

House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)

Thursday, June 21, 2012

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 21, 2012

The House met at 1:45 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1350)

[English]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to paragraph 90(1)(*a*) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2012.

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INFORMATION COMMISSIONER OF CANADA

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act of the Information Commissioner of Canada for 2011-12. These documents are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian section of ParlAmericas respecting its participation at the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding between the Organization of American States and ParlAmericas held in Washington, D.C., on February 9, 2012, and a bilateral visit to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, from March 18 to 24, 2012.

. . .

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

in relation to its study of skills development in remote rural communities in an era of fiscal restraint.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, the committee requests the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

[English]

It is in relation to requesting an extension of 30 sitting days to consider Bill C-377, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (requirements for labour organizations).

On behalf of the entire committee, I wish a wonderful summer to everyone in the House.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Wednesday, September 19, 2012, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[Translation]

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present in the House, in both official languages, the New Democratic Party of Canada's supplementary opinion on the study conducted recently by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons With Disabilities, which has to do with skills development in remote northern communities.

The NDP supports the report, but we think that these recommendations should go further if we want to ensure that skills development and training are accessible in remote northern communities.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

NATIONAL LYME DISEASE STRATEGY ACT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP), seconded by the member for Etobicoke North, moved for leave to introduce Bill C-442, An Act respecting a National Lyme Disease Strategy.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to rise today to present this private member's bill, for which I hope there will be support from all sides of the House. This is the ultimate in non-partisan issues. This is the ultimate in non-geographically limited issues. We are, in each of our ridings, facing an increasing threat to our constituents and their families from a very tiny threat, a little tick that is spreading and can bring debilitating illness to any one of us at any time.

I dedicate tabling this bill today to a very brave young woman who was with me earlier today at a press conference, Nicole Bottles. She was diagnosed in high school and is in a wheelchair waiting for her cure. I want to thank the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation. I urge all members of the House to join me in working toward a national Lyme disease strategy.

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

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, I would request unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move that in relation to its study and the order of reference of May 30, 2012, the members of the special committee on the status of co-operatives in Canada be authorized to travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick; Quebec City, Quebec; Regina, Saskatchewan; and Vancouver, British Columbia in July 2012, and that the necessary staff do accompany the committee.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There is no consent.

* * *

[Translation]

PETITIONS

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by nearly 100 constituents of mine in Wellington—Halton Hills.

[English]

They are petitioning in support of Motion 312, and asking that section 223 of the Criminal Code be amended.

PENSIONS

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present three petitions. They are all from my constituents. I will be brief.

The first petition calls on the government to maintain funding for OAS and make investments in the guaranteed income supplement to lift all seniors out of poverty.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition urges the House of Commons to not pass Bill C-30 and to reject any proposals that would allow the authorities to obtain the private information of Internet users without a warrant.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my third petition calls on the Government of Canada to enact a Canada public transit strategy. The petitioners note that Canada is the only OECD country that does not have a national public transit strategy, and that there will be estimated \$18 billion gap in transit infrastructure needs over the next five years.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition regarding funding of environmental programs.

The petitioners call on the government to make sure the Polar Environment Atmospheric Research Laboratory is funded. In addition, they request the government ensure Environment Canada's aircraft program, air quality monitoring, CORALNet, IADN, toxics and ozone network are funded, in total, environmental programs that protect the health and safety of Canadians.

● (1355)

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions calling upon the House of Commons and Parliament to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as a human by amending section 223 of the Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence. The petitioners are from Estevan, Oxbow and Frobisher.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions. The first petition is in support of stronger animal cruelty legislation.

Stories like the horrific culling of sled dogs in 2001 shock and anger all of us, and yet our animal welfare laws are largely unchanged since 1892. So far I have received over 4,500 signatures in support of this petition calling for the government to recognize animals as beings that can feel pain, and to strengthen the animal cruelty section of the Criminal Code.

PENSIONS

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present a petition signed by over 100 of my constituents in Parkdale—High Park, calling on Parliament to support the NDP motion to reject the proposed change to the eligibility age of old age security from 65 to 67, and maintain funding—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

PENSIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this, the last day of our session, I want to bring forward a petition from individuals in Winnipeg North dealing with the increase in eligibility age of old age security from 65 to 67.

My constituents believe that people should be able to continue to have the option to retire at age 65, and that the government should not in any way diminish the importance and value of Canada's three major seniors programs: OAS, GIS and CPP.

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition calling on Parliament to recognize that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known, and that more people die from asbestos than all other industrial causes combined.

I will skip the preamble, and suggest that these petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms, end all government subsidies to asbestos and stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers.

[Translation]

FLOOR CROSSING

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am speaking on behalf of a number of my constituents in Saint-Maurice—Champlain, who are asking that members of Parliament who cross the floor be required to answer to their constituents by resigning and then being re-elected.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition signed by people from the Madawaska—Restigouche region. They are asking the government to scrap the employment insurance provisions in Bill C-38, particularly those concerning suitable employment, finding work and the creation of a social security tribunal.

[English]

CANADIAN COAST GUARD

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition regarding the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. Thousands of petitioners are calling upon the federal government to reverse the decision to close the Coast Guard station, which is one of the busiest ports in Canada. [Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present a petition on behalf of the people of Acadie—Bathurst. This petition is signed by 2,248 individuals who are angry about the changes to employment insurance in Bill C-38, including provisions that will weaken entire economic sectors across the country and penalize seasonal workers in the region. [English]

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition in the House of Commons

Routine Proceedings

on financial support for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

Mr. Speaker, I wish you and all our colleagues a safe summer. I look forward to coming back in September.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of the members of my constituency. They call upon the Government of Canada to enact a Canadian public transit strategy to provide a permanent investment plan to support public transit; establish a federal funding mechanism for public transit which would get all levels of government to work together to provide sustainable, predictable, long-term and adequate funding; and establish accountability measures to ensure that all governments work together to increase access to public transit.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition whereby the signatories ask that the federal government not close down or otherwise transfer the Experimental Lakes Area program outside of government, that it remain within the purview of the federal government.

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QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Question No. 517 could be made an order for return, the return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1400)

[Text]

Question No. 517—Mr. Peter Stoffer:

With regard to the Canadian Forces (CF): (a) for each year from 2001 to 2012, how many members of the CF have been medically released; (b) for each year from 2001 to 2012, how many CF members have been medically released with less than 10 years of service, specifying whether they served with the Navy, Air Force, or Land Force sections; (c) considering all the medical releases each year from 2001 to 2012, what percentage of those who served less than 10 years were medically released; (d) what accommodations are made for health and dental benefits and pensions for those who are medically released with less than 10 years of service; and (e) how many members were medically released each year from 2001 to 2012 after (i) one year of service, (ii) two years of service, (iii) three years of service, (iv) four years of service, (v) five years of service, (vii) seven years of service, (viii) eight years of service, (ix) nine years of service, (x) ten years of service, (viii)

Statements by Members

(Return tabled)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians from coast to coast gear up for another summer season of camping and outdoor activity, I encourage everyone to explore one of our national parks across Canada.

