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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 21, 2012

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 21, 2012

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

GAZA STRIP

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in this time of strife between Israel and Palestine, the Bloc Québécois is calling on the Government of Canada to take a fair, equitable and balanced position in its statements and actions. It is time for this government to stop being provocative and return to the role of a political player that respects international law and human rights.

We would like to reiterate the importance of a permanent end to violence in the Gaza Strip and a return to negotiation and dialogue between the two parties, with the necessary co-operation of the international community.

We hope that with the ceasefire announced this afternoon, the UN resolutions—those regarding the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and those calling for the immediate lifting of the blockade and an end to the unlawful colonization—will be honoured and will serve as a basis for dialogue.

I hope the Canadian government will use the truce as an opportunity to take a reasonable position, one that reflects the values of Quebecers.

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[*English*]

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a true Canadian hero from my riding.

Sergeant Herb Peppard is a 92-year-old World War II veteran. During the war, he fought in the very distinguished brigade known as the “Devil’s Brigade” and, during his service, he served with such valour and distinction that there has been an award named after him called the “Sergeant Herbert Peppard Silver Star”, which is awarded every year to an outstanding young Canadian serviceman.

During the Second World War, Herb was actually wounded in Italy. He was shot in the side and was hospitalized for five months. After returning to duty, he served as a paratrooper in southern France. Now Herb has been hospitalized again. He is at the Camp Hill Hospital in Halifax. I was speaking to him on the phone yesterday. He is doing very well. We know he will recover and be back home by Christmas.

On behalf of all members of Parliament and all Canadians, I thank Herb for his service. We are pulling for him. Keep those home fires burning.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ACCESS TO MEDICINES

Ms. Hélène Lavergère (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tonight we will have the second hour of debate on Bill C-398 before it is referred to a committee.

This bill would help save lives by fighting such illnesses as HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in developing countries. It is actively supported by tens of thousands of Canadians.

However, there is misinformation about this bill circulating on the other side of the House.

[*English*]

Bill C-398 would not weaken existing safeguards ensuring medicines are not diverted. The bill would not remove measures to ensure the quality of medicines sent abroad. The bill would not violate Canada’s obligation under the WTO.

This bill would save lives. It should not be voted upon on the basis of hearsay and misinformation. If any of my colleagues have questions about the bill, my door is always open to them.

*Statements by Members***CLIFF PILKEY**

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, my home city of Oshawa lost one of its great community leaders. On Saturday, November 17, at the age of 90, Cliff Pilkey passed away. Mr. Pilkey spent his lifetime trying to make a difference and he has certainly left his mark in Oshawa.

Over the course of his long and distinguished career, he was president of Oshawa's CAW Local 222. He was also president of the Oshawa and District Labour Council from 1957 to 1967 and with the Ontario Federation of Labour from 1976 to 1986. Cliff also served as an Oshawa councillor in the 1960s and 1970s and was the member of the provincial parliament for Oshawa from 1967 to 1971.

For his efforts and hard work, Mr. Pilkey received the Order of Ontario and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

I take this opportunity to honour the life and career of Mr. Pilkey. His memory and legacy have left a mark on Oshawa.

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EDUCATION

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a significant milestone in the education of girls in my hometown of Kingston.

The dream of Archbishop MacDonell to establish a school for the education of girls became a reality when three sisters from the congregation of Notre Dame in Montreal arrived in Kingston on this day, November 21, in 1841. Three days later, the sisters received their first pupils and, in time, the Notre Dame Convent School was inaugurated, a school which hundreds of women still proudly call their alma mater.

From Kingston, the sisters expanded their ministry to educate girls in western and Atlantic Canada. After 126 years, Notre Dame Convent School joined with Regiopolis College for Boys to become the current Regiopolis-Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School.

Let us honour this milestone of the sisters of the congregation of Notre Dame as they celebrate today 171 years of continuous ministry and education in Kingston, Ontario.

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Kyle Couture, an amazing special Olympian. Kyle will be competing in ball hockey at the Pyeongchang Special Olympics in 2013.

