrants we want, when we want".

How are we doing that?

First, we will eliminate the backlog of old federal skilled worker applications that has nearly crippled our immigration system. This will transform the federal skilled worker program from one that has moved at a snail's pace for older applications, to one that will be able to bring to Canada the people we need when they are needed. The backlog hurts our economy by impeding our system's abilities to respond quickly to our changing economic priorities.

As a result, we will now be able to shift our processing priority toward newer federal skilled worker applicants who are more likely to have the current, in-demand skills that our economy requires.

To ensure that Canada's immigration system will benefit our economic future, Canada needs immigrants who are ready, willing and able to fully integrate into Canada's labour market, particularly where there are existing skills shortages. However, we also need to ensure that the skilled immigrants we choose are the ones Canada needs and that once they arrive here, they are able to put their skills to use immediately.

Economic action plan 2012 also commits to continue working with the provinces and territories to speed up and streamline the credential recognition process for regulated professions.

Under the pan-Canadian framework for the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications, our goal is to give applicants an answer within a year of their application. We can tell skilled professionals whether their credentials will be recognized or if they will require additional education, training or experience to become licensed in their field.

● (1850)

To date, we have processes in place for eight regulated occupations and we are working with an additional six regulated occupations to add to the list this year. We have also made considerable progress toward improving the foreign credential recognition process for many newcomers who are already in Canada, but we can and must do more.

Skilled immigrants come to Canada with the expectation that they will be able to work in the profession in which they are trained and we owe it to them to ensure that is the case. That is why the changes we are proposing to our immigration system will ensure mandatory assessment of foreign education credentials for federal skilled worker program applicants. This will involve a new requirement for applicants to first have their overseas education credentials assessed by a designated third party before they are accepted. The results of this assessment will be part of the immigration application. The process will be separate from more in-depth assessments that regulatory bodies will use to license professionals from abroad.

Our Conservative government believes that by working together we can find practical ways to give people a green light before they get to Canada, especially if we know they are going to have a better than even chance of being licensed and joining the workforce in Canada. Our goal with this change is to better select immigrants, so they can hit the ground running once they arrive by integrating quickly into our labour market.

This is part of the broader changes we are proposing to improve the federal skilled worker program, bringing it in line with the needs of our modern economy. For instance, we are working to introduce a new skilled trades program that would create a means for skilled tradespersons to be assessed based on criteria geared to the reality of the job, putting more emphasis on practical training and work experience.

It is common sense that to ensure immigration will fuel our future prosperity, we need a system that will help position Canada to attract the world's best talent. That is why our Conservative government is committed to strengthening the immigration system to make it truly proactive, targeted, fast and efficient to help sustain Canada's economic growth and deliver prosperity into the future.

The Canadian Construction Association, or CCA, one of the many of the many supporters of this portion of Bill C-38, states:

CCA was...encouraged by the measures outlined to build a fast and flexible immigration system...In order to continue to build the economy and remain cost competitive, businesses across Canada must have access to the required skilled workers in order to grow and take advantage of the tremendous international demand for Canadian products and services.

I join the Canadian Construction Association and others asking that this House support and pass today's legislation.

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When I go back to my province and my riding and talk to the constituents there, they talk about this budget and they see so many benefits and structural changes to our future economy. It really lays a proper foundation for Canada to grow and move into the future. This is a good budget. I cannot see why anybody would vote against it. I encourage all members to get behind the budget and move it forward.

• (1855)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to what the member had to say and I do not understand where the Conservatives are coming from. On one hand, they say that we have to fill the skilled labour shortage. On the other hand, they want to take skilled labour people who are seasonal workers and force them into other jobs that do not really meet their skills, because we will not using them to their full potential.

However, at the same time, the Conservatives would create a void in the seasonal workforce. Where are these people going to get their training skills? Where will they get people to fill those, if they force the seasonal workers to work somewhere else and then they cannot go back to their seasonal jobs?

Maybe the member can tell me this. Will those workers be able to go back to their seasonal jobs and will they be penalized that?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate my colleague does not understand how the process will work. As we see it unfold, hopefully she will get a better understanding of why this would be better for all of Canada.

I will use the example of what happens on the farm in Saskatchewan and has happened throughout the last 15 or 20 years. We have a lot of grain farmers who farm throughout the summer and spring. Once the snow hits in the fall, they have all their grain hauled out. Now that we no longer have the CWB, they actually control their product even better. They go into Alberta or southern Saskatchewan and work in the oil patch and they take on that seasonal work in the winter. That is something of which they can take advantage. When we have a strong and vibrant economy, we have all sorts of opportunity and people have choice of employment.

When we take on policies that restrict business activity and suppress people, which the NDP government did in Saskatchewan, our kids are forced to go to another province to find jobs. Hopefully, with these proposed changes in the budget, we will see so much economic activity across Canada and that issue will take care of itself.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to challenge the member on his assertions in regard to the backlog in immigration.

First, the member should be aware that the Minister of Immigration, through ministerial instructions, increased the backlog significantly, over 150,000 virtually overnight. Then the minister tried to say that the Conservatives would get rid of this backlog and he tried to blame it on the former Liberal government. In reality it is the Conservative government that needs to take responsibility for the backlog of skilled workers. Now, to put icing on the cake, the government has made a decision to hit the delete button. My question—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg North has the floor. I am sure the hon. member for Prince Albert would like to hear the question.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the government pushes the delete button for those individuals who were in the process. That is a cruel policy.

Now that the Federal Court has ruled that what the government has done is morally wrong, would the member not agree that those individuals who applied to come here as skilled workers should be allowed to at least go through the process?

• (1900)

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member has misconstrued the facts of what is actually going on. I will explain it for him as we go through.

The reality is that they had a system that we inherited from the Liberal government that was totally inadequate and not functioning in a way that was appropriate for both the employer or the person trying to come to Canada. How could it be acceptable for people to be on a waiting list for six years to find out whether they can come into the country? That is something we inherited from the Liberal government.

I want to clarify one other thing that will happen. Yes, there will be a reduction in the backlog. We will give the money back to the people who have been in the queue for six years, but they can apply right away and they will know within a year. They will not be waiting six more years to get their application processed. That is what the Liberals think is acceptable. Well, let them have 10 kids and wait an entire life—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Essex.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, going back and looking at our budget document, some 498 pages long, and not expecting a budget implementation bill that would be 12 pages long, but hidden on page 146 and several pages forward are changes to employment insurance. We find them in our budget implementation bill. Could the member comment on the positive aspects of the changes that we have been debating now since the end of March?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hard work my colleague does in representing constituents in his riding. I also congratulate him on the hard work he has done in bringing that new bridge to his riding. It is something that has been needed for such a long time. I congratulate him for getting that job done. He did a great job there.

As far as employment insurance, the one thing I found talking to businesses in Prince Albert was that they were looking for employees from areas where there is high unemployment. The first thing that came back to them when they had approached those people with jobs was that they had another five or six months of unemployment insurance so they were going to wait until that ran out and then maybe take a job. We are just correcting some of those problems and making it easier so those people can find a job that much quicker.

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**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, following the last comment that was made, that is a pretty bad stereotype and a dangerous thing to say. Anyone who is considered to be using EI on a frequent basis may be in a circumstance of seasonal work and would love to be working year round. The stereotype that is being put out is a pretty sad one.

I went to the town of Port Union just two weeks ago and was told about how people hoped the plant would be sold to someone diversified enough to provide double the amount of time throughout the year to allow them to work that many months. The people agreed. I hardly consider that to be something akin to repeat offenders.

I will talk about EI in depth in just a few moments, but I have another point to make about the bill. I first came here, like other members, in 2004. At that time the contentious issue was the Atlantic accord. The negotiations were back and forth between the then prime minister, Paul Martin, and then premier, Danny Williams. To say it was heated is quite the understatement. When we finally settled on a deal that was satisfactory to both the province and the federal government, we knew the best mechanism by which we could establish it was through the budget. In other words, it was affixed to the budget as one lump sum payment with changes that would affect the equalization formula.

Here is the issue. When we brought this to the House to debate within a budget implementation bill, the anger from the Conservative side of the House was vehement. It was like watching Pavlov's dogs. Every time a member mentioned that there was a budget implementation bill, the Conservatives were incredibly angry. They asked how dare we slip this through. They said it was like some kind of "is everyone ready for this term that I have heard, Trojan Horse. The Conservatives said that we had produced a Trojan Horse. That Trojan Horse was a miniature pony compared to what we have now. This thing is the size of an elephant.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: A Trojan elephant.

Mr. Scott Simms: A Trojan elephant, if it exists. It is 400-plus pages plus. It is unbelievable.

This is like looking for steak and ending up with about 200 tonnes of Spam that is shoved right through the system because everything is in here, clause after clause, change after change to this regulation and that regulation. One of the fundamental things the government has done to EI when it comes to the rules and regulations about employment insurance is to bring the decision making from the legislature to the cabinet table. It makes it much easier.

When we brought in pilot projects in 2005, we were faced with the prospect of an EI system that was falling down in seasonal industries, so we changed it. We went to the best 14 formula, which at the time was a pilot project, but it was voted on in the House under a minority Parliament. How is that? The idea of actually doing that is foreign. It is passed off as something that has been done before, something that is necessary, but yet it was only back in 2005 and even prior to that when it was considered sacrosanct to the validity of the chamber, the heart of democracy as it were.

When we look at this bill, one of the biggest changes is to old age security. Many of my colleagues have talked about this quite a bit,

whether it is OAS or language. One those members, I am honoured to say I will be splitting my time with, is the member for Ottawa—Vanier. I look forward to his speech. He is a hard-working employee of the people who he represents and a fantastic member.

I will go back to the OAS changes. One of the fundamental things about old age security is that the government had talked about upping the GIS payments before it won its majority. I would argue that only one-third of it was covered at the time. It could have upped it by more, probably closer to \$700 or \$800 of total expenditure. That would have raised the income level for the poorest of our seniors to a much higher level, taking many more people out of poverty.

• (1905)

Not once during the last election did anybody on that side of the House, whether it was Conservative propaganda or not, or even through ministers at the time, say that in no way, shape or form would this program meet the brick wall. In no way, shape or form will this run itself into trouble 20 years down the road.

Shortly thereafter we found ourselves in a situation where the Conservatives decided that it would be a tough program to maintain at the current funding levels in 20 or 30 years from now. I could understand if the Conservatives had been in opposition and then went to government and decided that the program was not feasible in the future. However, when they had been in government since 2006 right up until 2011, certainly to God they had to know at some point that this program would need to be looked at.

The chief actuarial officer of the OECD, the organization that the Conservatives brag about quite a bit, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer all agree that this change is not necessary as Canada's old age security program is already sustainable.

A lot of people would say that it is only two years, but we should think about that two-year period. Some people say that it is well down the road and that we should not worry about it. In other words, we should not worry about it. We should let our kids deal with it because we will not around. That is pretty short-sighted and it goes against everything else when it comes to things like investments that we make.

Given the situation we are in and the fact that experts are saying that this does not need to be changed, even at that particular year down the road, why would the Conservatives be doing this? That is two years. To me, that represents a downloading to the province. People who are in a situation of extreme poverty may rely on the provincial welfare system and there is supplementary health care involved. Now, all of a sudden, that has to be extended for two years because at 65 they were able to claim old age security and if their income level was at a lower level they could have also qualified for the guaranteed income supplement.

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That two years will be downloaded to the province, something the Conservatives said that they would never do. It has to be done that way, according to them, because it will save the system. However, time and time again we are hearing more people say that it is not really serious.

I will now go to employment insurance. What I am hearing time and time again is a fundamental misunderstanding of what seasonal work is to areas of the country. The mayor of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Mayor O'Keefe, had a point when he said that if these changes occur, the downgrading of services like search and research, the downgrading of other services, do we centralize outside of the island?

EI changes that affect seasonal work, where frequent users, under the government's category, represent 80% in my area of people on EI. They are not repeat offenders. It is the industry they work in. If there is one company across the street, as the minister heckled earlier, with full-time work and the person leaves the fish plant to go to that store and work all year round. That is one job to be filled by approximately 100 or 150 fish plant workers. Then the government says that maybe they can go from the fish plant over to the tourism sector because it is a newer industry and it is hoping to expand it. All that does is take one seasonal worker and put him in other seasonal work. That does not help seasonal workers at all.

What are these fish plants going to do? The plant that I spoke of earlier in Port Union wants to diversify its plant. It wants to attract industry, except now it will have nobody to work in the plant. It will shut down and will have little hope of opening because of the workforce problems. It is not workforce problems in the sense of getting temporary workers but in the sense that people will be shuffled around. They will not have the opportunity to fend for themselves or to get something else. The proverbial vacuum will suck all the skilled labour out of these smaller communities. If that is what the Conservatives want why do they not be honest?

• (1910)

My colleague from Essex earlier talked about how nothing was hidden in this budget, yet everyone has questions about seasonal workers. If people are within an hour's drive, they have to go to these jobs. What happens if a person lives on Fogo Island and there is ice in the harbour and the person cannot make it on the boat? What happens if someone does not have a car? What happens, what happens, what happens?

I am hoping that at some point the government will answer these questions, that it will take this into a full debate in the House. It is unfortunate that the government did not do that.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk about seasonal workers. My colleague is absolutely right. This is very problematic for industries in a lot of provinces, whether fisheries, forestry or MNR. We have extreme concerns with the impact that this will have on the skills shortage that we can see with seasonal workers.

I am wondering if he has some concerns as well. If someone is a machinist or a driver who can drive a big truck, if his or her job is only seasonal does that mean that the individual would now be forced to deliver pizzas because he or she can drive a vehicle? We have real concerns on this side of the House that this would create a

void in seasonal workers. Who would fill those jobs if the government forced people to take full-time jobs at minimum wage?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, indeed the provisions in the budget regarding EI are fraught with contradictions. The member has a point. Let us think for a moment about taking someone out of a seasonal industry that is the main industry of a smaller community and having that person deliver pizza. The pizza store only exists because of the fish plant. Therefore, money that is being generated, money that is coming into the community, goes to smaller retail outlets that are now running the day according to the Conservatives. If they keep taking seasonal workers out of this particular area, the pizza store will not exist anymore.

This is the problem with it. There is a lack of understanding. I wish, I pray, I hope that the government will stop treating people like they are repeat offenders whose only intention is to not work that part of the year. These people would love the opportunity to put in 12 months, but the markets right now do not dictate that to happen and never will if the government policy is implemented.

• (1915)

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member should understand that it is not seasonal workers who are the concern. Employers want employees. For example, in Fort McMurray, Tim Hortons and other employers are looking for people to fill positions. They are offering \$15 or \$20 an hour and because they cannot get anyone to fill the jobs they would like to have foreign workers come in. In some areas there is high unemployment not very far from these centres. This is not targeting seasonal workers. It is trying to help fill positions where employers are asking for foreign workers and foreign workers are being brought in to fill positions for which there are probably people available. I would like the member to understand the broader picture for the legislation.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, let us try this again with the example of Tim Hortons in Fort McMurray. The government would provide it with domestic workers not foreign workers. These domestic workers would come from the government's category of frequent users of the system. There is no other place to get these workers, according to the government.