[Translation]

In my riding, Kootenay—Columbia, we are spoiled for choice with four national parks: Yoho, Kootenay, Glacier and Mount Revelstoke. These national parks have been around for over 100 years, providing us with the opportunity to enjoy some of the world's greatest natural wonders.

[English]

Takakkaw Falls in Yoho National Park, Marble Canyon in Kootenay National Park, the Rogers Pass National Historic Site in Glacier National Park and, finally, the Meadows in the Sky Parkway in Mount Revelstoke National Park are just a few of the awe-inspiring natural treasures that await them.

[Translation]

This summer, come and see for yourself what people in Kootenay and Columbia call "the greatest place on earth".

* * *

[English]

AIR INDIA BOMBING

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, each year, June 23 marks a painfully sad day for thousands of Canadian families. Twenty-seven years ago this Saturday, 329 people lost their lives in a tragedy known as the Air India bombing, the largest mass murder in Canadian history.

Although a Canadian inquiry was launched and completed, many questions remain unanswered. Relatives still struggle to understand how it happened. Today, our hearts go out to each and every one of them.

As we approach another anniversary of this atrocity, I stand here asking all parties in this House to join together in remembrance of the victims and their families. Canadian, British and Indian citizens perished on that flight, but countries all over the world mourn them.

[Translation]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the obstruction and childishness of the NDP and other opposition members, the Conservative government has stayed the course towards long-term prosperity for Canadians.

What is most disturbing, however, is the behaviour of the NDP members who refuse to recognize the sovereignty of the National Assembly.

When the NDP members do not agree with something, they sulk and scoff at our democratic institutions in order to promote their ideology and dogma. What an insult—and just before Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day—to the only parliament in North America that represents a francophone majority.

As a Quebecker, I am proud to vote for a prosperous future for Quebec. On behalf of all my colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to wish a happy Fête nationale to all Quebeckers.

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[English]

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on National Aboriginal Day, we commemorate the fundamental role first nations, Inuit and Métis played in the shared history of Canada. We recognize how historic injustices have contributed to unacceptable gaps in outcomes for health, education, housing and access to basic services like safe drinking water.

Today, we must reflect on the words of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It states:

Canadians have been denied a full and proper education as to the nature of Aboriginal societies, and the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. .

[Translation]

If we want to move forward in a spirit of partnership, respect and co-operation, all Canadians must be given the opportunity to learn more about the historical basis of these relationships.

[English]

On National Aboriginal Day, we must commit to a new nation-tonation relationship based on consultation and collaboration to ensure a more prosperous common future.

BOMBER COMMAND

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the early 1940s were dark days in England and in the rest of the free world. People were desperate for some good news and a feeling that freedom was fighting back against tyranny and oppression. Bomber Command became a ray of hope as the only way that the Allies could take the fight to Nazi Germany. Canada's contributions were impressive and the stuff of legend, but the success of Bomber Command came at a terrible cost. Out of 125,000 aircrew who served, over 55,000 were killed, including over 10,000 Canadians. This is a debt that can never be repaid but it is a debt that can never be forgotten.

In an act of political correctness in 1945, Bomber Command was left off the list of organizations that were officially recognized for the role it played in the allied victory. This oversight is finally being corrected 67 years later.

The new Bomber Command memorial will be unveiled in London on June 28 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the presence of 42 Canadian Bomber Command veterans. The Bomber Command memorial will form a physical and emotional link to our past. We will remember its members' dedication to the values of freedom and democracy and we will remember their sacrifice. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

* * *

● (1405)

NATIONAL TRANSIT STRATEGY

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, mayors and councillors want a national transit strategy, air travellers want safe, affordable services, and farmers want reliable rail delivery.

Did the Minister of Transport get the job done? No, he did not. There is still no national strategy for transit, air or rail. He has failed to heed the advice of the Transportation Safety Board on air safety. There are still no voice recorders and automatic braking systems to reduce train accidents. He has failed to protect pedestrians and cyclists by making side guards mandatory on trucks. He also has failed to protect rail customers.

What did the Minister of Transport get done? He is following a grand Conservative tradition of appointing insider friends. From Ted Flemming in Saint John to failed candidates in Quebec City and Prince Rupert, to fundraisers in Oshawa and Toronto port authorities, the minister excels in patronage appointments.

That is not Canadian leadership that will move Canada forward.

CANADA DAY

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this July 1, I will probably celebrate Canada Day and encourage all Canadians to do the same. However, this July 1, I will also celebrate Dominion Day.

The term "dominion" was originated by Sir Leonard Tilley, who came up with it "as a way to encapsulate the aspirations of the

Statements by Members

Confederation generation". It was derived from Psalm 72:8 and was meant to denote the breadth of the country from "sea to sea".

Dominion Day was taken away from Canadians when late on a Friday afternoon, in a voice vote, 13 MPs enacted legislation doing away with Dominion Day, with no debate, no thought, no warning and no reflection. They attempted to expunge from our history a word which, as Senator Ann Bell said, "...has a connotation of a firm foundation and an assurance of growth. It takes us above and beyond rather small partisan political concepts of the country".

I do not support the elimination of Canada Day, but July 1 also needs to be known as Dominion Day once again. It is a mistake to try and preserve the future by destroying the past, and the name Dominion Day should be restored.

CANADIAN ARMY NURSE

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome Madeline Shavalier to Ottawa. Her son bravely served Canada in Afghanistan and she herself was a Canadian army lieutenant nursing sister during the Second World War

On November 6, 1943, while travelling from England to a post in Italy, Madeline's ship was bombed and sunk by the Germans. After stopping to aid a friend who had fainted during the evacuation, both were able to climb down into a lifeboat. Although German planes were still circling, cloud cover allowed for everyone on board to be rescued.

Madeline served with the nursing sisters earning five medals, including the Italy Star, the Defence Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal.

Her service to Canada will never be forgotten, and we thank Madeline.

* * *

[Translation]

JACK LAYTON

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, June 23, the vision of our former leader, Jack Layton, will be honoured at the opening of Jack Layton Park in his hometown of Hudson, Quebec.

Formerly known as the Hudson Marina, the park offers a magnificent view of the Lac des Deux-Montagnes.

The park will commemorate the legacy of Jack Layton, who spent his youth in Hudson, on the lake, and was very involved in the community there throughout his political career.

Statements by Members

[English]

This park will serve to remind us of Jack and his legacy, that we should hold on to our optimism, move forward with love and keep focused on the true values of Canadians, values such as diversity, tolerance and social justice.