Kyle Couture has been involved in the Special Olympics for four years, participating in baseball, soccer and floor hockey. He has competed nationally and provincially and has won both gold and silver medals. During the off-season, he spends his spare time competing in track and field or working in the scorekeeper's box at the local hockey arena. Kyle is an avid hockey fan and cheers for the Edmonton Oilers and the Lethbridge Hurricanes.

His goal in Pyeongchang is to win gold on behalf of Canada. On behalf of Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, I wish him the greatest success and know he will do proud for Canada.

[*Translation*]

CIVIC ACTION

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I had the immense pleasure and privilege of meeting many of my constituents in my riding office.

My team and I organized an open house in order to listen to concerned and worried constituents who are trying to understand why this government has it in for them.

One thing was clear: the increase in the number of unemployed workers is affecting the entire Marc-Aurèle-Fortin community.

We also collected donations of food for the food banks in our area, which are needed more than ever during the holidays.

At last count, more than 800,000 Canadians depend on food banks. I would like to thank these organizations that work to bring about change in areas where the Conservative government has decided to do nothing.

I will always stand up for the fair distribution of our wealth and, above all, I will always encourage civic action.

I thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to be involved.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

COPTIC ORTHODOX COMMUNITY

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, November 18, I had the privilege to attend the enthronement of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II in Egypt. The ceremony took place in St. Mark's Cathedral in Cairo and was attended by high-ranking Coptic clerics, political leaders and members of the Coptic Orthodox community.

Following the enthronement, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and I were able to meet with His Holiness Pope Tawadros in his chambers. Pope Tawadros displayed that he is a compassionate, generous and courageous leader. He spoke to us about his knowledge of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Canada and our government's commitment to religious freedom.

Coptic Canadians in Mississauga and across Canada were following the ceremony very closely and I am pleased that we were able to represent them in Egypt at this momentous event.

Our government has shown that we will stand with the Coptic community as it strives for human rights, freedom of religion, democracy and the rule of law.

*Statements by Members***SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY**

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the tremendous economic benefits the people of British Columbia and, indeed, all Canadians will receive as a result of our government's national shipbuilding procurement strategy.

In North Vancouver, Seaspan Shipyards won the national competition for an \$8 billion contract to build non-combat vessels for the Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard. These include offshore science vessels, a polar icebreaker and joint support ships.

The Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries has estimated that government ship projects would directly and indirectly contribute over \$2 billion in annual economic benefit and 15,000 jobs across Canada for the next 30 years. Major federal investments such as this will also help Vancouver shipyards become a world-class centre of excellence.

On October 19, 2012, the groundbreaking ceremony at Seaspan kicked off the start of construction. I look forward to seeing the benefits of our national shipbuilding strategy come to fruition.

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STRATHCONA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary of two outstanding community organizations in East Vancouver, the Strathcona Community Centre and the Chinese Community Library Services Association, and the 44th anniversary of the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association. They are the heart and soul of this very historic Strathcona neighbourhood known for its diversity, community spirit and proud history.

The recreational programs and services provided to inner city families and seniors by the Strathcona Community Centre are quite extraordinary. The Chinese library is unique in North America. It preserves Chinese language and culture within the Chinese community and is a source of education and understanding among the many diverse groups in Canada.

SPOTA's hard work to stop freeways in Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood in the 1960s and 1970s has maintained this wonderful community as home for many generations.

I salute these organizations and thank them for the dedicated work they do in making Strathcona a place that all Vancouverites are proud of.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the senior Liberal spokesperson for natural resources made outrageous comments that once again show the Liberals' anti-energy agenda.

Our government strongly condemns the Liberal Party of Canada's comments that say that Alberta MPs do not belong in Parliament and should go home. As an Albertan, I am extremely proud to represent my constituents here in Ottawa and will proudly continue to defend

their interests. The opposition fails to understand the facts. Alberta's energy industry is creating jobs and prosperity at home and across the country.

This anti-energy prejudice is the same one the Liberals had when they brought in their disastrous national energy program in the 1980s, a program that damaged the economy and cost Albertans billions. This type of regionally divisive policy and rhetoric from the Liberal Party is unfathomable. Our government will continue to defend Albertans, especially against failed Liberal policies and their east-versus-west ideology.