I do not know where these people would come from. If people come from Port Union and decide to work at Tim Hortons in Fort McMurray, the government is not even going to help pay for the move. What if these people cannot afford to move? What happens then? They would go to the province and go on welfare. That is downloading on a province if I have ever seen it.

Government Orders

The government might say, “We are not going to bother with them, we are going to go to someone else.” Here is what the government is not providing: who is that someone else if it is not temporary workers or foreign workers, or it is not the people in seasonal work? They do not just appear out of nowhere.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak on Bill C-38, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget. If the bill were simply to implement certain provisions of the budget, it would not have become such a big problem. The problem is not just here in the House—as we saw last week and again today. The problem can be felt across the country.

I have heard a multitude of comments from the people I have the honour of representing in the House. They are extremely concerned by the government's approach of introducing a catch-all bill into which they are stuffing all kinds of things. People are well aware, for example, of the importance of the oversight body at the intelligence agency. The elimination of this inspection office concerns them tremendously. That has nothing to do with the budget.

I want to mention a number of points. First, I want to talk about the public service. There has been talk that the budget will eliminate 19,200 jobs. That is not quite accurate. They have forgotten to mention that, in the previous two budgets, there is already a loss that could go as high as 6,000 other jobs. There is no mention of fixed-term appointments that expire at the end of March, for example, and that have not been renewed. Thousands of jobs were not renewed when they expired.

The real number, according to most experts, is more than 30,000 jobs. I think the government is deliberately trying to provide inaccurate information.

Nonetheless, the method for coming up with these lay-offs is quite extraordinary. The government chose to give the employees a letter, in which they may learn that their position is affected, even if that does not necessarily mean they will lose their job.

The problem is that these letters are being given to two to three times as many people as positions being eliminated. There is a general sense of uncertainty being created among all public service employees. This distress is completely unacceptable. The government is creating a divisiveness that will cause public servants' productivity to plummet. Then there is the matter of the unnecessary fear and anxiety being created at the individual level. In my opinion, this approach never should have been adopted and this should never have happened.

I heard that there are some people who have been told that their positions are affected, but they still do not know what the outcome will be. This is truly an odd way to go about this, especially now that some public servants are being told not to talk about this situation publicly. I am talking about the public servants at Parks Canada or in the science sector. I find it very troubling that public servants are being told that the government no longer trusts them and that they are not entitled to speak, when the role of a public servant is to tell the employer the truth. “Speaking truth to power” is a value that is absolutely ingrained in our public service. I think it is being undermined by these initiatives that are denying people the right to

speak. When it comes to the public service, the budget is not exactly promising.

This goes beyond these issues. If a person has the right to speak because he is not a public servant and has a job at an environmental agency, for example, then he is suddenly declared a dangerous radical. If the government cannot stop people from talking then it attacks their funding, either by eliminating it or asking Revenue Canada to review the agencies' documents. Even funding that comes from individuals abroad gets questioned. This does not give a very good impression.

On another point, I also wanted to talk about seniors.

● (1920)

[*English*]

OAS is moving from 65 to 67 for people who qualify. Most have spoken about it. There is no justification whatsoever for this. If there were justification on the economic front, then perhaps. However, the government has refused to share its studies and information to demonstrate effectively against the views of the Parliamentary Budget Officer and Chief Actuary, who have said that there is no justification. Yet, we are asked to vote for it, which is something I just cannot do.

On foreign aid, I will read a comment that I received from a constituent. She states:

I am writing to you as my member of Parliament because I am so upset that our government is reducing our foreign aid budget. Astoundingly, they are doing it on the backs of the poor.

We should be proud that in the recent past we have helped those in the developing world by investing in the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria and have successfully treated four million tuberculosis sufferers and saved half a million lives. We are on the brink of finally realizing an AIDS-free generation and eradicating diseases like TB and malaria? So why jeopardize the achievement of these life-saving goals?!!

Yes, the federal government is facing some tough economic challenges but cutting back on foreign aid and pushing the world's most vulnerable further into poverty is not the way to balance the budget.

Why don't we do what the UK has done? What it has done in terms of foreign aid is incredibly generous and humane. Even though the country is facing the worst austerity measures since the second world war it will increase foreign aid spending by 40% and is committed to meeting the 0.7% target set by the OECD by 2015.

Why doesn't Canada follow in the UK footsteps? The UK has similar economic problems but it is not fighting the problems on the backs of the poor!! Where is Canada's generosity and humanity?!

I strongly urge you to keep the issue of the cuts to foreign aid on the front burner in the House of Commons. Why don't you make a statement or raise a question in the House of Commons about the cuts to foreign [aid] and express some of my views? I would appreciate that very much.

Thank you for the work you are doing in a very difficult environment.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Barbara Woollcombe

I thought I would express her views by just quoting her letter, which I think is rather compelling.

[*Translation*]

I do not have a lot of time, so I will quickly talk about libraries.

Here is the information that I received: 23 of the 49 librarians at Library and Archives Canada, or 46%, will be laid off. We are no longer talking about 10%. Almost half of the librarians will be laid off. That will have a huge impact on the accessibility of documents and research at Library and Archives Canada, since archivists are also being cut.

A program that was key for most small libraries across the country is also being eliminated. In particular, I would like to mention the University of Ottawa's Centre for Research on French Canadian Culture, which has relied on and been actively using this program since 1989. This program benefits not only the research centre, but also francophone communities across the country. The issues that it deals with are important to the country and to the French linguistic minority.

We were told that this community would not be affected by the budget, but we are already seeing an example that shows that such is not the case.

The last point, which is of the greatest concern, has to do with community access centres. They were created in 2000 to make sure that there was not a growing gap in the population. Only 81% of people are connected to the Internet in metropolitan areas. As a result, 19% of people in cities are not connected to the Internet. Outside those areas, the percentage is 71%. In Ottawa, 19% of people are not connected to the Internet. It is important to understand that people making less than \$30,000 a year are the least likely to be connected to the Internet. In fact, 54% of people who have an income of less than \$30,000 are not connected to the Internet compared to 97% of people who have an income of \$87,000 and over.

So who is being penalized? Once again, it is the poor. For \$70,000, 16 centres were operating in Ottawa with 17 volunteers. Only one coordinator and five students were working there. The 17 volunteers were putting in over 500 or 600 hours. A total of 52,000 people are using the service every year. For \$70,000, the government is going to deprive 52,000 people of Internet access, when it has been demonstrated that the poorest members of society are the ones who are not connected to the Internet. That is the common thread in this budget.

When it comes to old age security, it is the poorest who will be penalized. When it comes to Internet access, it is the poorest who will be penalized. When it comes to foreign aid, it is the poorest who will be penalized. This budget truly makes me very sad.

• (1925)

Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the member for Ottawa—Vanier.

He mentioned a very important point that I feel especially strongly about: the public servants who are receiving letters saying that their jobs may possibly be cut.

In my riding, Saint-Jean, 144 positions will be cut in the Department of National Defence's civilian staff. That is not just 144 people, but several hundred civilian staff members who will each receive a letter explaining, as the hon. member said, that their position might possibly be eliminated.

Government Orders

I would like to hear his comments on that aspect. Since there are probably some civilian staff members of the Department of National Defence living in his riding of Ottawa—Vanier, I would like him to tell us how this affects their morale.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, in the 1990s, I experienced a similar situation when we came to power and inherited a \$42 billion deficit.

We had to reduce the number of public servants. We went about it in a completely different way. People knew when their jobs were going to be cut. They also had access to a range of benefits over and above the minimum legal or collective agreement requirements. As many have said repeatedly, lots of people were upset that they were not laid off because they were not entitled to those benefits.

At the time, nobody left unwillingly. People left the public service willingly. That is not the case this time around. Two or three times more people are being told that they could be out of a job, instead of just the people who will really lose their jobs. Imagine the tension that creates in an office where 10 workers know that five jobs are going to be cut. Ten people get the notice and have to compete with each other. That is just great for team spirit, morale and productivity.

That is exactly the kind of terrible situation our public servants are dealing with now.

• (1930)

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because the hon. member brought up the tragic history of the Liberals in government between 1993 and 2006, I thought I would ask him if he is as concerned as I am about the hidden agenda of the protest party opposite with respect to trade. I know when the Liberals were in opposition many years ago, they too were concerned about trade. They said that they would cancel NAFTA and all of our trade agreements, but as soon as they got into power, they realized how important trade was to the economy.

We have heard the member for London—Fanshawe talk about how bad NAFTA is for Canada. She seemed to imply that the NDP would cancel that agreement. I wonder if he has some comments on cancelling trade agreements.

I will be meeting with the Liberal member of the provincial legislature this weekend. The Liberal government in Ontario is cutting thousands of jobs. I wonder what advice the member would give to me so that I can speak to the Liberal member of the provincial legislature. Perhaps I could have a copy of his speech so I could give it to the Liberal member of the provincial legislature.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I do not play games here. If he wants to read my speech, he can get *Hansard* tomorrow morning and provide it to anyone. He can get a paper copy or get it electronically; it is up to him.

Government Orders

I personally always have been pro trade. I believe that as a trading nation, we are advantaged by having trade agreements that are respected both by us and the countries with which we have the trade agreements. I have had some difficulties with the way the Americans have treated the free trade agreement because sometimes I wonder if, indeed, they see it as free trade as opposed to trade that suits them. We have had these kinds of experiences.

As a trading nation, we benefit from trade agreements. As long as trade agreements are fair, negotiated openly and transparently and are respected, no one will have any problems with me.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Brampton West.

I am thankful for the opportunity to stand and support Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, and the important measures it takes to enact economic action plan 2012.

Specifically, I would like to speak to two important sets of amendments in this bill that would impact telecommunications consumers and help attract foreign investment. Both of these are important components of the Conservative government's ongoing plan for Canadian jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

This long-term focus rings especially true in the case of the government's agenda in telecommunications and in foreign investment. Indeed, the amendments put forward to both the Investment Canada Act and the Telecommunications Act in Bill C-38 would promote investment and innovation and would strengthen the financial security of Canadian workers and families. Moreover, the measures contained in the bill would create jobs and promote long-term prosperity in every region of this great nation.

I would like to begin by addressing the changes that Bill C-38 would make to the Telecommunications Act.

I think all members in this House would agree that the Canadian telecommunications sector has entered a critical phase of its development. The private sector is beginning to make significant decisions on massive capital investments across the range of Canada's telecommunications services. Our government's job is to ensure that an appropriate regulatory framework is in place, one that encourages both investment and competition to ensure that Canadians have access to high-speed broadband networks and innovative wireless services at competitive prices.

Our government is building on our strong record of encouraging greater competition and consumer choice in telecommunications. That is why this past March we announced a series of new measures for the telecommunications sector designed to prepare the sector for the expected growth and transformation on the horizon.

These measures included the reform of foreign investment restrictions and the release of a framework for the upcoming 700 megahertz and 2,500 megahertz spectrum options. Furthermore, our government will improve and extend the existing policy on roaming and tower sharing to further support competition and slow the proliferation of new cellphone towers for the benefit of all Canadians.

These reforms, which our government has developed, consulted on and announced as part of our comprehensive approach to the

telecommunications industry, are now before the House today as part of Bill C-38. These amendments to the Telecommunications Act would lift foreign investment restrictions for telecom companies that hold less than a 10% share of the total Canadian telecommunications market, supporting access to capital for the companies that need it most.

Let me be clear. Our government is working to promote greater investment and competition in our telecommunications sector. We are not lifting foreign investment restrictions for broadcasting. This change has been the subject of extensive consultations by our government, and has been recommended by two external review bodies, the Telecommunications Policy Review Panel and the Competition Policy Review Panel.

Again, the changes proposed in Bill C-38 reflect both the feedback received through consultations and the work of the independent review panels. It is little wonder they have been so warmly welcomed.

As Mobilicity, a Canadian wireless provider, told the finance committee during its study of Bill C-38:

[We support], with open arms, the changes to foreign ownership rules. Easing foreign ownership restrictions can potentially make raising capital easier, or decrease some of the costs to capital.... If easing foreign ownership can lower the interest on borrowing—or the cost of capital—by one dollar for Mobilicity, this is one extra dollar that Mobilicity can use elsewhere to lower plan costs, improve the network, or bring a better quality of services to Canadians.

I would also like to briefly address the portion of Bill C-38 related to the do not call list. These changes would reinforce the government's commitment to protect consumers from unwanted telemarketing calls.

The do not call list allows Canadian consumers to register free of charge to reduce the number of unsolicited telephone calls they receive. Telemarketers are prohibited from calling consumers who are registered on the list. To date, the list has more than 10.7 million registered phone numbers.

● (1935)

Currently, the operation of the national do not call list is fully funded by telemarketers, while investigation and enforcement costs are funded by taxpayers. The amendments put forward as part of Bill C-38 would allow the CRTC to recover the cost of do not call list investigations and enforcement from the telemarketing industry itself, and not ask taxpayers to foot the bill. The CRTC would be permitted to establish fees for this purpose.

I have spoken about the important changes to the Telecommunications Act, but I would now like to take a few minutes to speak about the proposed changes to the Investment Canada Act, changes that would enhance transparency and the review process while continuing to promote job creation, economic growth and long-term prosperity in Canada.

Government Orders

Once again, I think all members of the House can agree that foreign investment brings with it benefits to our economy and to Canadians all across the country. Canada has the fortune of being one of the top destinations in the world in which to invest and do business. What does that mean for Canadians? The fact is that foreign investment encourages high-paying jobs for Canadians and brings some of the most productive and specialized firms in the world to Canada.

It is important to remember that foreign investment works both ways. For Canadian businesses to expand and compete successfully throughout the world, we must demonstrate to our trading partners that we understand protectionism is not the path to economic growth. Our government has fostered a long-standing reputation for welcoming foreign investment. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that significant investments will continue to be reviewable under the Investment Canada Act.

The amendments proposed in this bill would provide the Minister of Industry with a greater ability to publicly communicate information on the review process while preserving commercial confidences. The amendments would allow the minister to disclose publicly the fact that he has sent a preliminary notice to an investor that he is not satisfied that the investment is likely to be one of net benefit to Canada. This would also allow the minister to publicly explain his reasons for sending the notice as long as it would not prejudice the Canadian business or the investor. These amendments strike the correct balance between transparency and confidentiality.

As Philippe Bergevin of the C.D. Howe Institute told the finance committee during the study of Bill C-38:

—I believe the measures are positive.... The measures that are aimed at facilitating the disclosure information....are definitely welcome steps. Increased transparency enhances predictability in the application....which obviously is positive for both investors and the public at large.

I have spoken about how the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity bill would improve competition in foreign investment rules to reaffirm Canada's growing reputation as a destination to do business. These amendments are part of an integrated and forward-looking policy and investment promotion agenda in economic action plan 2012, which underpins our agenda for jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

In closing, to keep our economy strong in a time of global uncertainty, I strongly urge all hon. members to lend their support to this important piece of legislation.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions to ask the hon. member who just finished speaking.