I am proud to inaugurate the Jack Layton Park in my riding and I invite all members to celebrate with us on June 23.

* * *

● (1410)

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on National Aboriginal Day, June 21, we celebrate aboriginal cultures and traditions by taking part in festivities across the country.

Since National Aboriginal Day was proclaimed in 1996, more and more Canadians have taken time each year to learn about the incredible accomplishments and contributions of first nations, Inuit and Métis to our great country. On this day, we celebrate the diversity and heritage of aboriginal people and we honour their unique place in the history of Canada.

Indeed, the traditions and cultures of first nations, Inuit and Métis have become part of the fabric of Canada.

[Translation]

Taking part in National Aboriginal Day is an excellent way to promote a better knowledge and understanding of aboriginal groups and their contribution to Canada.

[English]

I invite all Canadians, including members of this House today, to join our community and our country to celebrate National Aboriginal Day.

..

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL HOUSING

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Human Rights Commission reported earlier this week that aboriginal and first nations groups have lodged many complaints against the federal government since 2008.

Not surprisingly, some complaints were about the condition of housing on reserves. We all remember the images of the dilapidated houses in Attawapiskat.

The situation must be serious if these groups have to go before the Canadian Human Rights Commission to ensure respect for their right to housing.

Even today, members of the community continue to live in shacks where living conditions are unbearable.

The NDP has proposed real solutions to ensure safe, appropriate, accessible and affordable housing for all Canadians, but the government is still refusing to work with the provinces, territories, municipal representatives and aboriginal communities to establish a national housing strategy.

When will the government take action?

* * *

[English]

WOMEN'S ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL SERVICE

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, more commonly known as the Wrens, as they celebrate their upcoming 70th anniversary.

Founded in 1942, the Wrens have a proud history of serving Canada when we needed them most. Between 1942 and 1946, close to 7,000 volunteers joined the Wrens and served within the war effort performing non-tradition jobs like maintaining anti-submarine equipment, aircraft, communications, cryptology and more.

The contributions made by the brave women of the Wrens as full and equal partners were crucial in support of Canada's war effort. These women were pioneers and their legacy is assured since by 1955 women were fully integrated into the regular component of the Royal Canadian Navy, and they continue to serve in all aspects of Canada's defence, including combat.

I would ask that all members join the Minister of National Defence and myself, the member for Etobicoke Centre, in offering our sincerest thanks and congratulations to the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service on this momentous occasion of its 70th anniversary of service.

* * *

[Translation]

OLYMPIC ATHLETES

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two weeks this summer, the best athletes in the world will meet in London for the Olympics. Nearly 250 Canadian athletes will represent our country in 20 sports. Our team, led by the president of the Canadian Olympic Committee, Marcel Aubut, and his chef de mission, the extraordinary Mark Tewksbury, will be able to count on experienced athletes, such as my friends Adam van Koeverden, Clara Hughes and Alex Despatie, as well as on young hopefuls, such as Michael Tayler and Martha McCabe, who will be at the Olympics for the first time this year.

[English]

For Canadian athletes, getting to the Olympics means thousands of hours of training and sacrifice to be able to represent their country in the biggest sporting event in the world. Only a rare few have that honour, so I know it is with much pride that our delegation will soon leave for London.

I want to tell all those athletes how proud we are of them and remind them that, from the starting gun to the finish line, 34 million Canadians will be cheering for them every step of the way.

Go Canada go.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, on National Aboriginal Day, I would like to take a moment to remember the contributions of aboriginal soldiers, peacekeepers and servicemen, such as police officers.

Thousands of aboriginal veterans saw action and endured hardship in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, on peacekeeping assignments and while protecting this great nation. They fought overseas to defend the sovereignty and liberty of Allied nations, in addition to supporting the cause at home. This proud tradition of service continues today.

I, myself, having served in the RCMP for over 18 years, attained the rank of sergeant. On July 7, 2006, under my command, two first nations colleagues of mine, Constable Marc Bourdage and Constable Robin Cameron who was the first female shot in the line of duty, were killed while serving their country.

Today, we honour aboriginals who served and continue to serve with honour and distinction in all branches of the Canadian military. We remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the values and freedoms we enjoy today.

This National Aboriginal Day, let us all reflect on the aboriginals who have served in the name of Canada.

* * :

● (1415)

MINISTERIAL AWARDS

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand today and announce the first-ever "most likely to do the shuffle" awards.

Of course we start with the award for the champagne Conservative, the Minister of International Cooperation, but she should watch out because her colleagues are spending hard on limos and catching up.

As for the most costly photo op award, who else but our very own Minister of National Defence, who spent \$47,000 on posing with an F-35 that cannot fly? It was not only very expensive but also tragically ironic.

The be seen, not heard award goes to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The minister spoke fewer than 600 words in question period. On his salary, that is \$433 a word.

Last but not least, the award for least likely to make cabinet is a tie between the members from Kootenay—Columbia and Nanaimo—Alberni. Here is my advice: if they remove that independent thinking and insert talking points, they will be just fine in about 20 years.

I really do hope these awards help the Prime Minister as he tries to clean up this mess.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us go back over our government's record this past spring.

Oral Questions

We have increased full and part-time jobs, lowered taxes for Canadian families, signed new trade agreements, invested \$150 million for community infrastructure and expanded Canada's student loans and grants. We brought "royal" back to our navy and air force and we cut red tape for veterans. We have created national parks and expanded existing parks. We have invested \$50 million to protect species at risk. We have maintained our country's path for jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition has managed to accomplish one thing: oppose everything.

That leader called an entire sector of the economy a disease. He believes the only way to promote growth in one sector of the economy is to drive another one down.

As countries around the world struggle with out-of-control deficits and debt, Canada is on the right track to balance the budget, and while our government rolls up its sleeves and continues on the path to provide opportunity, hope and long-term prosperity for Canadians, we expect the NDP leader—

The Speaker: Oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the F-35 is probably the biggest procurement fiasco in the history of Canada. There was no bidding process to buy the jet, which does not even work. And even if it did work, it would not meet the criteria set by the government. Then there is the \$47,000 photo op with the full-scale model. The Minister of National Defence is responsible for this failure.

Will the Prime Minister clean up this mess over the summer by replacing the Minister of National Defence with someone who can do the job?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has not yet purchased the F-35. On the contrary, we have said many times that we will replace the jets when necessary, at the end of this decade. Now, we are in the process of rebuilding the Canadian armed forces. It is very important to give our men and women in uniform the equipment they need. I am very proud of our government's track record on this.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Prime Minister respects the French language, and Canadians appreciate the fact that he answers questions in French. However, the Conservatives' political decisions should reflect that respect. For example, the Minister of Canadian Heritage is cutting funding for French-language newspapers, such as Manitoba's La Liberté and Sudbury's Le Voyageur, in half. The minister says that he cannot do anything because there is a formula, but the minister is the one who came up with the formula.