Members can bet I will be telling my constituents that when I go back to Alberta.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, women often hold part-time, temporary or casual jobs. Many women simply do not accumulate enough hours to be entitled to employment insurance benefits. The figures speak for themselves. Only four out of 10 unemployed workers have access to EI, but the figure is just three out of 10 for women. That is unacceptable.

It is clear that the EI reforms for so-called frequent claimants will penalize women in particular. I recently met with representatives of the Seigneurie-des-Mille-Îles school board to talk about female workers in my riding—early childhood educators, special education workers, monitors and bus drivers—who are laid off every summer.

The Conservatives must stop going after female workers and come up with a job creation plan that helps combat this instability.

* * *

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the senior Liberal spokesperson on natural resources, the MP from Ottawa South, attacked Albertans for sending MPs to Ottawa to defend Alberta's interests. He said that if Alberta MPs wanted to defend the interests of their constituents, they should resign and go home.

Statements by Members

I stand in this House proud to represent the hard-working residents of Alberta. My constituents work hard, play by the rules and pay their taxes. They deserve to have their voices heard in the House. The Liberal Party may find it offensive to have Alberta's interests defended on the floor of the House of Commons, but Albertans find it offensive when the Liberal Party tries to shut down their voices.

Today, on behalf of Albertans, I call on the Liberal Party to apologize and I call on the Leader of the Liberal Party to fire his natural resources critic.

* * *

[Translation]

ROGER GUINDON

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Father Guindon has left us, but the marks of his time on Earth remain.

Beloved Father Guindon, you transformed the College of Bytown, a humble Catholic academy, into a public institution that has become the largest bilingual university in Canada, specifically mandated to advance the cause of the Franco-Ontarian community.

[English]

The people of Ottawa saw the results of your skilful negotiations with successive governments as the University of Ottawa grew and grew to become a major player in medicine, sciences, engineering, law, administration, education, the social sciences and the arts.

Let us not forget the numerous championships garnered by the Gee-Gees, the garnet and grey.

[Translation]

You also played an active role in creating the Fondation franco-ontarienne, which last year celebrated its first quarter century.

Tributes will come from those who, like me, became involved with the student federation and thereby also had the good fortune to work closely with you. That is where I was able to really get to know you, Father Guindon, as a wise, courageous and generous man.

On behalf of all those for whom the University of Ottawa is their alma mater, thank you so much, Roger Guindon, and may you rest in peace.

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[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Albertans are rightfully appalled by the arrogant comments about Alberta MPs from the MP for Ottawa South, the senior Liberal spokesman on natural resources.

As always, the Liberals fail to understand that Alberta's energy industry is creating jobs and prosperity right across our country. As a proud Albertan and chair of the Alberta caucus, I can unequivocally say that my colleagues and I will continue to stand up and defend the interests of Albertans each and every day we are here in Ottawa.

Albertans are proud of our government's work to promote the energy industry at home and abroad, and what Albertans do not want to see is a return to the devastating past Liberal policies that hurt our economy and cost Albertans billions of dollars. It is simply outrageous that the Liberal member would say that if we want to stand up for Albertans we should go home and run for our provincial legislature.

Our government is proud to defend Alberta's interests, especially against disastrous Liberal policies that have hurt Alberta before, such as Pierre Trudeau's national energy program. As my colleague from Peace River so eloquently stated yesterday, the Liberals have rejected Albertans and that is why Albertans continue to reject the Liberal Party.

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TAXATION

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives seem to be in love with making things up, so let us add some facts.

Fact: less is being collected in corporate taxes for the past four years than the first year they took power. Fact: for the past four years they have collected more income tax than when they took power. Fact: since they took power, the Conservatives have collected \$47 billion in user fees from Canadians.

What is the Conservatives' excuse for their attack on the middle class? It is make-believe policies and fabricated committee records. When the member for Beauce got caught being spoon-fed untrue pabulum, he did not even seem to care. It must be so nice to live in the Conservative land of make-believe, insulated from the problems of the real world and surrounded by puppets. Canadians do not have that luxury.