I am particularly interested in telecommunications. I worked in public policy in that field.

I think two aspects of the budget and the budget implementation bill pose a real problem. The first concerns auctions and involves the decision to forget the good we did in the last auction, in 2007—if I remember correctly, it was the AWS spectrum—and to allow set asides, the band frequencies reserved for new entrants so that they

can be competitive. The government's decision will give the three companies—Bell, Telus and Rogers—a major advantage over new entrants, which is quite problematic.

The second aspect concerns the provision allowing companies with less than 10% of the market to be sold to foreign interests. What will happen if a company—such as Vidéotron or WIND Mobile—is eventually bought and attains 15% of the market, while another company, such as Bell, Telus or Rogers, drops to 15%? Will these two companies play with different rules, even though they have the share of the market?

[*English*]

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, just to review, the measures in Bill C-38 included the reform of foreign investment restrictions and the release of a framework for the upcoming 700 megahertz and 2,500 megahertz spectrum auctions. Furthermore, as the member opposite knows, our government would improve and extend the existing policy on roaming and tower sharing to further support competition with all companies and slow the proliferation of new cell phone towers for the benefit of all Canadians.

These reforms that our government has acted on were through consultations with companies all over the world and were announced as a comprehensive approach to the telecommunications industry and have the support of many of the players in the telecommunications industry.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member might be able to provide some comment. People from coast to coast have a great deal of concern with respect to the government's decision to increase seniors' eligibility to retire from age 65 to 67 and why the government has made the decision to go in that direction, ultimately believing that Canada is in a financial position today, and will continue to be into the future, of being able to provide senior support at age 65. I wonder if the member would comment on that issue.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure seniors are supported, and by raising the eligibility in the year 2023, which gives us lots of time to prepare, we will be able to maintain that support for seniors.

Raising the age from 65 to 67, in answer to the member's question, is imperative because we want the financial support to be there for seniors. We cannot think about just today. A good, solid, stable government thinks into the future to provide all Canadians with financial stability.

Government Orders

• (1945)

Ms. Candice Hooppner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague a question regarding feedback she may be receiving from her constituents. She is a great member of Parliament who is very well connected, spends a lot of time in her constituency and listens very closely to her constituents. I am wondering if she could comment on their reaction to the display we saw last week when the opposition used very extreme tactics to delay this bill and the implementation of a piece of legislation that would create jobs and further our economic growth. Were her constituents supportive of those kinds of delay tactics or are they looking for our government to continue on the path we have set out, where jobs, growth and the economy are our focus and priority?

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, one of my constituents said that it was interesting to note that in 2010 the opposition parties allowed the 2010 budget, which was actually 900 pages, to pass. That was twice as long as the 2012 budget, which is 450 pages. Since the Conservatives had a minority, the opposition could have significantly changed the budget or voted down the budget then. Yet in 2010, they put forward 62 amendments and let the budget pass. Here we were the other night sitting saying the same thing over and over again.

The feedback from my constituents is that our government is doing the job, getting the job done, and they want this bill passed.

Mr. Kyle Seebach (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing her time with me today, so I can add my voice to the debate on Bill C-38, the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act. I know this piece of legislation has had substantial debate in the House, despite the cries from the opposition that it has not. We have had extensive debate, so I will try to find a way to add my own unique perspective, although I suspect we may be going over some well-tilled soil today. I will talk about creating jobs, balancing the budget, OAS, reforms to EI and research and development.

Creating jobs has always been a priority for our government and we lead the G7. We have created 760,000 net new jobs. The vast majority of these are full-time, well-paying jobs. However, that is not enough. We are going to move forward with an enhanced labour market focus and a number of targeted investments that would help respond to the current labour market challenges and meet the longer-term labour needs.

These are some of the highlights: \$50 million would be invested over two years in the youth employment strategy to help young people gain the necessary skills and experience; \$6 million would be invested to expand the third-quarter project to key centres across the country to help employers find experienced workers who are over the age of 50; \$21 million would be spent over two years to help unemployed Canadians find jobs more quickly. The investment would enhance the content and timelines of the job and labour market information that is provided to Canadians who are searching for employment. Finally, \$30 million over three years would go into the opportunities fund to enable more Canadians with disabilities to obtain work experience with small and medium-size businesses.

In addition, we are on track and will continue to balance the budget. It is an important part, to keep tax low and keep our debt

low. Over the past year, we have found fair, balanced and moderate savings measures to reduce the deficit. Overall, the savings we have found represent less than 2% of program spending and less than 0.3% of the economy. In fact, over 70% of the savings found are in operational efficiencies, such as reducing travel expenses by using virtual tools such as teleconferencing and video conferencing; reducing duplication across departments by combining administrative functions such as human resources, financial services and IT; and of course one of the things driven by the Treasury Board, replacing paper publications with online content.

We also have to look at OAS. Our government is committed to sustainable social programs and a secure retirement for Canadians. The facts on OAS are absolutely clear. The number of Canadians over age 65 will increase from 4.7 million to 9.3 million over the next 20 years. The OAS program was built when Canadians were not living the longer, healthier lives they are living today. Consequently, the cost of the OAS program will increase from \$36 billion in 2010 to \$108 billion in 2030. Meanwhile, by 2030 the number of taxpayers for every retired person will be down to two from four, as it stands currently. In order to ensure the sustainability of OAS, the age of eligibility would be gradually raised to 67 starting in 2023 and would be fully implemented by 2029. We have ensured that all Canadians would receive substantial notice of these changes so they could plan for their future. Despite the fearmongering we hear from the members on the opposite side, these changes would not affect any current retirees or anybody who is close to retirement. The proposed changes to OAS would put it on a sustainable path so it would be there for Canadians when they need it.

Going forward we plan to provide certainty with respect to EI premiums, because businesses need certainty, especially small businesses.

• (1950)

We would limit any increases in EI to 5¢ each year until the EI operating account is balanced. Once the EI operating account is balanced, any future increases would be limited to a maximum of 5¢. Small business drives the economy and it needs this certainty.

In addition, we have agreed to extend the temporary hiring credit for small businesses. This would be available to approximately 536,000 employers whose total EI premiums were at or below \$10,000 in 2011. We would reduce small business payroll costs by approximately \$205 million.

Government Orders

In addition to the legislative matters in Bill C-38, it also includes investments. There would be \$74 million to ensure that EI claimants benefit from accepting work and \$387 million to align the calculations of EI benefits with local labour market conditions.

We all know that to have a successful economy we have to have a competitive economy, and one of the key drivers for a competitive economy is research and development. Since 2006, our government has invested \$8 billion in research and development.

In October of 2011, the expert panel submitted a report to the government with its findings on how we could improve the R and D program in Canada to help our companies grow and become globally competitive. The economic action plan begins to implement the expert panel's recommendations. We would invest \$1.1 billion over five years for direct research and development support and make available \$500 million for venture capital. We would also include \$400 million to help increase private sector investments in early stage risk capital and to support the creation of large scale venture capital funds led by the private sector. We would invest \$100 million to the BDC to support its venture capital activities; \$110 million to double the supports to companies through the industrial research assistance program; \$14 million over two years to double the industrial research and development internship program; \$95 million over three years, starting in 2013-14 and \$40 million per year after that, to make the Canadian innovation commercialization project permanent and to add a military procurement component. There would also be \$67 million in 2012-13 as it refocuses on business-led, industry relevant research.

There would also be changes to the environment and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. These changes are designed to streamline projects so that we would have security and knowledge when we are moving forward with our investments. There would be time limits set for the assessments, so that businesses have certainty as to when they would be able to move forward with their projects. That would stimulate investment in this country, especially in the resource sector where we have to move forward.

There is a requirement that opportunities for public participation be provided during the assessments and that participant funding and a public registry, including an Internet site and documents, would be established.

Economic action plan 2012 proposes \$50 million over two years to protect wildlife species at risk. The Species at Risk Act is one of the government's main conservation tools to protect wildlife species and maintain healthy ecosystems and preserve Canada's natural heritage.

There is so much in this piece of legislation to support. Surely there are things in the legislation that even members on the opposite side, who vote against virtually every piece of government legislation and have voted against every budget we have put forward, can find something to support and will support us on this budget.

• (1955)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right; there is so much in the budget. Sure there is some good stuff in the budget, but

there is a lot of bad stuff in the budget. One of the other members mentioned it a while ago; it is what is hidden in the budget.

Let us just check it out. On the OAS, which the member has spoken of, it would be much more difficult for people to receive their OAS when they should. Is he not concerned with the fact that today we found out that there are more seniors living in poverty? Is that not a reason why we should have kept the OAS at age 65?

Perhaps he could advise me and clarify the record. If people are only able to receive their CPP disability until age 65, would that be extended to age 67? Perhaps he could also talk about the impact that would have on the provinces, especially on social services.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we brought forward the largest increase in the guaranteed income supplement in 20 years to support our seniors, and as I said in my speech, nobody who is currently retired is going to be affected by the changes to OAS.

Why do we need the changes in OAS? The opposition can keep saying we do not need to have the changes. However, at least since the mid-1980s we have known we were going to have to do something. We knew that back in 1997 when we did revisions to the CPP. At the time, we were doing so much that we did not think we could add one more layer, so we did not do it, although we certainly talked about it. We did not do it at the time because we were doing so much else.

We have to get it done. Who said that? David Dodge, the former governor of the Bank of Canada. We stand on good authority when we say that changes need to be made to the OAS system.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the weekend I was in my community. I was speaking with a Ph.D. in a science area. I will not be too specific because I do not want to compromise this individual.

He is a researcher. He is scandalized by the changes the government has made through this budget to the funding of science in Canada. Essentially what he told me was that the government has changed its approach from one of funding research that would develop and choose its own winners and losers to a situation of the government now choosing its pet projects. That seems to me to contradict the whole philosophy and ideology of the party opposite, which is to let the free market flourish and let winners and losers emerge by themselves.

I would like the member's comments on that.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the question was.

We believe in science-based research, absolutely, on this side of the House. My friend is talking about the environment, and I am happy to have the opportunity to talk a little about the environment. Let us talk about a few things.

Since 2006, there has been \$1.1 billion for the eco-energy home retrofit program, \$1 billion for priorities such as green energy generation and transmission, \$1 billion to support pulp and paper mills to reduce greenhouse gases.

Government Orders

That is just a start. I could keep going. I do not think my friend wants me to—

• (2000)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment.

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to follow up on the question of my colleague opposite, I actually spent a better part of my career in the field of research administration. I saw first-hand the impact of government funding from the tri-council on research and development in this country.

Over the last few years and certainly in this budget, our government has increased the levels of funding to the point where the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada has said that this is a wonderful thing, a great increase and that we are now a leader.

In fact, in a time of global recession, we are funding basic science at record levels. Could my colleague comment on the reality of the funding situation in R and D in Canada?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is always a tough act to follow, but she got it. She has nailed it, absolutely.

We have made record investments in all of the areas that she has discussed. We are absolutely a leader in investing in science and technology.

I talked about some of the things we are doing with research and development and the reform of the R and D sector. This government is committed to making sure that we are moving forward with the right investments in science and the right investments in research and development so that our companies can become globally competitive.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Churchill.

This evening, I am pleased to address the House, but not the Conservatives. Actually, I would like to speak to the people at home, particularly those in my riding. I would like to speak to the people who work in plants, those who work at Miller Electric, TAC Machine Shop, Transport Papineau Internationale, Luxorama, Chalut, ICC or anywhere in Saint-Jérôme industrial park. I would also like to speak to the cashiers working at Provigo or IGA, the waitresses in restaurants, truck drivers, taxi drivers, seamstresses, hairdressers, masons, carpenters, people who work hard every day. They wake up, go to work and work hard to get a pay cheque at the end of the week—a pay cheque that barely covers their basic needs.

The savings rate in Canada is in a terrible state. First, RRSP contributions are going down year after year. Second, the average RRSP contribution is \$2,900 in Quebec and about \$4,000 in Canada. With \$2,000 a year, retirement does not look so good.

I also want to speak to the people at Aveos, Electrolux, Mabe, Caterpillar and Daimler. In fact, I am speaking to all the workers in the companies that have closed up shop this year. I want to speak to the men and women who used to work there. I want to tell them that

this government is not working on their behalf. The government says that it has no choice, but it is making choices. Other countries are dealing with the question of pensions differently. Here, the government says that, if people lose their jobs, they have to find other ones paying up to 30% less, they have to travel some way from their homes and, after all that, they have to work until they are 67.

I could have talked about other things because this bill affects 70 other laws. My concern this evening, though, is the workers of Canada. Can we imagine construction workers, masons or painters working until they are 67? From their early 50s, they have bad days, muscles work less well, things get tough. People who lose their jobs at 45, 50 or 54 years of age have extreme difficulty getting back on their feet. Once their employment insurance benefits run out, they often end up on welfare. Now those people are being told that they have to work until they are 67. Why? What reasons can there be?

I looked for the reason. I looked at the entire Canadian economy. For some people, things are going very well. The average salary among Canadian CEOs is \$8 million a year. Money is not a problem, because with \$8 million a year, a person can take a sabbatical or retire at 59 or 60, with lots of cash. That is an illegitimate accumulation of wealth. These people have it all. At the same time, ordinary people, who work hard day in and day out, see that their purchasing power has remained the same for 30 years. Who are these people working for?

This evening, I am not speaking to the members on the other side of the House; they do not want us talking to them, anyway, because they have cut us off 30 times now. I am speaking to the people at home watching television. Perhaps a worker, somewhere, has worked hard today and has worked hard this year, but has not been able to put much money aside, and cannot imagine how he can keep working until age 67. That is the challenge; asking people to work until they are 67. Whoever thought up that line in the bill never earned his wage by the sweat of his brow. Whoever did that considers people as mere numbers that can be added, multiplied, subtracted and pushed to the bitter end.

I am reminded of my grandfather who worked for 48 years in the Dominion Rubber factory. At the end of those years of service, he was worn out, completely used up.

• (2005)

The government wants to make those people work two extra years. That is unacceptable. Who do the members opposite work for? I ask the question, but I have some answers.

I was reading the headlines that announced the oil companies' record profits. Imperial Oil's profits are skyrocketing by 64% this year. That is great. Then there is the \$14.6 billion in profits for Esso, which saw its number of employees in Canada drop from 14,000 in 1991 to 4,900 today. Those profits are driven essentially by ExxonMobil, in the United States, which is the main shareholder. Who do those people work for? They work for the banks, which made record profits in the second quarter of this year to the tune of \$7.6 billion.

Government Orders

I think of the people I am talking to this evening, who are sitting at home. They are watching the situation and seeing how the Conservatives have been bragging from the start of this session about the incredible performance of Canada's economy. Canada's economy is doing well for some, but for others it is a prison and their sentence has just been increased to be served until age 67.