Will the Prime Minister scrap the minister's formula, or the minister for that matter, and save Canada's French-language newspapers?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government's level of support for such activities is unprecedented. Our commitment to the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality is unprecedented. Also unprecedented is the fact that the NDP fields unilingual candidates in francophone ridings. The Conservative Party has never done that.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this spring we saw the Conservatives abandon the very principles they claim they came to Ottawa to defend: ramming through their Trojan Horse budget bill, gutting their own Federal Accountability Act, treating their backbench MPs like a rubber stamp, using closure a record number of times, engaging in electoral fraud and slush funds and, of course, having ministers travelling the world staying in luxury hotels and taking \$23,000 limo rides on the taxpayers' dime.

How can a former member of the Reform Party defend this behaviour?

This summer, will the Prime Minister just shuffle the deck chairs on the *Titanic* or will he get his Conservative cabinet under control?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we just had one of the most legislatively productive periods, and the NDP members, by deciding they will oppose everything and filibuster everything, have proven themselves to be the least influential opposition in terms of legislative agenda in the history of this Parliament.

Canadians elected us to focus on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity. That is what we are doing. That is why the Canadian economy continues to have superior performance.

[Translation]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this spring has not been easy for the Conservatives. The cabinet cannot agree among themselves, nor can Conservative backbenchers. It is total chaos over there.

There is growing dissent among the Conservatives, because they are attacking employment insurance, old age security, environmental assessment and fleet separation.

To bring back some order, they need to stop introducing sloppy legislation. Will they finally learn their lesson from the fiascos of this session of Parliament?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, Canadians and Quebeckers know that passing our budget on jobs, growth and long-term prosperity will produce positive results here in Canada.

We are opening new markets through free trade agreements. We have also brought in measures to protect the integrity of our immigration system.

So instead of engaging in useless political rhetoric—like the NDP members who want to increase taxes—and dragging out the legislative process, which prevents us from getting anything done, we have delivered, with an excellent track record that is very positive for the Canadian economy.

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we can see by their answers that they have not learned their lesson. Some ministers have used military helicopters as personal taxis; others have refused to apologize for insulting Alberta's deputy premier; others are rewriting the conflict of interest record book; and their parliamentary leader has issued repeated gag orders out of fear of debating with the NDP.

Will they use this parliamentary break to pull their heads out of the quicksand they keep sinking into?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, it will be good to see our constituents and talk to them about the savings we have found in the way we operate the federal government.

We have made targeted investments that show promise for research and innovation in order to make our economy more productive and innovative. We have also introduced measures to open up markets and help boost exports, instead of coming up with a grim program that would lead to job cuts and business closures as a result of higher taxes and a carbon tax.

That is absolutely not our approach and we will continue to do what is good for the economy.

. . .

● (1425)

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Bob Rae: I cannot get used to this fan club, Mr. Speaker, but somehow I do not think it will last.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister a very simple question. His Minister of Finance announced earlier today that mortgages were going to be reduced from 30 years to 25 years and would require a 5% down payment.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, before the applause breaks out on the other side, does that mean that the government is now admitting that its decision in 2006 to ultimately raise the mortgages to 40 years, without a down payment, was in fact a mistake?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance announced four different changes to rules for government-backed mortgage insurance. I note that objective observers in the marketplace have responded extremely positively to the minister's announcements. We do have record low interest rates in the country. The government has altered rules a number of times and will continue to do so in a prudent and flexible manner, depending on the circumstances.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the data clearly show that, in 2008, 60% of first-time homebuyers chose a 40-year mortgage amortization period. Since 2006, personal debt has increased by more than \$725 billion; the federal debt by \$117 billion; and provincial debt by \$60 billion.

Does the Prime Minister not recognize that he is responsible in part for the current debt problems of the Canadian economy?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party talked about the debt situation.

It should be noted that the federal government's debt, and that of the country in general, is one of the lowest of developed economies. It is one of the reasons for the Canadian economy's superior performance.

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the dance of complacency continues.

My last question has to do with this being National Aboriginal Day and the fact that we are celebrating as well the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. One of the things the government has to recognize is that one of the most significant claims that has not been recognized or resolved is the Haldimand Tract claim. This claim dates specifically from commitments that were made by the Crown to the Six Nations with respect to their support for the Crown in the War of 1812.

This dispute carries on. It lies at the heart of many other contemporary disputes. Will the government finally recognize the need to resolve it?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has been in negotiations with its partners on this for some years now, and we will continue to work productively with our partners to try to resolve this dispute.

At the same time, this government is the government that brought in the new specific claims legislation advocated by the Assembly of First Nations. It has seen a record number of specific claims settled across the country.

Oral Questions

On this anniversary of the War of 1812, in all our events we of course recognize the very important role played by aboriginal peoples and first nations in that very successful war that helped establish this Canadian nation.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment put on her rose-coloured glasses when she spoke about sustainable development.

When we remove those glasses, here is what we see: the Conservatives are not going to meet their own targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental assessments are going to disappear while oil pours out of pipelines. What is more, the Conservatives are firing our scientists.

Who will defend this record? Is that why the Conservatives want to sabotage the Rio negotiations?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us look at a highlight reel of the NDP year-end review when it comes to the environment. It voted against clean tech funding. It voted against climate change adaptation funding. It voted against increased participant funding for environmental assessment. It voted against laws that would increase monetary penalties for those who break the rules on environmental assessment.

Our most recent greenhouse gas inventory showed that greenhouse gas emission growth in Canada stabilized while our economy continued to grow.

When will my colleague opposite recognize that it is possible to grow the economy while maintaining environmental stewardship?

• (1430)

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we can grow the economy with things like a green infrastructure fund. Today we actually learned from Global News that 80% of the green infrastructure fund has not been spent, showing a total lack of commitment to green infrastructure projects by the government.

But wait, there is more. In fact, the money that has been spent is going to projects like running government offices and pipelines, not exactly top-of-mind environmental priorities.

My question for the parliamentary secretary is: when will they quit with the greenwashing?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe if we checked the record over the last few years for any sort of green infrastructure funding or anything that would support the environment, we would see that the NDP voted against it.

By contrast, we are making tangible investment in green infrastructure, in research and development, to promote environmentally sustainable technologies and help get them to market.

Moreover, we are working with industry, with stakeholder groups. We are consulting with them to figure out how we can implement programs to see real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and water quality improvement.

In fact, the World Health Organization noted that we have the third-best air quality in the world. We are getting the job done.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development was at committee, he said the cultural connections for the aboriginal youth program was safe from cuts. However, in June, the Treasury Board froze all funding for this program. Friendship centres across the country had to close after-school programs and health, recreational and cultural programming.