Instead of making things up, will the next member please tell Canadians why the government is taking money away from middle-class families and giving it to—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Wild Rose.

* * *

● (1420)

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as time passes people learn, grow and change. Unfortunately, even though time has passed, the Liberal Party has not learned a thing. Yesterday, the senior Liberal spokesperson for natural resources said that Albertans should “go back to Alberta” if they want to represent the interests of Albertans and the energy industry. That comment is simply outrageous.

I am proud to stand here and to voice the interests of my constituents. Unfortunately, the Liberals fail to acknowledge that Alberta's energy industry is creating jobs and prosperity right across this country. My constituents remember all too well Pierre Trudeau's failed national energy program that devastated the economy and cost Albertans billions of dollars.

We call upon the member for Ottawa South to do the right thing and resign as he clearly does not stand up for all Canadians. Our government will continue to stand up and defend Alberta's interests, especially since it is clear that no other party in the House will.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are withholding information from Canadians about cuts to their vital public services. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 85% of Conservative cuts are aimed directly at front-line services, but the PBO cannot measure the full impact of these cuts because Conservative ministers are hiding key financial data. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has now been forced to take the extraordinary step of asking the Federal Court to intervene.

Why are Conservatives obstructing the very office they created to provide objective financial information to Parliament? What do they have to hide?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Well, of course, nothing, Mr. Speaker. The government has made available to Parliament and to all Canadians all relevant information whenever it is available and we will continue to do so. We created the office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer so he could do his non-partisan work and we will continue to supply information for that non-partisan work—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in his economic update, the Minister of Finance had to admit that he will not be able to eliminate the Conservative deficit by the time he promised. The minister's plan was to balance the budget in 2015, but he will still be in the red to the tune of \$8.6 billion. Unexpectedly, the Prime Minister immediately contradicted his minister by stating, despite the evidence, that the budget would definitely be balanced on schedule.

If the Minister of Finance was telling us the truth, why did the Prime Minister contradict him? If he is wrong, how can the Prime Minister explain the fact that his Minister of Finance made an \$8.6 billion calculation error?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the objective of the government is to bring the budget back into balance during this Parliament. We are going to achieve that objective by controlling expenses and not, as the New Democratic Party proposes, by raising taxes.

Oral Questions

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently expressed his frustration with the weak economic growth in the United States. However, the International Monetary Fund is reporting that Canada's economic growth is now weaker than that of the U.S.

The Prime Minister needs to realize this and work with the other levels of government here in Canada. In fact, the premiers will be meeting in Halifax this week to discuss Canada's economic problems.

Why is the Prime Minister of Canada refusing to attend the premiers' economic summit in Halifax?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the end of the global recession, Canada has had the best economic performance of all major developed countries, and the OECD forecasts that this will continue for 50 years.

[English]

Let me repeat that. It is very clear from all observers that Canada does have the best economic performance of all major developed countries over the period since the end of the recession. The OECD has just predicted that with the policies put in place by this Conservative government that should continue for the next 50 years.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we believe it is crucial for the Prime Minister to sit down with the premiers together. Canadians are worried about the economy and they will be watching the meetings in Halifax. Premiers are expressing disappointment that the Prime Minister is refusing to sit down with them. Disappointing as this may be, we do understand that the Conservatives have a Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and his mandate is to coordinate federal-provincial relations.

Will the minister be attending these important meetings in Halifax?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister meets regularly with the premiers and has done so since 2006. He has had more than 250 meetings and phone calls with the heads of other governments in Canada since 2006. I meet regularly with my provincial colleagues. We will be getting together next month. The other ministers do as well.

We certainly worked well with the provinces at the time of the fiscal crisis several years ago during the recession with the stimulus plan. We worked very well together and it helped Canada recover faster than any other country during that difficult time.

Of course the New Democrats voted against that stimulus plan and now—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the minister cannot even get to his feet and answer a simple question in his area, then the Prime Minister should fire him.

Oral Questions

Premiers expect better than that from the federal government. Times are tough. Canada needs a common economic plan from coast to coast to coast.