What do we do with a government such as this? We stand tall, denounce the lies, injustices, and biases, and we wait until we can give it the boot, because that is the only way to bring in a Canadian government that thinks about the ordinary people, workers and families. The members opposite do not work on our behalf. I am convinced that Canadians can find the proof of what I am saying all through this budget.

In addition to not working on our behalf, this government lies. On March 22, it told us that it would announce a measure to enhance the guaranteed income supplement for seniors. Tax professionals told us that not all seniors who receive the income supplement will be entitled to the \$600, which amounts to \$2 a day; only 42% will receive it. The Minister of Finance played a trick, a tax shell game, and only half of seniors will receive the \$600.

I said it was a lie, but it was also a trick. In light of this, how can Canadians believe for one second that the Conservatives are thinking about the people when preparing the budget?

That is why we have rejected this budget. We will continue to debate it in coming months and years because it has long-term implications for the environment, poverty, unemployment and ethics. By eliminating the Auditor General's power to audit certain government agencies, the government is concealing the information so that the public no longer has access to it.

For all these reasons, I will be voting against the bill.

● (2010)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are many areas of concern with regard to this budget. A lot of it has to do with the environmental impact, as a wide variety of things in this legislation would have a negative impact on the environment.

In Manitoba there is the world-renowned Experimental Lakes Area project. I have always argued that budgets are about priorities, and the government is getting rid of that particular responsibility. In essence, scientists and staff are going to be let go, and this will have a negative impact on fish habitat, quality of water and so forth. These scientists really make a difference.

I talked earlier about the budget being a Trojan Horse. Strictly from a budget perspective, because there are all sorts of other problems, could the member provide some thoughts on how this budget implementation bill acts to the detriment of our waters and environment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

I admit that the environment is not my area of expertise, but what I have been told, and people can check the bill themselves, is that Bill C-38 will reduce the number of environmental inspections and

assessments from roughly 4,000 to about 40. To me, that seems like quite a significant reduction, particularly given the fact that, according to one statistic I read, there have been 871 pipeline leaks this year alone. It seems to me that if the government stops monitoring these projects, then who knows how many such leaks will escape our notice and disappear into the environment.

I see that as a major problem because the Conservatives' economic action plan is essentially based on developing the oil sands and those notorious pipelines. The government is cutting assessments while going full speed ahead with pipeline development. We are headed for catastrophe.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech. I appreciate the fact that he began by talking about people who work hard, especially those who work physically hard, every day of their lives.

I am thinking of a constituent I met during the consultations on old age security. Sometimes people like him who work in the mines lose their jobs when they are in their late 50s or early 60s. By increasing the age of eligibility for OAS and the GIS, the government is giving those people no choice but to work longer.

I would like my colleague to expand on the government's lack of respect for those workers, who have worked so hard their whole lives.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle: Mr. Speaker, I am thinking not of today's workers necessarily, but of future generations of workers.

Here is a government, a gang of politicians who, in their great wisdom and with all their rhetoric, are telling future generations that they will have to work harder, that they are not productive enough, that they, the politicians, will not pass on the benefits that our generation had, that it is over, because they themselves used them all up.

I am glad this member was the one to ask me this question, because he is young. The people of his generation are the ones who will have to work until the age of 67.

We also do not know what the future will look like, because the economic situation is fragile. It remains fragile around the world and in Canada, despite the rhetoric spewed by the Minister of Finance. Consider Europe: it could all fall apart from one day to the next. We do not know what our future generations will inherit.

I hope the social programs that we put in place and that we have fought for over the years will still exist. We will continue to fight to maintain them.

Government Orders

• (2015)

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate

informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-8, An Act respecting the safety of drinking water on First Nation lands, to which the concurrence of the House is desired.

[For continuation of proceedings see Part B]

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Monday, June 18, 2012
(Part B)

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 18, 2012

[Continuation of proceedings from part A]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this House and speak to Bill C-38, a bill that fundamentally attacks the Canada of yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is an attack on who we are and what we have built together.

As a result of the bill, the government is turning the clock back on Canada's reputation, holding back our country in terms of research and innovation while lowering not only the standard of living that Canadians face today but that Canadians will face tomorrow.

The budget also speaks to the two-faced approach the government has taken. At election time, the Conservatives said one thing and now in government they do another.

I will go through the budget and see who is not a priority and who is not spoken for.

Who is not a priority in the government's budget? It is northern and aboriginal people. Many northern and aboriginal people who I represent have spoken to me about the real concerns they have vis-à-vis Bill C-38. In fact, I had the opportunity to hear from people participating at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs gathering and there is united opposition to Bill C-38. Why is there t opposition? I am sad to say that there are many reasons.

First, cuts to employment insurance will have a disproportionate impact on northern and aboriginal Canadians, particularly seasonal workers, fishers, forest firefighters, construction workers and people who work in tourism. It will impact the people who make the economies in some of the poorest communities in our country operate. For example, people may simply leave and abandon critical services like forest firefighting, something that we all depend on for public safety, as they will have no ability to look at other options. In fact, due to these cuts, people may need to turn in a much greater way to welfare. We will see increased social turmoil and a continuation of government neglect for first nations. There will be a lack of options for people to become re-educated and skilled in

other areas to have the ability to move on. It is simply not be a reality in northern and aboriginal communities.

When it comes to the changes in EI, many people are worried because they simply do not know what will happen. They have been told to trust the minister, but the reality is that the employment insurance money is the money of these very workers and of all Canadian workers. They must be seen as the priority and not be influenced by the ideological slant of a certain minister.

Another area the bill would have a disproportionate impact is on the changes to the EI tribunals. The elimination of a specific workers' representative would have a disproportionate impact on working people. For those who live in remote and rural Canada, the ability to connect in person to these tribunals is critical. With this streamlining, the option of using the phone or travelling to the tribunal is simply not an option for so many Canadians.

The change to the OAS would also have a disproportionate impact on northern and aboriginal people. Many already live in higher conditions of poverty than in other parts of Canada.

We have the loss of environmental assessments and environmental reviews. Many first nations, including the AFN national chief, have spoken out clearly against the rolling back of environmental legislation. They have spoken of the importance of the fiduciary obligation that the federal government has to first nations and of the importance that the federal government must place on the duty to consult, which is something that did not happen in the formulation of Bill C-38 but something that will continue to not happen in the case of environmental development that will have a direct impact on first nations and their lands.

There is the loss of the National Aboriginal Health Organization that did critical work across the country both in terms of research and advocacy when it comes to aboriginal people. As well as the loss of the First Nation Statistical Institute which provides information that we need when it comes to first nations and aboriginal peoples, some of the most marginalized people in the country. This information would no longer be at their fingertips.

● (2020)

There are cuts to Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and the continued inaction to deal with the shocking housing crises, the need for repairs and the building of new schools, the need to support infrastructure in the northern and first nation communities that I represent and in so many aboriginal and northern communities across the country.

Government Orders

This is also the further attitude by the contempt that the government showed when just a few short weeks ago the UN special rapporteur spoke of the extreme poverty that aboriginal people face and the fact that so many of them are unable to access healthy foods, something that there is no action on in this budget.

There are cuts to VIA Rail that connects northern aboriginal and remote communities across this country. Without the support that is needed for our national rail service and without a vision in this area, many people will be left out in the cold.

Another set of people and communities left out of this budget are rural and agricultural people and communities.

In addition to the loss of the Canadian Wheat Board, the government has compounded the insecurity faced by rural people, particularly on the Prairies, through the loss of the Shelterbelt Centre in Saskatchewan, the loss of the community pastures program and the withdrawal of commitment to the cattle enhancement program in Manitoba leaving many cattle ranchers in the lurch who were counting on a federal partnership when it came to such an important program.

There are the amendments to the Seeds Act that potentially allowed private contractors to perform something as critical to our public safety again as food inspection.

There is the closure of the Cereal Research Centre in Winnipeg, an institution that performed world-class research.

Now we see that the government is even failing to truly stand up for supply management and continuing to not be transparent in terms of its trade negotiations on an international level.

I would also add that in my province of Manitoba there has been a particular blow in terms of immigration to the successful provincial nominee program that has built my province over the last number of years. Unfortunately, the federal government is unwilling to see a success story and support it.

Who else would be left behind through this budget? Canada's women, the 51%.

The changes to employment insurance would have a disproportionate impact on Canadian women. The changes to OAS will also have a disproportionate impact upon Canadian women because about 38% of women get more than half of their income from OAS or GIS. Then there is the loss of public service jobs. Many of these jobs are held by women. As we lose these good-paying jobs, so many women and so many families will be made even more vulnerable in today's economic situation.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives stated, "In total, federal spending cuts could lead to the elimination of over 70,000 full-time equivalent positions".

While others have said more.

We have the loss of the Women's Health Network, the loss of the National Council of Welfare and the amendments to the Employment Equity Act that will leave women, aboriginal people, people with disabilities and visible minorities in the lurch.

Who else does this budget leave out? It leaves out young people.

It lowers our standard of living through the changes to OAS. It destroys the environment through the loss of the Experimental Lakes Area which conducts such critical research on the well-being of our ecosystems and the future of our economic development. We have loss of the Kyoto agreement, the gutting of the environmental assessment regime and fish habitat protection and the loss of research by removing, privatizing, muzzling and silencing those who tell us who we are and where we are going.

Perhaps the most insidious are the changes that would be made to our history and our identity.

Whether it is the cuts to Parks Canada that lead to the de-funding of Louis Riel House or the lack of leadership shown in making a commitment to *La Liberté*, the francophone newspaper in my home province, trying to rewrite history by the current government also means trying to change our future for the worse.

However, in this devastation, there is hope, hope in the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have spoken out and hope in the outcry we have seen in and out of this House.

I am proud to be part a strong NDP team that is presenting a vision of a country where we are all part of it, where we are all better off and where we can be a model on the world stage in terms of the environment, equality and dignity, a vision we hope Canadians will choose to make reality in 2015.

● (2025)

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, part of our budget and our implementation bill would help the mining sector. People have asked us to make changes so the overlap of the assessments will be less cumbersome.

Our mineral production was \$45.3 million and 21% of it was accounted for by Saskatchewan. That is a significant figure. Canada is a world leader in the production of potash and uranium. We rank fifth in the world for the production of aluminum, cobalt, sulphur, nickel and platinum and third in the world with respect to diamond production. All of these rely on good policies and lots of emphasis on efficiency and to ensure there are no barriers to the production of sustainable development in gas, oil and minerals.

The member does not seem to understand how important the budget is for aboriginal people in the north. We have invested in schools and in the University College of the North. Does she not appreciate the fact that we have put education high on the agenda—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. I do not wish to interrupt the Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, but time is limited.

The hon. member for Churchill.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, if the government is so convinced that it stands up for mining communities, then I would ask it to act on behalf of my home community of Thompson, a community that was bought out by a multinational corporation. All of the value-added jobs will be lost because of the agreement that the government signed with a multinational corporation. The government is selling our jobs down the river and eventually outside our country. I would like to see the government act on that because it has not. All we have heard is silence.

The member talked about the government's commitment to education. The Conservative government has not committed to the University College of the North. It was Jack Layton's amendment before the Conservatives came into power that ensured the only federal money that went to building new infrastructure of our institution.

I would like to see the government invest in education not only at the post-secondary level but also at the primary level for first nations that I represent, something we also do not see from the government.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the hon. member on her speech.

She said that at least a third of Bill C-38 is devoted to environmental deregulation, while the Conservatives have the worst track record of all recent Canadian governments in terms of environmental protection and action on climate change. Not giving consideration to sustainable development on the environment is making our current situation worse and is threatening the future of our next generations.

Could the hon. member comment on that?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for pointing out a major issue in this awful budget, and that is the attack on the environment, which is essentially an attack on the future of Canada and Canadians.

As Canadians, we have been proud to be world leaders. Now, countries around the world are talking about us in quite a different manner. It is clear as day for everyone that Canada is no longer a leader and that we have completely lost our way. We are going to create a future that is much worse and that is also extremely dangerous since we are making cuts to research, statistics and information. We will not even know where we are. When we do not know where we are, we certainly do not know where we are going.

That is why we have introduced amendments, that is why we are against this budget and that is why we have a vision for all of Canada that includes a sustainable environment.

• (2030)

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand today. I have not spoken as much as I used to. I remember a time, a couple of years ago, and I can always count on my own colleagues to applaud that. However, I do remember just over a year ago that we had an opportunity to speak up for constituents across the country. I heard the NDP member across the way talk about standing up for

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infrastructure. I do not remember any NDP members standing up for infrastructure when we brought in Canada's economic action plan.

In fact, I remember the exact opposite. Opposition members sat for that and did not vote. They did not vote for the bridges, the tunnels, all the road work that we brought in for the country. They did not vote for the jobs, the infrastructure investment and multiplexes and other measures we voted for at that time. Although they talked a lot about the need for infrastructure, when it came time to vote for it, they even voted against the water and waste water projects across the country.

I know in my constituency in northern Alberta that waste water and water projects are very necessary because of the expanding growth, but also because some of these projects were put in 30 or 40 years ago and are wasting away, which, as is the case with all infrastructure, actually depletes its purpose.

I heard the member say that she and the NDP spoke up for infrastructure, but I could not help to bring forward the fact that when it came time for the infrastructure investment to combat the economic decline in our great country, as well as that which the rest of the world had seen, and still sees, it took this Conservative government to stand up for Canadians and those infrastructure investments. I will never apologize for that because they were some of the best initiatives we could have taken for our country. It also was the best action taken in probably a 50-year period by any government.

Being from western Canada and northern Alberta, I have seen some things happen with which I am not very happy. One is that we have run out of people to take the jobs in western Canada, jobs that have been available for many years. I am proud to be from the constituency of Fort McMurray—Athabasca, which I consider to be one of the most beautiful places on the planet.

During the period of time I have been there, I have been a business owner, a lawyer and owned and operated some 10 different family businesses for some 45 years. For the last 20 years, I have been active in my own businesses there. I can assure members that we have had real problems employing Canadians. We have had to resort to outside agencies so to speak. We have had to resort to temporary foreign workers. In some parts of the country that is a dirty word, but in my area it is a necessary word. Without temporary foreign workers and the programs of the federal government in co-operation with the provinces that have been brought into play, we would have nobody manning any of restaurants or hotels.

In fact, I can tell stories of hotels having to close down in my constituency and even further abreast than that in Alberta, and now in Saskatchewan. Some hotels have to close entire floors because they do not have staff to clean rooms. It sounds like a trivial matter until one sees that those people who work in those jobs, like in my area of northern Alberta and Fort McMurray, work 12 to 14 hour days, 20 or 25 days straight. That might sound absolutely atrocious, and I believe it is because the quality of life of my constituencies is affected, but the truth is our economy is such that these people not only work because they need to but also because they come from many different places in Canada.

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Economic action plan 2012 focuses somewhat on employment issues. I am proud to say that I think the government has addressed these issues very well.

These employment insurance initiatives will encourage people to take long-term employment, to come from other parts of Canada and to be employed not only in northern Alberta, hopefully, but also in Newfoundland. I do not know if members are aware, but I hear clearly from my constituents, and I have about 30,000 to 35,000 constituents who are from Newfoundland, that they and many of their relatives think the growth in unemployment is such in Newfoundland that they will return there.