Why does the minister not know what is going on in his own department?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I was at the Odawa Friendship Centre. I met with the national president. I met with the executive director. We are concerned about this issue. We are working with the executive director. We are at meetings this afternoon, official-to-official, and we will be realigning the program to meet our current needs for skills training development and job readiness for aboriginal youth. We are putting the train back on the tracks

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is National Aboriginal Day. We should be celebrating programs for youth instead of worrying about what is happening with friendship centres.

These are the programs that keep kids off the street and keep them going to school. Staff have been laid off, doors have been closed and uncertainty has grown around the cultural connections. This is a blow to the great work that friendship centres do across this country.

Why did the minister let this funding be frozen? Why did he not act before he was pressured into doing it?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most of this programming is delivered through the friendship centres. The executive director of the National Association of Friendship Centres has called our current approach the right approach. He went on to say it shows a level of understanding that if we want to do it better we need to engage the people who the program is for.

That is what we are doing.

[Translation]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, education is not the only desperate need. According to a recent study, mould in homes is a growing problem. Over half of first nations dwellings are infested with mould, which causes serious

health problems. The problem has gotten worse since the current minister has been in office. His solution is to hand out brochures.

When is the minister going to take this situation seriously?

[English]

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of first nation community members is of primary concern to our government. That is why we developed, in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, a comprehensive national strategy to address mould problems and create healthier homes in first nation societies.

Since we formed government, we have built or renovated approximately 30,000 homes on reserves. That has been growing annually, and we have done 3,000 major renovations every year.

[Translation]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that education and housing problems have escalated since this minister came to office.

• (1435)

[English]

This winter we saw in Attawapiskat a symptom of a much larger crisis that is happening everywhere in this country. We also saw a minister completely lost, unable to do the right thing to improve the lives of people living in some of the worst conditions in this country.

Seeing that incompetence, why should aboriginal peoples trust the minister to resolve the national crisis that is striking them?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we had a housing issue in Attawapiskat. In very short order, we put 22 new homes into that community. We had a long-standing call for a new school in Attawapiskat. That school is currently under construction. Things are moving in the right direction. We even had a petition going around the community asking for retention of the third party manager, who we took out of the community as a result of pressure from the leadership and the reduced need for the manager's presence.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unprecedented protests are taking place in Inuit and northern communities across this country to protest the high cost and lack of availability of healthy foods. People are fed up with this high cost and with the government's failure to act.

Will the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development stand here and do two things: one, recognize the government's failure to act when it comes to providing accessible, healthy foods to northern communities and, two, show some leadership with the government and put an end to the third world living conditions that aboriginal people in Canada face today?

(1440)

Oral Questions

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is full of overblown rhetoric. We have a letter that was published today from the Stanton Group. This is an Inuit-owned food retailer in the Northwest Territories. In the first year of the nutrition north program, we have seen savings of up to 35% on perishable foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, milk, meat and eggs, savings that have been passed on to northern residents. In our experience, the nutrition north Canada program is working well. That speaks for itself.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, some of those communities are having to pay at least \$7 for a loaf of bread, so do not tell me that the program is working.

The government's much-touted nutrition north program has failed to address the basic food needs of Inuit Canadians. Northern communities cannot afford these sky-high prices. Even hunted game is expensive when we factor in the cost of gas and gear. The poverty in these communities is staggering.

When will the Conservatives concentrate on northern poverty? When will the Prime Minister shuffle someone in to start managing the portfolio?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nutrition north Canada was a program that used to subsidize air freight and now subsidizes food at the retail level, nutritious perishable food for northerners. We are spending \$60 million on the program in 103 communities. The evidence is now in that we have changed eating habits so that people are choosing healthier foods. The evidence is in that the price of those foods is reduced. The program is working and these complaints are illegitimate.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the social conditions of our first nations, Inuit and Métis people are this country's greatest failure and, in fact, our greatest shame. The Conservatives have a blank cheque for G.I. Joe to buy all the war toys that he wants, but they cannot find any new money whatsoever to deal with the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding before our very eyes. Aboriginal people need a champion around the cabinet table, not another minister for managing poverty.

In the interest of National Aboriginal Day, will the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development do the honourable thing and shuffle himself out of cabinet to make room for somebody else?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the current government has made incredible new investments in quality-of-life measures for first nations on reserves. We spent incredible amounts on the water and waste water systems. We injected major moneys into stimulus spending for housing on first nations reserves. We have covered the gamut. We are investing in new school infrastructure and new school programming. We have set our priorities along with collaborations with our partners, and the system is working as intended.

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is fond of announcements and reannouncements, but it never delivers. The Conservatives announced the joint supply ships, cancelled them, re-announced them and still there is no sign of when they will be delivered. The Arctic patrol ships are more than three years late, which will delay the replacement of our destroyer fleet.

Among other examples are fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft, military trucks and fighter aircraft.

When will the government actually deliver on its commitments?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to our shipbuilding strategy, after a very competitive and successful process two Canadian shipyards were selected to build our ships for the Coast Guard and navy. This is a long-term industrial strategy. It will go on for decades, and it will create an estimated 15,000 jobs in the shipbuilding industry. There is a lot of work to be done, but I have every confidence that the navy, working closely with Irving Shipbuilding, and the Coast Guard, working closely with Seaspan on the west coast, will do what they need to do to deliver these projects. We will remain vigilant, overseeing the contracts as they unfold, but we are very proud of our commitment to build ships in Canada and we know Canadian—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

* * *

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in November 2008 the PBO predicted a deficit, the minister a surplus. The PBO was right, the minister wrong. In December 2009, the PBO predicted a lapse in infrastructure spending. The PBO was right; the minister was wrong. In 2010, the PBO pegged cost overruns on the F-35 at more than \$10 billion more than the minister. Again, the PBO was right and the minister was wrong.

There seems to be a pattern here. The PBO is more frequently right than wrong, and the government appears to be more frequently wrong than right. If this is overstepping the mandate, maybe we need a bit more of the PBO, not less.

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2009 this was said: "I'm quite concerned the Parliamentary Budget Officer sees himself as an independent practitioner who can report whenever he wants". Who said that? It was the Liberal member for St. Paul's.

What the public can see through right away is that when the opposition members want to use the Parliamentary Budget Officer as an attack talking point, then they side with the Parliamentary Budget Officer; when they disagree because it does not fulfill their arguments, then they attack the Parliamentary Officer.

. . .

[Translation]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday night, watching from the Trois-Rivières marina, Captain Frigon witnessed a shipwreck and called the Quebec City search and rescue centre. Within a few minutes, four people were rescued by the Coast Guard. Tragically, two people are still missing.

Does the minister not see that time, ultra-fast intervention, full knowledge of French and familiarity with the St. Lawrence saved four lives?

Will he keep the Quebec City search and rescue centre open? [English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are saddened by any deaths and we are also very happy to hear that four lives were saved.