If the economy is not the top priority, why are the Conservatives not taking the premiers seriously?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Of course we take the premiers seriously, Mr. Speaker, and we take the finance ministers seriously.

Jobs, the economy and prosperity are the number one priority of this government. The record shows that over the years we have been able to demonstrate the kind of competence, at least the best fiscal performance in the G7 here, in co-operation, I might add, with the provinces.

This is unlike the leader of the NDP, who has a different attitude toward the premiers. He said that there was no reason to talk to premiers because they were just the Prime Minister's messengers.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been estimated that in the northern reserves of northern Ontario as many as 10,000 of the 45,000 people are addicted to the drug Oxycontin. The chief of the Nishnawbe First Nation has said that the decision not to deal with this crisis by the Minister of Health is another blow to nations that are currently combatting an addiction epidemic.

The Minister of Health has the clear power to delay the granting of a licence to a drug where there is a public health crisis. I would like to ask the Prime Minister this. Why is the government not addressing this public health crisis?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is taking the appropriate measures, given the government's legal responsibilities.

Obviously there is a serious problem here, as the leader of the Liberal Party said, in terms of the illegal misuse of this drug. This government is certainly prepared to work with the provinces on addressing that concern.

• (1430)

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Council of Family Physicians and every minister of health across the country, both of them together, have asked the government to delay granting a drug information number to this generic product, which is now coming on the market. They have asked that it be done. There is an epidemic, particularly in isolated communities across the country, but not only in isolated communities, it is on the street as well.

Why would the Prime Minister's minister not sit down with the ministers of health and act with them co-operatively to deal with this question, and specifically to exercise her powers—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the government can only act in terms of forbidding products based on their legal use and this is a substance that has to be used and prescribed legally and properly.

The problem the member refers to is the illegal use and circulation of these substances. This is a criminal matter and the Minister of Health is prepared to work with the provinces to address those problems.

[Translation]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the solution to the problem is not to jail people who are taking the drug because they have an addiction. The solution is not to put them in prison as the Prime Minister is suggesting.

Here is an example. Every health minister across the country and the College of Family Physicians has requested the same thing of the minister. I am well aware that the minister wants to interrupt, but I am asking the Prime Minister the question.

Why not stop the approval process for this generic drug, since, according to aboriginal leaders, it is going to cause an epidemic in northern Canada?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just answered that question. We must make our decisions based on the legal use of these drugs.

We know that these drugs are sometimes used illegally, and the Minister of Health is prepared to work with the provinces to address this problem.

[English]

While I am on my feet, it is incumbent upon me to raise the issue of statements made by another member in the House. I find it shameful, not surprising, that 30 years after the national energy program, these anti-Alberta attitudes are still close to the surface in the Liberal Party.

* * *

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' lack of clarity on investment Canada has become an embarrassing mess. They are missing their own deadlines, deciding on deals in the middle of the night, confusing investors and refusing to consult Canadians. Considering how badly they are bungling this, it is no wonder they are hiding behind closed doors.

However, it has now leaked out that they are apparently asking CNOOC for something. What is that something? The House wants to know and Canadians want to know. If the Conservatives are not embarrassed about selling out Canadian natural resources, then why are they hiding behind closed doors?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. Our government will always act in the best interest of Canadians.

Every decision that will be made regarding foreign investment will have to prove net benefit for Canada. This is exactly what we are reviewing. We take the time to fully scrutinize a proposed transaction to ensure that a decision is made in the best interest of Canadians.

Oral Questions

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how can the Conservatives expect Canadians to trust them? They hide information from the public, they negotiate in secret and they let foreign companies break their promises with impunity.

Remember when they sold out Falconbridge? Hundreds of jobs were lost. They sold out Inco and hundreds of jobs were lost. They sold out Stelco and hundreds of jobs were lost. They sold out Alcan and hundreds of jobs were lost. Now, with CNOOC and Nexen, they are doing it again.

Why should Canadians trust the Conservatives to keep Nexen jobs in Alberta when they have sold us out every other time?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, with regard to the review, we will act in the best interest of Canadians.