I see from my notes that I also missed a very important part, but I was passionate about the issue of infrastructure and the vote that this Conservative government took on it. I forgot to mention that I would be splitting my time with the member for Don Valley West. I apologize for forgetting that. However, I would like to continue on with some of the employment insurance initiatives that this budget would put in place.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that you may have a problem with me splitting my time, but clearly as many—

● (2035)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. I do not mean to interject. I advise the hon. member that in fact we are past the five-hour mark, so there really is no need to split one's time.

I do not know if the hon. member is asking for unanimous consent to split the time that he has in front of him right now. I do not think perhaps that was his intention.

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, everybody likes that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member will then take the 10 minutes and five minutes that one would normally take for this time slot. Is that correct?

Mr. Brian Jean: Yes.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca.

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, like all things in life, we follow instructions, and that is what I did.

I am very happy with what this government has brought in as far as employment insurance program initiatives, and I will leave it for the general public to understand that. People can visit the website of the federal government to understand specifically what is happening. There are some great initiatives, and I hope to see more in the future.

Because I do not have a lot of time left, I want to talk specifically about what took place when we passed this budget through committee. Many people have talked about how we are ramrodding it through and how we have done many things that have not been done before. The truth is that omnibus bills are nothing new. They have been done by many previous governments, and I am sure they will continue to be done by many governments in the future, notwithstanding what political stripe they may be.

I want to talk about public consultation. I sat on the finance committee and I even sat on the subcommittee for finance sometimes when I was still awake, and I say that with no jest. Many times we sat into the night, eight o'clock, nine o'clock, and with the

subcommittee up until midnight and 1:30 in the morning one particular day.

We heard from many witnesses. In fact, during the period of time we studied this, we heard 70 hours of testimony. That may not seem very important when we consider the work week, but when we consider all the other things MPs do, 70 hours of study, especially considering that most hours of study for me, when I go into an hour of committee time, I take an hour or two hours outside of committee to study and prepare for that period of time, the 70 hours can easily be 150 to 200 hours for any member of Parliament.

We did that in particular in relation to Bill C-38 to ensure that Canada's economy was strong, but we also listened to opposition parties and heard testimony from many individuals across the regime, including government officials. These government officials have been working, contrary to what the opposition says, on these files, these issues and these items for many years. In fact, as a parliamentary secretary involved in some aspects of it, these people were more up-to-date in relation to policy of governments than I will ever be and certainly provided a lot of opportunity. Therefore, I can assure members that they dealt with and understood those issues long before any of us came to this place.

We also heard from industry associations. I know we heard from them, because I heard from many of them. They called for the same things. They said, "Let us have some changes".

The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, of which I have been a member through my businesses in the past, do a great job. I continue to get the surveys and the input from their members and write those members back to confirm what we do as a government. It said, "With respect to employment insurance, 22% of our members told us they feel they're competing against EI for workers". They are competing against an insurance program for jobs. It does not really make a lot of sense. It goes on to say, "and 16% of our members said they have been asked by employees to lay them off so they can collect employment insurance. The need for change is very clear".

Those were not my words. Those were the words of the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the voice of business for Canada, had this to say. I would consider it to be a very good voice because it petitions the people who create jobs in our country and pay the most taxes as far as percentage to gross income and personal income. It said:

For decades we've understood that the EI system can be a double-edged sword, protecting workers who lose their jobs, yes, but also creating enduring dependencies and marginalizing thousands of workers...Canada can't continue to pay the cost of an underutilized workforce.

Those are not my words. That is the business community of Canada coming forward and saying we need change.

There are labour inefficiencies from coast to coast. I am clearly in support of this budget. It would do great things for Canada. It would do great things for Canadian families. More important, it would do great things for Canadian families in the future. A budget today is what affects us in years and years to come.

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● (2040)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order, or usual practice of the House, when the proceedings are interrupted later this day, pursuant to the order made Tuesday, June 12, 2012, under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures:

- (a) all questions necessary to dispose of third reading stage of the said bill shall be deemed put and a recorded division shall be deemed requested;
- (b) the bells to call in the members shall ring for not longer than 30 minutes;
- (c) following the disposal of Bill C-38, the House shall then proceed immediately to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions respecting the third reading stage of Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, and the motion to concur in the third report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates; and
- (d) after the taking of the recorded divisions provided for in this order, the House shall stand adjourned to the next sitting day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the Chief Government Whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): 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)

* * *

[*Translation*]

JOBS, GROWTH AND LONG-TERM PROSPERITY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-38, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party organized extensive consultations on Bill C-38. I heard a lot of concerns about this legislation. I myself just used the term “heard” when I should have said “listened”.

The member said he heard a number of witnesses, but did he really listen to them?

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, did I really listen to them? That is a bit insulting.

I am trained to listen and to speak, but clearly I am not trained to speak as the NDP member opposite is. I heard those members speak for years about infrastructure investments and when they had the opportunity to vote for them, they voted against them. They voted against the bridges in Quebec and the bridges and roads across the country. They voted against water and sewer infrastructure. I assure the member that I listened to the committee members and to the witnesses who came forward, and not just the witnesses whom this

member heard from. We heard from hundreds, including witnesses from aboriginal bands and environmental consultations.

I have been here for eight years now. It is not a very long time, but I have been on the environment committee. I have been the parliamentary secretary for infrastructure and transportation when that member's party voted against all those infrastructure investments. I have heard clearly from many witnesses over the years and I assure that member that all the proposed changes in Bill C-38 would be excellent for the country, today and tomorrow.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following up on my colleague's question, with all the committee hearings and all the debate in this place, could the member tell us why there was not one good idea they heard, not one single amendment that the government put forward in terms of how this bill would affect those people who came before you to testify? And why, including the Speaker's riding, were members of your caucus not listened to in terms of the devastating changes to the ridings bordering on the Trent-Severn and what a shortened year and shortened day would mean in each of those towns that only has one economic development? That is their lock.

You think you consulted, but consulting is sending—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. I would remind hon. members to direct questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca.

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that many good ideas were taken. I know that because I received feedback from the Department of Finance that it received some of my ideas and implemented them in the budget. So what could be better than that for me? Clearly, they had some great ideas.

However, I assure the member that we heard, loud and clear, from the Liberal Party in Alberta. I mentioned the national energy program which shut down every business in Fort McMurray, except for probably two. We listened, loud and clear, and that is why we will never vote for a Liberal government again. That is why it is in third place and that is where it is going to remain for a long time if it is able to hold onto that particular place.

● (2045)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member from beautiful Fort McMurray to expand on some of the changes that have happened in the oil sands that are largely because our government committed to a cleaner, more environmentally friendly development of our natural resources. Could he enlighten us on what has been happening over the last four or five years? Have there been any dramatic changes in the oil sands?

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, that is a bit outside of the topic, but I assure the member that I am proud to say there have been some tremendous changes.

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I talked to an aboriginal chief from northern Alberta two days ago about some of the changes that have taken place in northern Alberta, including more air and water monitoring and initiatives by the federal government in co-operation with the provincial government.

One thing that I am proud of is this. In 1967 when I moved to Fort McMurray it had what was called tailings pond number one. Many people over the last 35 to 40 years said that could not be cleaned up. Well it is cleaned up today. Suncor Energy has done a tremendous job in environmental performance. It has done a tremendous job with the community. In fact, I would suggest the oil sands companies that are currently in Alberta and northern Alberta spend more money per capita for environmental integrity than anywhere else on the planet. That is the truth and I stick with that.

As far as what is happening in the oil sands regarding employment insurance, though, we clearly need more workers. We need more people to take those great jobs. With the highest household income in the country of \$185,000, I am proud to say that Canada's economy is created in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca for sharing his time with me today. I look forward to visiting his riding this summer, and seeing the resource development of the oil sands and the great things that are happening in Fort McMurray—Athabasca.

It is a pleasure to rise and speak at third reading in favour of Bill C-38, jobs, growth and long-term prosperity act, and the many economic action plan 2012 initiatives that it enacts.

In particular I want to highlight how today's bill reduces pointless bureaucratic red tape to help jump-start Canada's economy. I should note that the measures I will speak to today flow from the work of the Red Tape Reduction Commission.

For over five decades, the Food and Drugs Act has served to protect the health and safety of Canadians by providing them with one of the safest and most rigorous food and drug regulation systems in the world. It has served us well, and continues to serve us well. However, it is reasonable that in over 50 years certain aspects of that act may need to be updated from time to time, especially those that do nothing but harm Canada's economy.

Before I begin, let me clearly state that the changes to the Food and Drugs Act proposed in Bill C-38 do not change the scientific assessment process in any way. I repeat, we are maintaining the current high standards of the act.

What we are targeting is the pointless, antiquated and often times bizarre red tape that presented itself after the scientific assessments were completed, red tape that increased the regulatory burden and creating lengthy delays for businesses to get approved food and drug products to consumers.

At present, once a scientific assessment is completed and a food safety decision is made by the experts at Health Canada, be it concerning the safety of a new food additive, setting the limit for a chemical contaminant or approving a new health claim for food, it can take years to circumvent the red tape required to implement that decision. These delays, between decision and implementation, can

impede the entry of safe new food products to the marketplace. This disadvantages Canadian businesses and workers by harming the food and consumer manufacturing sector of the Canadian economy that employs 300,000 Canadians, the largest employer in the manufacturing sector in every region of our country.

It can also limit Health Canada's ability to protect the health and safety of Canadians. For example, under the current system, Health Canada determined that a food additive used to combat harmful bacteria in certain processed meats was safe, but it took 36 months for the required regulatory change to enable the use of this product in Canada.

The targeted amendments to the Food and Drugs Act would eliminate these types of delays. They would improve Health Canada's ability to protect the health and safety of Canadians while cutting red tape. More specifically, these amendments include new authorities that would shorten the time it takes for safe food products to be put on the Canadian market.

Streamlining the regulatory process would significantly reduce the approval time for food additives. These new regulatory tools are marketing authorizations and incorporation by reference. I should note that these amendments have received widespread support.

Food and Consumer Products of Canada has voiced its strong support, saying:

This legislation will give Canadians access to the new and innovative products they are demanding, protect product safety and help our manufacturing sector grow... We strongly support the federal government's move to address these regulatory delays. [This] will bring Canadians more of the products they have been asking for, support innovation and jobs in our sector, and uphold Canada's exemplary safety standards.

● (2050)

The Retail Council of Canada has also added its voice of support, saying:

These amendments will reduce delays and red tape while maintaining the highest level of food safety in Canada...

...in the past, Health Canada would have to seek a regulatory amendment each time a new use was requested for a food additive that the department had already deemed to be safe; this process could take years. Now, the same process will take a matter of just a few months allowing industry to keep pace with growing and changing demands from consumers...

They also demonstrate the government's ongoing commitment to do away with red tape.

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association has also noted that the changes “support efforts to reduce regulation and simplify the process by which new products can come to market”.

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Bill C-38 also proposes amendments to reduce the regulatory burden associated with managing Canadians' access to safe, approved drugs. These changes would give Canadians a more responsive drug safety system. As the Red Tape Reduction Commission reported, the current process is burdensome.

Let me take a minute to illustrate exactly what these amendments would and would not do. Currently, for instance, once Health Canada scientists make a decision, the process used to make a simple regulatory change to remove a drug from Schedule F of the Food and Drug Regulations can take years. Implementing a decision to change a drug status from prescription to over-the-counter can be delayed by as much as 24 months after the scientific review. What does this delay between decision and implementation mean? It means a great deal to Canadians and their health care system. Delaying timely access to effective and affordable treatments costs the health care system money. It also costs Canadians.

Under the current system, they must continue to take time off work, go see their doctors, get written prescriptions and then fill them at the pharmacy long after Health Canada's scientists have determined that a particular drug is safe and effective for over-the-counter use. I should note that the science used to assign prescription status would not change at all. As is the case today, the scientific criteria, together with the new process for making changes to the web-based list, would continue to be regulated.

Without a doubt, this portion of Bill C-38 would help replace costly and outdated red tape around drug prescription status. In the words of Consumer Health Products Canada:

Without changing the scientific review process, this measure will eliminate the 12-18 month regulatory delay that currently holds up access to new over-the-counter medicines after Health Canada approval. These consumer health products reduce consumer costs and have been shown to save provincial health care systems money... and this measure will quicken access to those savings.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage all members of the House to support Bill C-38 and its measures to reduce red tape and grow the economy while advantaging Canadian consumers.

● (2055)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will advise my hon. colleague that I will not be supporting Bill C-38. Liberals have a great concern about what is taking place. For example, Bill C-38 would tear the EI program to pieces. A lot of people would have to work for 70% of their salaries. It would make changes to the Fisheries Act. Over the years, when there were changes to the Fisheries Act, it was always felt that members had to go from coast to coast to talk to fisheries groups in order to find out what they felt should be changed in the Fisheries Act.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would comment on why there was no consultation on the east coast or the west coast of people who are involved with the fishery and the EI program. Why did the government unilaterally decide on what was going to take place? Does my hon. colleague realize the enormous hardship that it is going to create among people?

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, economic action plan 2012 is geared to jobs, economic growth and prosperity for all Canadians. With regard to consultation, the finance committee and subcommittee that were formed spent over 70 hours in consultation with Canadians from industry and consumer groups right across the

spectrum. They spent more time than any consultation process in the past 20 years for any economic bill of this nature. Quite frankly, the consultation process has been thorough and extremely fair.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member's speech about expediting the approval of medicines or pharmaceutical drugs in the country. I have a friend who just received her Ph.D. at Dalhousie University, lauded as the best Ph.D. of the year. Her analysis was the input of the public into the review of drugs for breast cancer and the difference in the end analysis when organizations were given the opportunity to have input or not. We need merely refer to the issue of Oxycontin and the disaster that resulted when there was no proper review of what its implications might be given the form in which that medicine was allowed to be released.

I am giving the member the opportunity to rethink whether or not it makes sense to always short-circuit and fast-track the approval of drugs.

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. There has to be serious consultation and consideration in every one of these cases. Short-circuiting for the sake of short-circuiting is not the answer.

The Red Tape Reduction Commission reviewed a number of avenues by which redundancy occurred and impeded the development or the sale of products over the counter in the health care system. My understanding is that the commission achieved a reduction in redundant costs and redundant steps in processes that keep the appropriate medications from getting to market on time and on budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I heard the government member talk about the scope of the consultations that took place. It is not the first time I hear this. They talk about 70 hours in committee. That is 50 hours at the Standing Committee on Finance and 20 hours at the subcommittee.

However, we have to keep in mind that some 70 acts were either added, abolished or amended. If we had followed the usual process and spent about five hours in committee to review each piece of legislation—usually, it is much more than five hours—the various committees would have spent 350 hours reviewing the scope of these changes.

I wonder if the member for Don Valley West could elaborate on this. Does he not agree that 70 hours to review this bill is much less than the minimum of 350 hours that would have been required to review these changes in an appropriate fashion?