The changes we are proposing would have no effect on the services being provided. We would provide the same bilingual service, the same rapid response as the Coast Guard has always done in the past.

. . .

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here is another mark on the Conservatives' record.

Over six years, the Conservatives have developed a very detailed guide on what not to do with military procurement. They did not have a bidding process for the F-35s; they did not offer any guarantees of industrial spinoffs or jobs; and they hid \$10 billion from the total of costs. The worst part of this whole fiasco is that no one has taken any responsibility.

Are they simply irresponsible?

• (1445)

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we take responsibility in terms of meeting all the recommendations that the Auditor General has outlined in his

report. Importantly, no money has been spent on the acquisition of any aircraft.

To replace our aging CF-18s, we have launched the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat. This arm's-length secretariat will be doing the due diligence very transparently and openly. We look forward to its conclusions.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' record is rather impressive when it comes to failures.

But Canadians are not fooled. They know full well that to fix all of the problems with the F-35s, particularly the ever-increasing costs, we need much more than the creation of a simple secretariat made up of the very people who were responsible for the fiasco. After making many mistakes, the Conservatives have lost control over this procurement process.

Will we have to wait for a new Minister of National Defence before we get answers?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, no money has been spent on the acquisition of any new fighter aircraft. In fact, to replace our aging CF-18s we have launched the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat. This arm's-length secretariat will ensure that the due diligence, oversight and transparency will be performed for this acquisition. Importantly, it also includes the advice of independent members, one being a former very well respect Canadian auditor general, Denis Desautels. We look forward to his support.

In the interest of taxpayers, we will not move forward with a purchase of any new aircraft until we have received the conclusions of the secretariat.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have had over six years. The CF-18s need to be replaced, but they just cannot get the job done: "It's the best plane in the world". "No, it's just a developmental project". "The AG is right". "No, the AG is wrong". "We haven't spent any money, except for the \$700 million". "That minster is in charge". "No, it's the other guy". "No, now it's this minister in charge".

Why have the Conservatives turned defence into an Abbott and Costello sketch? Who is on first?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can say who is not supporting the military and it is that member and his party.

While our party has spent up to \$1 billion annually to replace equipment, support programs, to make our forces better and ready to respond and to support the men and women in uniform, what we get is claptrap and insults.

The member from Winnipeg referred to war toys. However, C-17s brought compassionate aid to Haiti. Those are not war toys. There has been a lot of work that has been done in Afghanistan to protect those men and women's lives who are doing so much for Canada. That is an insult to our soldiers.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thought that minister was on the bench. However, instead of turning this important project into a comedy of errors, the Conservatives could have just committed to an open and transparent competitive process. That would have guaranteed the best plane for the best price with the best benefits to our economy. Instead, we get more of this ducking and diving, with no answers to some very simple questions.

When will the comedy team get the hook? When will the Conservatives get a new act together to replace the CF-18s?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, rather than respond to this comedy routine, I want to remind the member opposite and members of his party that this government believes strongly in investment for the Canadian Forces, and for the Canadian economy, giving them the protective equipment they need to do the important work at home and abroad.

I am extremely proud of the work of the Canadian Forces. I am proud to be part of a government that has brought the Canadian Forces out of decade of darkness under the previous Liberal government to a decade of delivery under a caring, compassionate, Conservative government.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many in the House will recall the name of Clinton Gayle. He was a drug dealer who received a sentence of less than two years and was able to appeal his deportation as a result. While he was delaying his removal, he shot a Toronto police officer named Todd Baylis. Our Conservative government committed to take action to put a stop to this.

Could the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism please update the House on how we are meeting this very important commitment to all Canadians?

(1450)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for too long, too many convicted serious foreign criminals have been able to delay their deportation from Canada for years. These people have abused the privilege of being in Canada by committing a serious crime, having been found guilty by a Canadian court of law. Because of a loophole created by the previous Liberal government, they have been able to make appeal after appeal of their deportation, sometimes for as long as a decade or more, and too many of them have gone on to victimize other Canadians.

That will stop with the adoption of Bill C-43. The faster removal of foreign criminals act would close the loophole and shut the door on unnecessary—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in March, the Conservatives got rid of the community access program, which provided Internet access to the less fortunate. Once again, they are attacking society's most vulnerable people. They should be ashamed of themselves. They are reducing the number of public servants providing services to the people and replacing them with machines. This decision makes no sense at all.

Now that half of Canada's poorest people no longer have access to the Internet, how can the minister justify his decision?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the community access program began in 1995 and has achieved its objectives. In 2010, we implemented the broadband Canada program to connect as many Canadian households as possible across the country.

Unprecedented amounts of money have been invested, but, hypocritical as always, the NDP voted against that investment.

It is also important to look at the policies we implemented with the spectrum auction. What we want is more competition and more choice for Canadians, whether they live in rural or urban communities. We also want them to have access to better technology no matter where they live. That is what we are doing, and it is something that party will never do.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, either the minister does not understand the file, or he truly thinks that Canadians are stupid.

I would like to talk about other cuts that will directly affect the people of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and the economy of my entire region.

According to the Union of National Defence Employees, 144 civilian jobs at the Saint-Jean military base are being eliminated. The military base is an important economic driver in my region.

Why are the Conservatives attacking so many regions in Quebec with their budget cuts?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are still investing in the military, including in its infrastructure across Canada. At the same time, we need to ensure our economy is balanced, while making important decisions that respect Canadian taxpayers. For every decision that is made, we work with the public service in order to find fair solutions that are necessary to maintain support for our soldiers as well as local communities.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to increasing prosperity for Canadian families, the evidence is in, and the government has failed.

The average after tax income for families has gone flat under the government. Seniors' after tax income has actually gone down. Canadians are losing ground under the government and now it wants Canadians on EI to accept 30% less pay on a downward spiral.

After watching income stagnate, why are the Conservatives using their budget bill to drive down wages for hard-working Canadians?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are doing exactly the opposite. We are ensuring that whenever people on EI are working, even part-time, that they are going to be better off than if not working, than if they were just on EI. That is a big change. We know that working part-time often leads to a full-time job. We are ensuring that we are taking it yet one more step to ensure that families are always better off working than not.

We have had tremendous success in lowering the poverty rate in our country. For example, the low income rate for children is now 8.1%. Under the Liberals it was 18.4%.

We are making progress to help ease poverty in our country.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear whose pockets are being lined with this wealth they claim to be creating. It is obvious when we look at the corporate bonuses that go to the CEOs.

Statistics Canada's data are clear. Since 2007, entirely on the Conservatives' watch, the average income of Canadian families did not move. And with the new employment insurance rules, people will be forced to take jobs that pay 30% less.

Can the government tell us why Canadian families are not benefiting from the Conservatives' economic policies?