We welcome foreign investment and we believe in it. It can put out enterprises in the global value chain and it creates jobs and growth for the economy.

However, if we were to follow the NDP policy, everything would be lost from the outset, with a \$21.5 billion carbon tax and an anti-trade and high-tax agenda. We will not go there.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when Caterpillar closed its doors and laid off hundreds of employees in London, it was not in the interests of Canadians.

When Electrolux moved its factory in L'Assomption to Memphis and laid off over a thousand workers, it was not in the interests of Canadians.

When Xstrata laid off hundreds of employees in Sudbury, it was not in the interests of Canadians.

Too often, the Conservatives have failed to stand up for Canadian jobs and interests. Why would it be any different if they allow a Chinese state-owned company to control our natural resources?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the proposed transaction, we will act in the best interests of Canadians. We are going to take as much time as we need to carefully assess the transaction in order to ensure that it will provide a net benefit to Canada.

What is not in the best interests of Canadians is to propose a \$21.5 billion carbon tax and then oppose measures to lower taxes for Canadians, lower the GST and lower taxes for small businesses to an all-time low of 15%.

The NDP is opposed to practically everything. That would kill the economy and is not in the best interests of Canadians.

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SECURITIES

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' record includes making up stories, exporting our jobs and handing over control of our resources.

It seems as though the Minister of Finance's stubbornness knows no bounds. Even though the Supreme Court rejected his plan to create a single securities commission, and even though there was an outcry from Montreal to Calgary to Victoria, he refuses to budge.

Instead of stubbornly working against the provinces, why not work with them to bring about change, in order to improve the existing passport system for securities?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will respect the provinces' jurisdiction here.

The Supreme Court of Canada decided that the provincial governments and the Government of Canada had jurisdiction over this issue. We need to work on this some more and talk together, which we are currently doing.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives truly wanted to work with the provinces on this important economic issue, the Prime Minister would have gone to Halifax to meet with his provincial counterparts or would be on his way there.

During his first attempt, the Minister of Finance chose to go to war with Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia, and after suffering a crushing defeat at the Supreme Court, he is at it once again with a similar plan. The minister's proposal will eliminate jobs, decision-making autonomy and valuable expertise in the provinces.

Why is the minister so obsessed with centralizing the securities commission?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is out of step with what is happening in these discussions in Canada, where a number of provinces, with substantial capital markets, have engaged in very substantive discussions with the Government of Canada on this subject. I have also had a discussion with the minister of finance in Quebec.

The reality is, what the Supreme Court of Canada has said is that the provinces have some legislative competence in this area, constitutionally, and so does the Government of Canada, particularly with respect to systemic risk, which means we must work together if we are to accomplish the goal of greater security for Canadians, an appropriate place internationally for—

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we are expecting this time around is that the Minister of Finance has learned his lesson. He did try to force the provinces to agree to his demands and he was shut down by the Supreme Court. His approach was nothing short of unconstitutional.

Therefore, the finance minister's bully tactics will not work. Neither he nor the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, understand that their role is to work with the provinces. Will he change his attitude and will he listen?

Oral Questions

●(1440)

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish the member opposite had listened to my answer to the last question. I do not want to repeat all that about what the Supreme Court of Canada decided. I invite the members opposite, including the member who asked the question, to read the decision of the court.

It is very plain that there is dual constitutional competence here. What does that mean? The opposition says that we should work together with the provinces. We are and the provinces are working together with us. The minister of finance for Ontario was here yesterday having a discussion with me about this subject and some other subjects.

The members want us to be working together, we are working together and we intend to achieve the goal together.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in fact his attitude so far has been to make future cuts to transfer payments without any consultation. Is that what he means by working with the provinces?

He attacks the finance ministers for not implementing his own vision while he is mismanaging an economy that will now grow at a slower rate than the United States, with 350,000 more unemployed in Canada today than when the recession hit in 2008.

Is this why he and the Prime Minister refuse to meet with the premiers?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that transfers have been reduced. Nothing could be further from the truth. Transfers, in all respects, in equalization, in the Canada health transfer, in the Canada social transfer, have grown to a record level in Canada from this government to the provinces.