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• (2100)

[*English*]

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, this government did its job in recruiting consultation and input on the bill, whether it was through the Red Tape Reduction Commission or the hours of study that went into the consultation process. Finance committee and a special subcommittee studied this bill for nearly 70 hours. That is the longest consideration of budget legislation in committee in decades and likely ever.

It is one thing to try to extrapolate an arbitrary number. The reality is that 70 hours of consultation went into the bill. There were 70 hours of solid input. This government has done an exceptional job in bringing the right bill to the House.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question is regarding the changes to OAS. This is an area which will affect all seniors across Canada when the time comes. Seniors and soon-to-be seniors from across our country, as well as organizations such as CARP and others have spoken out.

How does my colleague respond to the concerns of his own constituents? How can he stand up for what his government is doing when it comes to cutting back on the dignity of seniors across Canada?

Mr. John Carmichael: Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity to hold quite a number of sessions with seniors in my riding to discuss this issue. Seniors hear our news. They talk to their friends. They hear the information that is coming from the other side and they become terrified that their economic security is going to go away. That is not the case. That is not what—

The Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has elapsed.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Chambly—Borduas.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I found out I was going to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-38, I re-read an almost endless number of emails and letters I received at my office in which people spoke out against the bill.

Obviously, as a member of Parliament, delivering a speech before the House is the best way to represent the support or criticism—in this case the criticism—of the people of Chambly—Borduas. Unfortunately, with all the dissatisfaction of my constituents over this bill and all the measures in this Trojan Horse bill, I have decided to take a different approach to describing how it will affect my riding.

Madam Speaker, if I may, I will relay an anecdote. On the weekend, on Saturday, I took part in an activity that gave me the opportunity to travel down the Richelieu River, which splits my riding in two. It is the heart of my riding. In travelling down the river, I truly saw to what extent Bill C-38 would harm my community. The point of departure was Chambly. Our canoes had not even touched the water and I could already see that my riding would be adversely affected in a number of ways.

I asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance a question last week, but unfortunately she did not give a satisfactory answer in her speech.

This bill will initially affect the tourism sector. As I have said many times in this House, I was pleased to learn in committee that Fort Chambly is one of the most popular Parks Canada sites in Quebec. Unfortunately, its operations will be reduced because of the cuts to Parks Canada. That is interesting because it is a very important site that commemorates the War of 1812. Colonel Salaberry, one of the greatest heroes of the wars, was from Chambly, Quebec. A statue of Colonel Salaberry is located in front of the town hall and a street has been named after him. And yet, the hours of operation at this heritage site will be reduced.

I am just at the beginning of my story, and I have already pointed out very significant repercussions. Obviously, this will have a negative effect on all businesses in the region, such as restaurants and local organizations. All these places, all these people and the services they provide to the community will be adversely affected by these cuts.

We could talk about the Festival Bières et Saveurs, which is held at Fort Chambly, and which allows people to visit the fort at the same time. Parks Canada officials have told me that these cuts will first affect events held in the fall. That is a very significant repercussion.

We then got into our canoes and passed by two very large signs that said “Caution: pipeline”—the Montreal-Portland pipeline to be exact. My predecessor said that there will be a number of problems with this pipeline because the flow of oil is going to be reversed. The infrastructure is 60 years old, and the integrity of the structure could be affected, which would cause a disaster. This pipeline runs under the river; we canoed over it. When we think about the heritage value of this river and its economic and environmental value, we come to realize just how devastating the repercussions could be.

You will surely ask me what the connection is between a 60-year-old pipeline and Bill C-38. It is not complicated: it shows how important it is to have operational, adequate, in-depth environmental assessment structures to ensure that we will never have such a situation again, where the infrastructure is unable to contain an oil spill under a river. We all agree that environmental regulations are not the same as they were 60 years ago. The reason regulations were improved was to ensure that these problems would not occur again.

Representing a community that faces such a problem, I realize the importance of these procedures and I realize that destroying and removing all these measures in order to expedite a process would have negative repercussions. We cannot hurry environmental protection, because it will have repercussions for many generations. We have seen this at home in my riding for 60 years. This is not a new pipeline, like that proposed by Enbridge; this is a 60-year-old pipeline. That is almost a lifetime.

Government Orders

• (2105)

We continued our canoe trip and stopped to attend a first nations ceremony. I should mention that this Festival des voitures d'eau was organized to celebrate the Iroquois's journey with Samuel de Champlain from Lake Champlain to Quebec City. In making this journey to celebrate this heritage, we participated in prayers with the first nations peoples, people from the Maison amérindienne in Mont-Saint-Hilaire in my riding.

During these prayers, as my colleague from Churchill and a number of other colleagues pointed out, I realized the negative impact that this will have on our aboriginal communities because of the lax environmental procedures that will result from the proposed changes in Bill C-38, or because of various funding shortfalls and cuts to social services and health services. My colleague next to me is our health critic for aboriginal communities. Services will be affected, but that is not all.

When other cuts are made, it puts more pressure on the provincial governments that might want to help their aboriginal communities, but will be less and less able to do so. In praying with these communities, I realized more and more the impact this will have on the communities.

Let us continue on our journey and pay a visit to the Résidences Richeloises in the municipality of McMasterville in my riding. Last August, I had the pleasure of celebrating the sun festival with the residents there, who are seniors. I could not help but think of how this will affect them. They told me how proud they were of us, and of our new leader, the member for Outremont, but also of Mr. Layton. Why were they so proud of him? Because he talked about our seniors' dignity, which was improved by this celebration and this residence. Unfortunately, their dignity is not being improved at all by the cuts and measures proposed in Bill C-38.

I thought of these people and of the fact that they asked us to fiercely protect their dignity and their rights. As a little aside, that is why it does not bother me in the least when members opposite, the government members, talk about how we tried to stop this bill, to prevent this undemocratic act, and to allow real debate by separating this bill into the various pieces of legislation that it should have been in the first place. Clearly, these measures should have been introduced in several bills, rather than a single budget implementation bill.

Last week, when we rose almost 160 times in this House, I was not at all uncomfortable that we had launched this process and that we were fighting in this manner. Indeed, I knew that the people I met last summer would be pleased, because this is how we defend their dignity.

So we continue our canoe trip on the river. We finally arrive at our destination. I thought once again about the environment as we reached Pointe-Valaine, which is a woodlot in the town of Otterburn Park that people are fighting for. We could raise the same issues that I already raised regarding the protection of our environment.

On my way back home, I also went by several businesses that provide seasonal work. The workers and owners of these businesses came to see us in our office to explain the impact of all that. I find it very interesting and I will conclude on that note. Obviously I would

not have had time to go through all the emails I received, since I do not even have time to finish my story.

These people came to see us, which proves, contrary to what the government claims, that it is not just citizens and workers who are affected. It is also employers, people who help, through team work with employees, to improve our economy, our heritage and our environment. They work to create beauty in the region that I am so proud to represent.

That is why I oppose Bill C-38, why we will continue to do so, and why I am proud of the actions that we have taken so far as the official opposition.

• (2110)

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am sure I speak for all of my colleagues and certainly should for all of those in the House. I want to thank the hon. member for putting a human face on the bill.

This is precisely the reason why we have fought so hard to have the bill split and broken up, so that Canadians can come in and speak to members of Parliament about their views on all the measures in the bill.

I think about the people I have worked with for 40 years in aboriginal communities and small communities across the Prairies, across Canada, who simply want to be able to come to a hearing and have their voice heard, so they can tell the tribunal what the impact would be on them, so they can have input to the terms of an environmental impact assessment to make sure there are measures that would protect their communities.

I would like to give the hon. member the opportunity to perhaps tell a little bit more about his canoe trip, and I really want to profoundly thank him for his speech today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As she explained so eloquently, her work also brought her into close contact with the community. Anyone working with the community and talking to people knows that this will have a serious impact. That is why I thought the story was so important to tell. As she said, we have to put a human face on the work we do here. Bill C-38 does not have a human face.

We often think of those who feel disconnected from the political process because of what the government has done. It is important to talk with people.

Earlier, my colleague from Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher asked a member opposite a question about whether he not only heard, but also listened. The member opposite seemed to find the question insulting, but that is how things are. People learn that lesson when they are very young. We cannot just hear people. The point of consultations is not—

• (2115)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

Government Orders

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was also very impressed with the hon. member's speech—and he didn't even use notes. It was excellent. I just wanted to say that it will also have an impact on Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, the riding I represent.

As we know, there are many lakes in my riding. There is a lot of concern about the impact of these changes on tourism, especially because new mines may be opening soon, and because of the effect on environmental protection.

We need only think of the Grassy Narrows First Nation and the fact that the mercury poisoning that occurred years ago still has an impact today. The environmental laws have been tightened up a great deal since that happened. Still, they are all being dismantled and the impact of new projects on the environment will, I think, be bad for our health and for everyone's health. Perhaps my colleague would care to comment on that.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I am happy to hear questions like this because it shows the passion we have for our work in our communities and our ridings.

The hon. member talked about health. It is extremely important, because, as I said in my speech, we have already had to deal with the consequences of our errors. We have already seen what can happen when there is no adequate, in-depth process in place.

Once again, we do understand the importance of proceeding rapidly. No one is against that, but when the environment is at issue, we must be aware of projects that might, if poorly designed and constructed, have a devastating impact on the communities where they are built. That is especially true in first nations communities, as my colleague mentioned. When the impact is considerable, it is important not to rush things, because we are not just talking about short-term benefits, but about long-term reality. We are talking about long-term impact. That is not true just for the environment and health; it applies to everything. It applies to old age security. When we talk about people my age who want to retire, we have to know what the long-term impact will be.

The government likes to talk about responsibility and making choices. Making choices and taking responsibility mean more than considering the impact for just the next year or two and saying it is no big deal, because people who are retiring in two years will not be affected. They need to think 10, 20 or even 30 years into the future.

When we think of it that way, this is definitely a mistake. It is important to think outside the box. That is the real duty of governance. An NDP government would take on that duty.

Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, NDP): Madam Speaker, what are we about to sacrifice in the name of this so-called economic prosperity?

It is important to point out that this omnibus bill is more than a budget implementation bill. The Conservatives are trying to impose measures that were never previously announced, without allowing Canadians and their MPs an opportunity to study them carefully.

First of all, let me just say that, after one year, we are beginning to see the Conservatives' true colours. Bill C-38 clearly demonstrates

the arrogance and irresponsibility of this government, which seems to think anything goes.

The Conservatives pass themselves off as experts at good governance, but in fact, they are going to make workers, families and seniors pay the price.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for Canadians to believe the Conservatives when they talk about economic prosperity, because so far, only the Conservatives' friends and cronies seem to be benefiting from their measures.

When the Parliamentary Budget Officer worries about the lack of transparency and the culture of secrecy, I worry about the interests of ordinary Canadians. This omnibus bill needs to be studied carefully and presented to Canadians for what it is: a partisan bill that defies common sense.

I was always under the impression that the government should build and improve society for the common good and for the general public, but with Bill C-38, the exact opposite is happening. The Conservatives are destroying, degrading and vandalizing what Canadian parliamentarians have spent years building. The rights of workers, environmental protection and Canadians' health are simply not enough for them.

Why is one-third of Bill C-38 devoted to environmental deregulation?

Is it so hard to add ecology to a Conservative budget? It is simply irresponsible and undemocratic.

Is this really what Canadians voted for? I do not think so.

Unfortunately, to the Conservatives, a majority mandate means they can do whatever they want, even if it is illogical or harmful. This is a very clear attempt to quickly pass new legislation without having a parliamentary debate.

This budget will cause some very tangible harm. For example, as far as old age security is concerned, increasing the retirement age from 65 to 67 is unacceptable and does not make any sense. Just because life expectancy is increasing significantly does not mean that working conditions will get easier. Even though a number of experts, including the Parliamentary Budget Officer, have confirmed that the old age security program is viable, the Conservatives insist on balancing their budget at the expense of our seniors. It is shameful.

Bill C-38 also changes the Employment Equity Act so that it no longer applies to federal contracts. That is a direct attack on women, aboriginal people and visible minorities. In fact, it was recommended 10 years ago that the employment equity provisions for the federal contractors program be strengthened. This government is weakening those provisions and, as usual, it makes no sense.

In the Conservatives' world, logic no longer applies. They are in an ideological world, where they are becoming increasingly out of touch with Canadians.

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When he appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance on April 26, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that the Conservatives' austerity budget would lead to the loss of 43,000 jobs and slow down Canada's economic recovery. He confirmed that the combination of this budget and the previous cuts would result in the loss of more than 100,000 jobs. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's figures show that this budget will cause the Canadian economy to backslide.

It is important to speak out against the changes made to unemployment insurance. We must remember that the federal government has not contributed a single penny to the fund since 1990.

Its reforms are based on prejudice against the unemployed, and those mainly affected, the workers, were not consulted even though employees and employers fund the program.

One of the most fundamental changes will hit workers with precarious employment very hard. The government is again targeting "frequent" claimants, people who have made three claims and collected more than 60 weeks of benefits in the past five years. It will require these people to accept any job starting in the seventh week of unemployment, with a salary equal to 70% of the salary of their previous job. This measure targets seasonal workers who rely on EI year after year.

The Conservatives are also planning to make other changes that will penalize claimants in remote areas in particular, while making legal procedures for challenging an unfavourable decision more cumbersome. Unions believe that abolishing boards of referees, umpires and appeal mechanisms restricts access to justice.

The changes proposed by the Conservatives threaten regional economies, especially where there is a lot of seasonal work and people make their living from the fishery, forestry, tourism and agriculture.

• (2120)

Moreover, there is no question that these changes will put downward pressure on salaries. What a nice way to bring prosperity to our economy and our country!

The Conservatives' approach is counterproductive. Instead of focusing on creating wealth by providing better support for quality jobs, including in the manufacturing sector, the Conservatives are going after the unemployed and society as a whole by forcing them to accept jobs where their skills will not be put to contribution.

Bill C-38 even repeals the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, which was created in the 1930s to set minimum standards for wages and hours of labour for construction workers engaged in projects funded by the federal government. In practice, removing these minimum standards will allow employers to undercut wage rates set by unions. This shows the scope of the legislation.

Last fall, we brought forward a motion calling on the government to take immediate action to create economic growth and jobs. The Conservatives supported our motion, but the budget does just the opposite. It cuts essential services and it weakens environmental regulations.

As regards old age security, the government has once again surpassed itself, although not in the positive sense of the word. The Conservatives never mentioned that they were going to cut old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, and certainly not during the election campaign. We have known for a long time that costs would increase. Therefore, the Conservatives cannot claim that this was not expected during the 2011 election campaign.

In 2010, the Standing Committee on Finance examined the Canadian retirement security system. None of the recommendations—not even those of the Conservatives—suggested that old age security and the guaranteed income supplement were not sustainable, or that the age of eligibility should be increased.