• (1455)

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are better off. In fact, there are almost a quarter of million children who used to be in poverty but who are not now.

There is a quarter of a million fewer children in poverty than there was under the previous Liberal government. Why is that? It is because we have invested in helping Canadians get over the welfare wall, through the WITB program and through over 150 different tax cuts aimed at families that now have roughly \$3,100 more in their pocket at the end of the year because of our tax reductions. That is money they can spend on their families.

ETHICS

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the chair of the ethics committee.

Today, at the last minute, the chair cancelled this morning's meeting. This despite witnesses being confirmed and my motion to call the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister to testify on allegations of election fraud being on the agenda.

NDP members have stated that they will not support my motion. It is clear that the NDP are colluding with the Conservatives to protect the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Why did the chair of the ethics committee cancel the meeting? Why is he protecting the parliamentary secretary? Did the Leader of the Opposition confirm this?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question.

I am not sure where he gets his information from, but the meeting was cancelled last night. I asked that it be cancelled because we knew that today would be the last sitting day of the House. It is normal practice to cancel meetings when it is the last day. A number of committee meetings were already cancelled for today, which is perfectly normal.

The motion is still on the notice of motions. If the hon, member wants to move the motion when we return in September, then he is free to do so. It will still be there.

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the chair of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Today, at the last minute, the chair cancelled the committee meeting, despite the Liberal motion that was on the orders of the day, despite the fact that witnesses had been called.

Did spending the night with the Conservatives in this House during last week's votes make the NDP want to keep sleeping with the Conservatives in order to defend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister?

Why did the chair cancel the meeting and why protect the parliamentary secretary? Did his leader-

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, the meeting was cancelled last night. It is an entirely standard practice. Most of the committees were cancelled today, as it is the last sitting day of the House.

I will say again that there was no discussion with the Leader of the Opposition. That is completely false. Nothing could be further from the truth. I will stop there because these are allegations that members should not have made. They should at least respect the chairs of committees.

[English]

PARKS CANADA

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I give my best wishes to indigenous people and all Canadians on National Aboriginal Day.

Northerners know the economic benefits national parks bring through increased tourism. With the expansion of Nahanni National Park Reserve and the creation of the East Arm National Park, northerners have shown their commitment to these heritage sites. However, with the Conservatives reckless cuts to Parks Canada, northerners are concerned that this vital form of sustainable economic development will be delayed or severely crippled.

Why is the minister cutting back on the government's promise to fully fund these northern parks? Is it the government's opinion that parks do not create jobs?

(1500)

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to note that, since 2006, this government has protected more parkland than any other government in recent history. We are committed to protecting Canada's parks. We are also proud of the fine work that Parks Canada staff do to promote Canada and promote our great natural heritage.

However, a concept that the opposition does not understand is being wise stewards of taxpayer dollars. In fact, one could say that its ability to manage the economy is like a dine and dash: order the most expensive thing on a menu and then stick someone else with the bill.

We have decided to ensure that we are wise stewards of taxpayer dollars, while managing the economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate in my riding to have a tourism jewel, the Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site.

The existing agreement provided low-cost service to Parks Canada and let thousands of tourists visit the site. However, Parks Canada has slapped the site managers in the face by taking over management of the port of Pointe-au-Père. Hours will be reduced, the season will be shortened and fees will double, all because management of the port is being taken away from an organization that has done a great job for 30 years.

Will the Minister of Tourism commit to review this ill-considered decision by Parks Canada?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to protecting our natural heritage, including under the scope of Parks Canada. We maintain funding and we maintain staff to ensure that those artifacts, those facilities are well protected and well maintained.

We certainly feel that the measures included in budget 2012 will continue to protect the great natural heritage of the country and the facilities that Parks Canada manages.

SEALING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP and the Liberals, our government has been clear. We

Oral Questions

are unequivocal in our support of the Canadian sealing industry, an industry that is vital to communities across Canada.

We continue to stand up and support these important jobs. Could our regional minister from Newfoundland and Labrador please inform this House of any updates regarding our government's respect and support for sealers in Newfoundland and Labrador and the rest of Canada?

Hon. Peter Penashue (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC):

[Member spoke in Innu-aimun]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for that question.

Unlike the NDP and Liberals, I am proud to be part of this government that truly supports Canadian sealers and recognizes the importance of traditional industry, not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but across the entire country.

That is why tomorrow I have the honour to announce a major contribution on behalf of the government to the Home From the Sea campaign to build a memorial to Canadian sealers.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, *Macleans's* magazine published the article, "The Silent Treatment", an exposé of the government's mishandling of CCSVI.

It details explosive conflicts of interest, politics over science, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research admitting, "We had not seen the crisis coming".

Today I intend to place a motion on notice, calling on the government to ensure the health committee investigates CIHR's handling of the development of a registry and clinical trials for CCSVI.

Will the Minister of Health commit to an investigation?

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has worked hard to advance research in MS to improve the health of those living with this horrible condition. Along with MS patients, we hope that the research will contribute to a cure.

Over the past five years we have invested more than \$27 million in MS research, and we are supporting the development of an MS monitoring system that will provide patients and health care providers with better understanding of the disease and its treatments.

It is critical that we complete clinical trials for CCSVI to assess the safety and effectiveness of this procedure. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration agreed, and warned health practitioners of the need for approval before using it to treat people with MS.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative attacks on science and research are never-ending.

The Conservatives have eliminated important scientific institutions like the Experimental Lakes Area and the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences. They have reduced investments in Statistics Canada and first nations data agencies. They have fired crucial scientists and researchers right across the public sector, and the ones that remain have been muzzled.

How can the Conservatives possibly justify their science and research attacks? Do they not care about Canada's future?

(1505)

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. This government has made significant and important investments in science and technology at every single opportunity that we have had.

We do that because science will create jobs, save lives and improve the quality of life, but every time we put forward more investments for our scientists, for our students, for our researchers, the NDP votes against those things.

It is time the NDP started to support science for once.

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has always been a consistent defender of supply management. By contrast, the Liberal Party offers no concrete proof of its position. The Liberals left supply management out of its election platform and constantly vote against measures that benefit our supply-managed farmers and all rural Canadians.

Could the Minister of Agriculture please inform the House of the most recent example of how the Liberal Party is turning its back on our egg, dairy and poultry farmers?

The Speaker: Order, please. I have had to rule before that questions to the government have to touch on government areas of responsibility, and—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

Asking about the position of another party is not a government area of responsibility.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member is out of time.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

* * * PENSIONS

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the old age security program is sustainable. However, the Conservatives need billions of dollars to pay for the rising costs of the F-35. Thus, our seniors are being stuck with the

bill for this procurement program, which has been completely mismanaged.

Yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development said that there will be no reductions in seniors' pensions. I am sorry, but taking away two years' worth of benefits means taking away \$10 billion. That is quite a reduction.