During the 2011 election campaign, the Conservatives even said they would not reduce transfer payments to individuals or provinces for basic needs such as health, education and pensions. This is some lack of respect for democracy! Not only did the Conservatives hide their agenda, they also misled Canadians by saying repeatedly that they would not cut pensions.

Then they came along with irresponsible and ideological choices that do not reflect the values of most Canadians: major cuts to environmental protection, food safety, old age security and employment insurance, among other things.

The Conservatives have no problem with their ministers spending thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money to take limousine and helicopter rides, but they have no scruples about cutting measures that keep Canadians safe and protect our most vulnerable citizens.

There is so much secrecy in Bill C-38 that it is unacceptable for it to be passed as is in the House. The government should come clean and redo its homework to protect the best interests of Canadians.

I would like to come back to old age pensions. I used to work in a factory where we were familiar with occupational illnesses. It is true that great strides have been made in factories, but the work is still extremely hard. People back home are known for suffering from bladder cancer, lung cancer, industrial deafness and all kinds of things. So how can the government force factory or mine workers to return to work at the age of 60, 62 or 63? What will the Conservatives do with these people?

I would like to talk more about seasonal workers. Here is a solution for the Conservatives. In Tadoussac, when the whale-watching season is over and tourism is done, they could shut down the town and transfer workers to La Romaine to work on the hydro dams. That makes no sense. These are seasonal workers. They make their living off of fishing, tourism and whale-watching. There is no work for them in the winter. The Conservative government did not take that into account.

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The employment insurance situation is even worse. The government is creating three classes of unemployed workers, three kinds of people to justify that approach. There will be short-term recipients who collect employment insurance occasionally; others, less fortunate, who find themselves out of a job more often; and yet others who collect employment insurance regularly and will have no choice but to accept lower-paying jobs. Moreover, these people will not be working in their chosen field. It will not be fulfilling for them.

People can accuse the NDP of anything they want, of wrecking one thing or standing up for another, but there are some things we do not understand. Yes, the Conservatives have to make changes; yes, there will have to be cuts. Cuts must be made, but the Conservative government is not cutting in the right places. Cutting health care and seniors' benefits and forcing people to take lower-paying jobs will not contribute to the nation's progress.

Anyway, I have been here for a year now. I have always believed that we should be working for the good of communities, workers and Canadians, but that is not the sense I get here. I get the sense that the government holds workers in contempt. As I have said here in the House, workers pay taxes, and they are the reason that we are here to participate in these debates and get to the bottom of things.

• (2125)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague's comments. He really knows the issues facing people who work in the industrial sector and truly cares about employment insurance.

With the changes being made by this government, people will lose their benefits in no time at all. Perhaps we need to remind the Conservatives who really pays for EI benefits. I find it truly disturbing that people can lose all the money that would really make a difference to their families when they lose their jobs.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on the government's cuts to employment insurance.

Mr. Claude Patry: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

My concern is that when we think of employment insurance, it is supposed to be a safety net. Now the government is going to force people to accept 70% of the wages they were previously earning. If people are truly unfortunate and are let go after three months, they are going to be offered 70% less in wages. Where will this ultimately lead? Are we headed for cheap labour? That is our concern. That is what many workers are worried about. People do not make a decision to be seasonal workers. People who live on the North Shore live off the fishery. There is no fishing in the winter. Everyone could transfer to La Romaine, I guess. This makes no sense. It is completely absurd.

• (2130)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I also want to congratulate my colleague from Jonquière—Alma on his presentation.

He has identified a serious problem with Bill C-38. In the House of Commons, we have employees who are unemployed almost all summer. They are long-standing employees who have worked here for 10 or 11 years. For instance, there is the group of servers in the

restaurants or the House of Commons bus drivers. In the summer, they are not paid, but in September they get their jobs back. That is how the House of Commons system works. The same applies to people in the tourist regions, the fisheries and forestry.

I will ask my question in English.

[*English*]

I know what happens to people who are in the seasonal industries. If we tell them they have to find another job somewhere for two months, three months, four months, it is unfair to the employers who hire them. Are employers going to hire and train people, knowing they will be gone in two months for the job that is waiting for them back here at the House of Commons?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Claude Patry: Madam Speaker, that is a concern I have seen among employers. Often, when things start up again, when the organization resumes its activities and the tourists come back, people come to the ticket office and board the boats to go fishing. It is almost always the same people who come back to work for the same employer. The employers fear that they are going to lose some employees with expertise who might go work elsewhere. If the difference in pay is \$1 or \$2 an hour and they are given a regular schedule instead of having to work seasonally, there is no problem. The thing that concerns the employers is that their employees are not going to come back when the fishing or tourism season opens.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague, the hon. member for Jonquière—Alma, a question.

One of the least discussed items in the budget is the weaker foreign ownership regulations, especially those concerning telecommunications. I would like the member for Alma, a community that has its own challenges as a result of the weaker regulations, to talk to us about what the government needs to do to support our communities.

Mr. Claude Patry: Madam Speaker, I will give a short answer.

I would like to mention that there are large multinationals in my riding, but it is the small and medium-sized businesses that create employment. When a big multinational catches a cold, the SMEs cough. We want to create something, keep our people working and have good, well-paid jobs so that people can live decently. We are not asking for MPs' wages. We are asking for decent wages that people can live on.

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, on Sunday we celebrated Father's Day in Canada and other parts of the world. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on some of the teachings I was raised on. I really thank my dad, my stepdad and other people who have acted as father figures, someone who is sitting in the Senate gallery today, for their wisdom.

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I was talking on the phone with someone about the principle of balancing the books in a household. Something that was instilled in me at a young age was that the principle of balancing books means that one can either spend less money or make more money. This is a challenge that Canadians face every day, how to balance their books. It was an interesting conversation, because we were speaking about how this affects my life as a legislator. Bill C-38 has this embedded in it as a fundamental principle.

Government has a role in managing programs, laws, services and public goods that underpin the competitive advantage our country enjoys internationally, programs such as employment insurance, our health care system, ensuring our streets are safe. Government has a role in all of these things. We provide them to Canadians. These programs also ensure that we have a healthy, productive and vibrant population and subsequent workforce. Those who are able can contribute to our society, and those who are not able are cared for and whenever possible are assisted in finding opportunities to succeed.

These practices are valued by Canadians, and yet, as in anything that has a value, they come with a cost. Programs are funded by taxes, royalties and levies on Canadians, be it individuals or job-creating companies. This means these individuals and entities lose access to these funds and subsequently will change their spending habits, be it for the consumption of goods, saving funds, hiring of employees, investment endeavours, and the list goes on.

Therein lies the rub. Government programs and services play an integral role in our society, and yet they come at a cost. I would hope that all of my colleagues would agree that achieving a balance in this regard is part of the responsibility we are charged with as legislators.

Embedded in this duty is the duty to review the efficacy and delivery of the programs and services, laws and regulations that we manage to ensure they are doing what they are intended to do, to improve on them whenever possible, and to ensure we are being wise stewards of taxpayer dollars.

These are important principles to remember as we watch what is happening in parts of the eurozone. In Greece, we see a country that has borrowed to the brink. Its economy is stalled, and the sustainability of the social programs it provides and which I talked about earlier is in question.

That is why our government has introduced Bill C-38. It is to ensure the long-term prosperity of our country in light of global economic fragility. It is the message that our country is taking to the G20 summit that is happening this week, the need to work toward balanced budgets around the globe while putting forward policies that encourage economic growth, so that populations can ensure they see that prosperity and sustainability of programming which underpins the fabric of our societies.

I talked about the need to ensure there is balance in spending and program delivery.

Since 2006, our government has reduced the tax burden on families. The average family of four pays \$3,000 less in taxes. I know that \$3,000 makes a lot of difference to the average Canadian family of four, and Canadians have recognized that.

We ensure that job creators operate in a competitive tax regime. People want to invest in our country. We are seeing job creation here. Over 760,000 net new jobs have been created since the economic downturn in 2009. It is also why we have introduced the responsible resource development aspects of Bill C-38, which I want to speak to tonight.

I was speaking with my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport. He gave a speech recently in which he noted that two of the biggest shareholders in Canadian Natural Resources Limited, the country's largest independent oil producer, are the Quebec pension plan and the Canada pension plan, with \$576 million and \$165 million invested respectively. There is clearly an interplay between the companies that are undertaking natural resource development projects and energy projects with other fabrics of our society.

• (2135)

In fact, I believe \$2.1 trillion is what the oil sands is expected to drive for economic growth in our country over the next 25 years. We talk about long-term sustainability for funding our social programs. The sum of \$766 billion is what the oil sands industry alone is estimated will pay in provincial and federal taxes and provincial royalties over the next 25 years. There is no denying that we need to ensure that for the long-term prosperity and growth of our country we recognize that the resource sector is important to Canada's economy.

The measures that are included in part 3 of Bill C-38 are not designed to weaken environmental protection. We still have robust environmental assessments embedded in the country's laws and regulations. We have recognized the fundamental principle of window to market, the concept by which we assess whether or not a project is viable is recognized in our regulatory process. That is why we have inserted predictability and timeliness in the review process.

I was at the subcommittee that reviewed Bill C-38, as well as the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, where we reviewed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Absolutely, the need to protect Canada's environment came up over and over again. Certainly, I do not think there is anyone on the government side who would refute that point. However, we need to ensure that we have predictability and timeliness so that when projects are environmentally sustainable according to our laws and they meet those criteria, they can go forward. We as regulators are achieving that balance. We are talking about creating more revenue for the funding of our social programs, creating more jobs for people to enjoy the good standard of living that we have in Canada.

We have heard a lot about the environmental components of the bill and it behooves the House to listen to some of the measures that actually strengthen environmental protection in the bill. At the subcommittee, the environment commissioner noted that something like 99.4% of the environmental assessments that are currently undertaken by our government through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, have "little to no environmental impact". One of the examples that was given was a park bench being added in a national park.

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We also asked him if he felt that if the resources that were being allocated to the review of these projects were allocated to larger projects with significant environmental impact would be a better use of taxpayer funds. He said yes. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency agrees with this as well. That is a component we are using to strengthen environmental protection.

Another thing is that for the first time people who break the terms of their environmental assessment would be faced with stiff monetary penalties. Penalties could range from \$100,000 to \$400,000. This is a new measure in Bill C-38.

We require follow-up programs after all environmental assessments to verify the accuracy of predictions regarding potential environmental effects and to determine if mitigation measures are working as intended. Again, this is strengthening environmental protection. For the first time, we would provide federal inspectors with authority to examine whether or not conditions set out in environmental assessment decisions are met. I could go on and on.

The opposition is not talking about these things. We are trying to create balance between environmental stewardship and economic growth.

A lot has been said about the consultation process around the bill. As a member of the subcommittee that reviewed part 3, I would like to read a list of those who participated in the consultation process through the subcommittee: Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environment, Department of Transport, Building and Construction Trades Department, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Canadian Construction Association, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canadian Nuclear Association, Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association, Mining Association of Canada, Ontario Commercial Fisheries Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Assembly of First Nations, British Columbia Coast Pilots Ltd., Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Ecojustice, First Nations Tax Commission, Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Pacific Pilotage Authority Canada, Canadian Hydropower Association, and as an individual, Tom Siddon.

• (2140)

I am getting the signal that my time is expiring.

The point to be made is that we have talked to Canadians. Canadians understand that we need long-term growth and prosperity in this country, and that is what Bill C-38 seeks to deliver.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak with Ducks Unlimited in the last two weeks. Its concerns around this legislation were quite strong.

We have lost 70% of the wetlands in Canada. The Conservative side has made much about drainage in farmers' fields. Ducks Unlimited said to me in my office that drainage in farmers' fields is an issue. The wetlands in this country that have been lost are important. So when we talk about drainage on any large piece of land, there has to be some understanding of the impact that draining that land would have on the environment. Installing a culvert is not a simple matter.

I would like to ask my colleague from the Prairies, where the wetlands are in so much danger, what she thinks we should do to promote wetlands in this country. How does she think we should move ahead with that, considering the great problem we have?

• (2145)

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, as a young girl I spent time going to Oak Hammock Marsh in the summer.

I am very familiar with the programs and services Ducks Unlimited offers, and it does a great job. Our government has invested millions of dollars into its programs. It has actually leveraged our government's dollars on what I think is a three-to-one basis in the protection of wetlands.

The member asked about the long-term protection of wetlands. If we talk to Ducks Unlimited and the people who work on a working landscape, they understand the need to talk to local folks who use the land and engage them in these conservation efforts. That is where Ducks Unlimited functions well as an organization.

From our government's perspective, we have invested millions of dollars in conservancy efforts across this country and those efforts are paying off.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like an explanation. My colleague opposite said that the Conservatives were ensuring the long-term sustainability of social problems. I have no idea what that means.

Could she explain the main social problems that she sees? What does she mean by ensuring the long-term sustainability of said problems?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, herein lies the inescapable paradox for those who believe in the welfare state. They believe they can create jobs by taxing those who hire, that we can borrow our way out of debt or protect pensions by taxing the companies to pay into them.

Bill C-38 proposes to create the conditions for long-term growth in the economy of our country by allowing companies to invest, by protecting our environment, while at the same time saying that some of our social programs are going to cost more in the future, like OAS. How do we ensure the long-term sustainability of that? We do that by making changes now and by also ensuring that we continue to have that stream of revenue that is created by companies.

I really appreciate the question my colleague asked, because it speaks to fundamental economics. There is an opportunity cost to delivering programs through government, but we achieve that balance by investing in growth, by creating terms and conditions for growth and also by ensuring the government's books are balanced.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her good work and her commitment to improving the environmental assessment process.

Government Orders

I just want to ask my colleague about the opposition's inconsistencies by voting against our budgets and our funding for environmental improvement, yet lambasting the government. Is there a problem with the consistency of what it is saying and doing?

Ms. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, the World Health Organization just ranked Canada's air quality as third best in the world. Our government has put in programs like the air quality management system. We have invested millions of dollars to protect lakes and waterways across this country. The chemical management plan that we established lists harmful chemicals. Our sector-by-sector regulatory approach on greenhouse gas emission is working. We are the first country to *Gazette* regulations for coal-fired electricity. We are protecting more parkland than any other government in history.

Our government is working when it comes to the environment.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am not certain that I am happy to rise to speak to this bill, because, seriously, there are so many errors in it that it makes no sense at all.

People have to understand that Bill C-38 is the act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures. I would say that the key phrase in the bill is “and other measures”, because it seems that it has everything in it but the budget. It has a little of anything and everything under the sun.

And yet, listening to the hon. members opposite, one would think that this bill is the greatest thing since sliced bread. People are asking why the opposition is so fired up about this 421-page document, of which 192 pages talk about the environment without really saying anything—that is quite an art—and 29 pages discuss fiscal measures. It is a bill with 753 clauses, and only 51 of those deal with fiscal measures. And these people call themselves great managers. Saying that Conservative members are great managers may be one of the country's greatest myths. Every day, more people are figuring that out.

We receive tons of email, without exaggeration. I invite everyone to look at the messages. My Conservative friends who have access to my Facebook page can see that I am not lying; it is full of comments.