What are the Conservatives doing for the summer? We in the NDP hope that they will use the time to learn to count.

[English]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are ensuring the sustainability of the system to preserve it for future generations.

[Translation]

It is important to remember that, in the future, there will be a lot more seniors than workers, and adjustments must therefore be made. There will be no reductions for individuals.

* * *

QUEBEC NATION

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this past session shows just how big the gap between Canada and Quebec is getting and just how big of an obstacle federalism is to the development of the Quebec nation.

Under the Conservative government, often with the support of the other federalist parties, the number of disputes with the Quebec National Assembly have multiplied, as have the attempts to strip Quebec of its authority and its jurisdictions and weaken its regions, its economy and its institutions.

Can the government promise today that it will not spend the summer coming up with other measures that go against Quebeckers' interests and values?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable to hear questions like this one.

Let us go back to 2006, when there were problems. There was a fiscal imbalance that the Bloc passively supported for over a decade. The Conservatives resolved that problem in less than a year. We gave Quebec a seat at UNESCO. Then, there was a disagreement regarding the harmonization of the GST and QST. Once again, this was resolved under the leadership of this Prime Minister. There was also a disagreement regarding the Old Harry offshore oil reserve. Once again, who resolved this problem? It was this government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

So yes, I will assure my colleague of one thing: we will continue to practise open federalism for all Canadians and Quebeckers. **●** (1510)

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as tempted as I am to pose the question to the chair of the ethics committee, I think tradition suggests that I present it to the House leader for the government.

It has been obvious that over this session we have had our disagreements in both form and substance. It has been no surprise to Canadians that we, as the opposition, have fundamentally disagreed about some of the objectives of the government on pensions, EI and health care.

While we have had our disagreements, something that we absolutely agree on is that we have been supported by one of the most complementary and hard-working staffs of any legislature in the world. We owe them a great deal of thanks. This was a long and trying session for them as well.

To all my colleagues on all sides, because we will not be meeting again before the summer recess, I wish them time with their family and friends and a productive summertime off.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the House leader for the opposition.

On this side, we will not be taking time off. We will be continuing to work as we have so far.

[Translation]

Earlier today, I drew the media's attention to what the government accomplished this spring in terms of legislation. I will therefore not repeat what I said.

However, I am very pleased about what we have been able to do here over the past few months so that the House of Commons has achieved results by working hard and in an orderly fashion.

[English]

The co-operation from all corners of the House that we did receive to keep business moving here is much appreciated. Members of Parliament did a lot of hard work reviewing and debating bills, including quite important bills. At the end of the day, we voted on those bills and made decisions for the benefit of Canadians.

Bills remain on the order paper for our return in the fall, not to mention new ones to come. I will advise my colleagues at a time closer to our return as to the business of the House when we next sit.

While sitting MPs and the government's legislative program will return after the summer, we will have a new team of pages. I want to thank this year's pages for their hard work and their tireless efforts to support us in being productive as members.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Back when we started the Christmas adjournment, I mentioned that the pages would have some good stories to tell when they got home. I think the six months that followed have only added many more.

Business of the House

I can say that being a page is a truly special experience that few get to enjoy. My wife was a parliamentary page; she will be upset when I say that was some 25 years ago—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

An hon. member: You are in trouble now.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Notwithstanding the 25 years that have passed since, she still treasures those memories and refers to them as perhaps the best year of her life.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Peter Van Loan: In my defence, I say that she is at home in the riding and I am here.

To the rest of the staff of the House, the clerks at the table, but especially the other employees who are not sitting here in front of us who work so hard to support us and keep our lives orderly, I do offer our thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I wish you and all of our colleagues here and all of the staff a happy, restful but hard-working summer. We will see everyone in the fall.

Now I believe there is something we have to do one more time.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my fellow House leader and colleagues, I would also like to echo our appreciation for the very hard work of the staff of this House.

As MPs, when we enter this House, we tend to be absorbed with what we will talk about, whether it is in debate or asking a question. We take for granted the high quality of the service that is provided in the House. I think it is only fitting that we take this moment to recognize just how well we are served and the fact that we sometimes do take it for granted. I thank them very much.

Thank you, sir.

[Translation]

With all the hullabaloo in the House, we often tend to take the good work that is done in this chamber for granted. So I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Liberal party, to thank all those who work so hard in this House and wish them a good summer.

* * *

● (1515)

[English]

FIRST NATIONS FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY ACT

The House resumed from June 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-27, An Act to enhance the financial accountability and transparency of First Nations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-27.

Call in the members.

Business of the House

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, I ask that you proceed immediately.

[Translation]

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

● (1520) [English]

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

(Division No. 455)

YEAS

Members

Butt

Ablonczy Adams Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac) Allison Ambler Ambrose Anders Anderson Armstrong Ashfield Aspin Baird Bateman Benoit Bernier Bezan Blanev Block Braid Boughen

Breitkreuz Brown (Leeds-Grenville)

Brown (Newmarket-Aurora) Calandra Cannan Carmichael Carrie Chisu Chong Clarke Clement Davidson Dechert Del Mastro Devolin Dreeshen

Duncan (Vancouver Island North)

Findlay (Delta-Richmond East) Finley (Haldimand-Norfolk) Fletcher

Galipeau Glover Goguen Goodyear Gosal Grewal Gourde Harper Hawn Hiebert Haves Hillyer Hoback Holder James

Kamp (Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge-Mission) Jean

Toet

Truppe

Kenney (Calgary Southeast) Keddy (South Shore-St. Margaret's)

Kramp (Prince Edward-Hastings) Lake Lauzon Leef Leitch Lemieux Leung Lizon Lukiwski

Lobb Lunney MacKay (Central Nova) MacKenzie McColeman McLeod Menegakis

Menzies Merrifield Moore (Port Moody-Westwood-Port Coquitlam)

O'Neill Gordon Oda Oliver Opitz Paradis Penashue Poilievre Raitt Preston Rathgeber Rajotte Rempel Rickford Reid Richards Schellenberger Seeback Shipley Shea Shory Smith Sopuck Sorenson Stanton Storseth Sweet

Tilson

Trost

Uppal Van Loan Vellacott Wallace Warkentin Watson

Weston (West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country)

Wilks Williamson Wong Woodworth

Young (Oakville) Young (Vancouver South) Zimmer- - 139

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Ravignat Raynault Regan Rousseau Saganash Savoie Sandhu Scarpaleggia Sellah Scott Sims (Newton-North Delta) Sitsabaiesan St-Denis Stewart Toone Tremblay

Trudeau Valeriote-

PAIRED

Turmel

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Business of the House

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

The Speaker: It being 3:23 p.m., pursuant to an order made Wednesday, June 20, the House stands adjourned until Monday,

September 17, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 3:23 p.m.)

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