If the Conservative members do not listen, they will have some surprises one day, we hope.

While doing a comparative analysis of various budget implementation bills—for such is the task of a parliamentarian—I was amazed to realize that from 1994 to 2005, such bills had an average of 77 pages.

However, since this wonderful Conservative government, this almighty public administrator, came to power in 2006, these bills have had 309 pages on average. The Conservatives try to shove this down our throats. Then they turn around and insult us. For the next year, they will probably be telling us that we voted against this and that, until the next bill, which could be even longer still.

Some members have surely said so, but we perhaps have not said it enough, because the members opposite do not seem to be actively listening. The problem with this kind of bill is that it may contain

some excellent measures that the opposition could have supported, but that is unfortunately not true of the vast majority of the measures. However, since the government decided to introduce this omnibus bill, this mammoth bill, this Trojan Horse—whatever you want to call it—the fact remains that this bill is hiding a lot of things. This bill gives us a clear picture of the government and what it is trying to do. That is what is unfortunate.

I once had high hopes. In 2006, when I lost my first election, I told myself that the incoming government believed in democracy and transparency. I told myself that it would do everything in its power to do things differently. I told myself that was a small price to pay to see democracy in action. Wow. It did not take long for me to wake up and see that the Conservatives were not going to make that happen. That might be part of their long-ago history and the legends they tell themselves when they party it up and engage in mutual admiration, but it has nothing to do with reality.

On the contrary, they have adopted some good old Liberal habits, such as introducing huge omnibus bills that they can hide all sorts of things in.

Here is what I do not understand: they have a majority. They can do what they want because they have the seats. We can do math as well as they can, thank you very much. We know full well that at the end of the day, it will be time to vote. So what is the problem? Why not study these issues thoroughly? I am not asking them to do it for our benefit but for the people we are all supposed to represent.

From everything we have been hearing for the past few weeks, you would think this is all-out war between the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party.

● (2150)

That is absolutely not the case. It is our duty to represent our constituents. At times, our Conservative colleagues have stood up—not in the House because they do not have permission to do so from the great Prime Minister—when they were in their ridings. They forgot that these days there are cameras everywhere and images are easy to get. We have more opportunity to see their true colours.

I have been a government backbencher, and I know that can be frustrating at times, because sometimes we are the last to know. However, at the time, in 2004, we had a system whereby for some bills we literally had the right to vote how the people of our riding wanted us to vote, as the Conservative member just explained to us.

As a newly arrived member of Parliament in 2004, this was probably the part I liked best, because we had an opportunity to have some influence on what was happening in Parliament. Unfortunately, we soon realized that these attempts were quickly crushed, which is rather sad.

Government Orders

I defy anybody—and I am tempted to challenge backbenchers—to know all the subtleties included in so many pages and measures. I studied law and I read and reread the bill. This is not necessarily the easiest and most exciting reading. At that level, the devil is often in the details, and there are many details in this bill.

What we do know is that it will change the face of our country. Perhaps that is what the government wanted to do, and it is certainly its prerogative as a majority government. I am not challenging this right, but there is a proper way to do things, and this is certainly not the case with Bill C-38.

The government often says that it creates jobs. That is its new hobby horse. That is what it claims, what it keeps repeating, what is written on its cards and what is in the black binder of answers for parliamentary secretaries and ministers. It is the government that creates jobs. There was a time when it talked about 600,000 jobs. Now, the number is 760,000. Sometimes, government members forget 60,000 jobs and talk about 700,000 jobs. These are nicely prepared answers, but they do not say much.

How polite and gracious is the government? Not only does it have a majority to impose a 421-page budget bill in which 69 acts are amended or repealed, and which contains 751 clauses on tax measures, but it does not even let the opposition express its views without saying silly things through and through. So much for that government.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that job creation is a totally erroneous notion. He estimates that, in fact, this budget will result in the loss of 43,000 jobs in Canada. When this figure is combined with the previous cuts made by this government, the number rises to 102,000 lost jobs. That is not what we call job creation.

The government is eliminating programs and changing measures in order to conduct fewer assessments. This will definitely not create any jobs. At a time when the global economy remains shaky, to say the least, this is not necessarily the easiest time to create tons of jobs. If the Conservative government is counting on the private sector to create jobs, I have some news for it.

In my region, in my riding of Gatineau, which is located right across the river, there is a great deal of unease. This government is cutting jobs in the public service and taking services away from people who need them. This hurts, and it is definitely not the right way to do things.

This bill warranted a lot more thorough examination so we could tell our constituents “mission accomplished”. We certainly would not have agreed with the policies, but we would have had the chance to express our opinions on this.

I would have liked to dissect this so-called budget bill quite a bit further, but unfortunately, I am out of time.

• (2155)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Chambly—Borduas for a very brief question.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to give my colleague a chance to speak some more about the unease felt by the people of Gatineau, where many people work for the public service. Considering what is happening in

my riding, I can just imagine what is happening in hers. I wonder if she could talk about that.

• (2200)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Gatineau has one minute.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Madam Speaker, I will try to reply quickly. It is unfortunate for the people of Gatineau that I have so little time to talk about this.

What has our public service and the workers here who provide such precious and countless services so worried is the way it is being done. They receive letters saying that their jobs may be affected. Then they hear that it might happen in their own units, but it is not yet clear who will have to go.

How hard it must be to work under such conditions. Worse yet, I hear that the details will not likely be released before the House has adjourned. Wow, what a lot of transparency. So, we can expect to hear the news about June 27, because the government likes to make its announcements on Fridays, when we are not here or not sitting.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 8:02 p.m., pursuant to an order made Tuesday, June 12, 2012, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings.

[*English*]

Pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill C-38, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 29, 2012 and other measures are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested.

Call in the members.

• (2240)

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

(*Division No. 444*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brousseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Fortin	Freeman

Government Orders

Garneau	Garrison	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Genest	Genest-Jourdain	Kerr	Komarnicki
Giguère	Godin	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Goodale	Gravelle	Lauzon	Lebel
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Leaf	Leitch
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia	Lemieux	Leung
Hsu	Hughes	Lizon	Lobb
Hyer	Jacob	Lukiwski	Lunney
Julian	Karygiannis	MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Kellway	Lamoureux	Mayes	McColeman
Lapointe	Larose	McLeod	Menegakis
Latendresse	Laverdière	Menzies	Merrifield
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)	Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Leslie	Liu	Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
MacAulay	Mai	O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Marston	Masse	Obhrai	Oda
Mathysen	May	Oliver	Opitz
McCallum	McGuinty	Paradis	Payne
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud	Penashue	Poilievre
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Preston	Raitt
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Rajotte	Rathgeber
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani	Reid	Rempel
Mulcair	Murray	Richards	Rickford
Nantel	Nash	Ritz	Saxton
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo	Schellenberger	Seeback
Pacetti	Papillon	Shea	Shipley
Patry	Péclet	Shory	Smith
Perreault	Pilon	Sopuck	Sorenson
Plamondon	Quach	Stanton	Storseth
Rae	Rafferty	Strahl	Sweet
Ravignat	Raynault	Tilson	Toet
Regan	Rousseau	Toews	Trost
Saganash	Sandhu	Trottier	Truppe
Savoie	Scarpaleggia	Tweed	Uppal
Scott	Sgro	Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	St-Denis	Van Loan	Vellacott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stoffer	Wallace	Warawa
Sitsabaiesan	Thibeault	Warkentin	Watson
Stewart	Tremblay	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	Williamson
Sullivan	Turmel	Weston (Saint John)	Woodworth
Toone		Wilks	Young (Oakville)
Trodeau		Wong	Zimmer— 158
Valerioté — 135		Yelich	
		Young (Vancouver South)	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	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
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

● (2250)

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

*(Division No. 445)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	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

Government Orders

Daniel	Davidson	Day	Dewar
Dechert	Del Mastro	Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Devolin	Dreeshen	Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Dusseault	Easter
Fletcher	Galipeau	Eyking	Foote
Gallant	Gill	Fortin	Freeman
Glover	Goguen	Garneau	Garrison
Goldring	Goodyear	Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Gosal	Gourde	Giguère	Godin
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Goodale	Gravelle
Hawn	Hayes	Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hiebert	Hillyer	Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hoback	Hoepfner	Hsu	Hughes
Holder	James	Hyer	Jacob
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Julian	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kellway	Lamoureux
Kerr	Komarnicki	Lapointe	Larose
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	Latendresse	Laverdière
Lauzon	Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leef	Leitch	Leslie	Liu
Lemieux	Leung	MacAulay	Mai
Lizon	Lobb	Marston	Masse
Lukiwski	Lunney	Mathysen	May
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	McCallum	McGuinty
Mayes	McColeman	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
McLeod	Menegakis	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Menzies	Merrifield	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock	Mulcair	Murray
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon	Nantel	Nash
Obhrai	Oda	Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Oliver	Opitz	Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Payne	Patry	Péclet
Penashue	Poilievre	Perreault	Pilon
Preston	Raiitt	Plamondon	Quach
Rajotte	Rathgeber	Rae	Rafferty
Reid	Rempel	Ravignat	Raynault
Richards	Rickford	Regan	Rousseau
Ritz	Saxton	Saganash	Sandhu
Schellenberger	Seeback	Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Shea	Shipley	Scott	Sgro
Shory	Smith	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sopuck	Sorenson	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Stanton	Storseth	Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Strahl	Sweet	Stewart	Stoffer
Tilson	Toet	Sullivan	Thibeault
Toews	Trost	Toone	Tremblay
Trottier	Truppe	Trudeau	Turmel
Tweed	Uppal	Valeriote — 135	
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 — 158		

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)

Nil

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the third reading stage of Bill C-11.

● (2255)

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

*(Division No. 446)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy

Adams

Government Orders

Adler	Aglukkaq		
Albas	Albrecht		
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)		
Allison	Ambler		
Ambrose	Anders	Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Anderson	Armstrong	Angus	Ashton
Ashfield	Aspin	Atamanenko	Aubin
Baird	Bateman	Ayala	Bélangier
Benoit	Bernier	Bennett	Benskin
Bezan	Blaney	Bevington	Blanchette
Block	Boughen	Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Braid	Breitkreuz	Borg	Boulerice
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge	Brison	Brosseau
Butt	Calandra	Byrne	Caron
Calkins	Cannan	Casey	Cash
Carmichael	Carrie	Charlton	Chicoine
Chisu	Chong	Chisholm	Choquette
Clarke	Clement	Christopherson	Cleary
Daniel	Davidson	Coderre	Comartin
Dechert	Del Mastro	Côté	Crowder
Devolin	Dreeshen	Cullen	Cuzner
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Day	Dewar
Fletcher	Galipeau	Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Gallant	Gill	Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Glover	Goguen	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Goldring	Goodyear	Dusseault	Easter
Gosal	Gourde	Eyking	Foote
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Fortin	Freeman
Hawn	Hayes	Gameau	Garrison
Hiebert	Hillyer	Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Hoback	Hoepfner	Giguère	Godin
Holder	James	Goodale	Gravelle
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Kerr	Komarnicki	Hsu	Hughes
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	Hyer	Jacob
Lauzon	Lebel	Julian	Karygiannis
Leef	Leitch	Kellway	Lamoureux
Lemieux	Leung	Lapointe	Larose
Lizon	Lobb	Latendresse	Laverdière
Lukiwski	Lunney	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Leslie	Liu
Mayes	McColeman	MacAulay	Mai
McLeod	Menegakis	Marston	Masse
Menzies	Merrifield	Mathysen	May
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	McCallum	McGuinity
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Obhrai	Oda	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Oliver	Opitz	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Paradis	Payne	Mulcair	Murray
Penashue	Poilievre	Nantel	Nash
Preston	Raiit	Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Rajotte	Rathgeber	Pacetti	Papillon
Reid	Rempel	Patry	Péclet
Richards	Rickford	Perreault	Pilon
Ritz	Saxton	Plamondon	Quach
Schellenberger	Seeback	Rae	Rafferty
Shea	Shipley	Ravignat	Raynault
Shory	Smith	Regan	Rousseau
Sopuck	Sorenson	Saganash	Sandhu
Stanton	Storseth	Savoie	Scarpaleggia
Strahl	Sweet	Scott	Sgro
Tilson	Toet	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Toews	Trost	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Trottier	Truppe	Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Tweed	Uppal	Stewart	Stoffer
Valcourt	Van Kesteren	Sullivan	Thibeault
Van Loan	Vellacott	Toone	Tremblay
Wallace	Warawa	Trudeau	Turmel
Warkentin	Watson	Valeriote— 135	
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wilks	Williamson		
Wong	Woodworth		
Yelich	Young (Oakville)	Nil	
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 158		

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Routine Proceedings

(Bill read the third time and passed)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

The House resumed from June 13 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the third report of Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, if you seek, I believe you would find agreement to apply the result from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

● (2300)

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Turmel: Mr. Speaker, we agree to apply the vote. The NDP will vote yes.

[English]

Ms. Judy Foote: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party will be voting yes.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois will vote yes.

[English]

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting yes.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party votes yes.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Mr. Speaker, I will be voting yes.

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

(Division No. 447)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Armstrong
Ashton
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bateman
Bennett
Benskin
Bevington
Blanchette
Blaney
Boivin

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Welland)
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Angus
Ashfield
Aspin
Aubin
Baird
Bélanger
Benoit
Bernier
Bezan
Blanchette-Lamothe
Block
Borg

Boughen
Boutin-Sweet
Braid
Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calandra
Cannan
Caron
Casey
Charlton
Chisholm
Chong
Christopherson
Cleary
Coderre
Côté
Cullen
Daniel
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Del Mastro
Dewar
Donnelly
Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dykstra
Eyking
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Freeman
Gallant
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Gill
Godin
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Grewal
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Holder
Hughes
Jacob
Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lapointe
Latendresse
Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leef
Lemieux
Leung
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
Marston
Mathysen
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Merrifield
Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Norlock
O'Connor
Boulerice
Brahmi
Breitkreuz
Brosseau
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Calkins
Carmichael
Carrie
Cash
Chicoine
Chisu
Choquette
Clarke
Clement
Comartin
Crowder
Cuzner
Davidson
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dechert
Devolin
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Easter
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Fortin
Galipeau
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Glover
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Gravelle
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia
Hayes
Hillyer
Hoepfner
Hsu
Hyer
James
Julian
Karygiannis
Kellway
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Larose
Lauzon
Lebel
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leitch
Leslie
Liu
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mai
Masse
May
McCallum
McGuinity
McLeod
Menzies
Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Nunez-Melo
O'Neill Gordon

Obhrai
Oliver
Pacetti
Paradis
Payne
Penashue
Pilon
Poilievre
Quach
Rafferty
Rajotte
Ravignat
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Oda
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Péclet
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Plamondon
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Raynault
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Shipley
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
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Sitsabaiesan
Sopuck
St-Denis
Stewart
Storseth
Sullivan
Thibeault
Toet
Toone

Tremblay
Trottier
Truppe
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 293

Nil

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 11 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11 p.m.)

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Trudeau
Turmel
Uppal
Valerioté
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

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