If the member opposite does not want to look it up, I can help with the number. Federal support has reached the level of \$60.9 billion annually and will continue to grow each and every year. As we have made clear, we will not—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Public Works pled guilty to three labour code violations in relation to the Fleet Street plant boiler explosion, which three years ago claimed the life of engineer and father of four, Peter Kennedy, and injured two others. Those losses may have been prevented had the department complied with the law requiring hazard training.

Will the minister, today, after taking three years to plead guilty, stand in this place and apologize to those workers and families for the harm and loss suffered because of her department's failure?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this has been a terrible tragedy. All the employees at Public Works have been feeling this for the last three years with this employee's family. It has been a very difficult time for the family and

for the employees who worked with the deceased. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family.

Since this happened, we have introduced enhanced training and management oversights for all heating and cooling plants in the national capital region. We have been working closely with the union and the union head, Donna Lackie, has said that they are confident that the measures we have put in place will ensure the proper training so this does not happen again.

Again, our thoughts and prayers go out to the family.

* * *

[Translation]

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing the Conservatives should not take lightly, it is the safety of their own employees. The Conservatives have done nothing to stem the growing number of fatal workplace accidents in Canada. There were more than 1,000 in 2010.

The tragic death of Peter Kennedy should serve as an impetus for the minister. Protecting Canadian workers at their workplace must become a top priority again.

What does the minister intend to do to prevent such a tragedy from happening again?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question on health and safety in our country because it is indeed a very important matter, which we take very seriously, both here in the government and governments across the country.

Although we only have a small portion of the total employees in Canada, we lead the way in terms of making sure it is of utmost concern that the people who work in the federal jurisdiction are protected through health and safety measures. We actually bring boundaries to ourselves, in terms of making sure we are the first to deal with violence in the workplace regulations. Those are the kinds of things that are forward looking, and those are the things I will continue to do.

* * *

●(1445)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday a protest was held by veterans and their families over their outrage at the government's decision to close the Veterans Affairs office in Sydney. In total, nine offices are to be closed across this country. As I stated in the House during Veterans Week, Cape Breton soldiers have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

The government needs to understand the importance of this in-person service. Veterans were there for us; now we need to be there for them. Will the minister stand up for our veterans and change this short-sighted decision?

Oral Questions

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, veterans will now receive services at five locations instead of the one location where they were previously receiving service. There will be no reduction in services to local veterans. In fact, those veterans who require home services will continue to receive them.

The opposition is just trying to defend union interests. Here on this side of the House we actually defend veterans' interests. It is because of our Conservative government, under the leadership of this Prime Minister, that veterans now need to complete two and a half million fewer forms or phone calls or faxes, because we have eliminated the need for them to have to provide receipts for certain services. We—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

* * *

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, leaders of Canada's \$79 billion tourism industry are in Ottawa today, and they are not happy with the government. The list of reasons is long, so here is one: cuts to our national parks and our national monuments are hurting shops and restaurants right across the country. It is so bad that cruise ships will be steering away from Cape Breton after Labour Day because the area's parks now close a month earlier than before. That amounts to thousands of customers for every ship that is no longer going there.

What is the government thinking? Why undermine tourism and the jobs that are so important to our communities?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are supporting, not undermining, tourism. However, the Liberal Party is now undermining the unity of this country by attacking members of Parliament from Alberta for representing their constituents. The member of Parliament for Ottawa South actually said, speaking of Alberta MPs, that they should really go back to Alberta and run for municipal council. These Alberta MPs were elected, on average, with 67% of the support of their constituents to defend their constituents and Canada's economy, and they will not be lectured by the arrogance of the Liberal Party.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, things are a complete mess at immigration. The minister is wasting time on self-congratulatory petitions—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, things are a complete mess at immigration. The minister is wasting time on self-congratulatory petitions, cancelling visas that he says were granted by mistake, invading the privacy of visa holders, closing 19 regional offices, overloading the Montreal call centre and taking 20 months to approve sponsorship of spouses in Syria.

I wrote to him about the terrible situation in Syria. His response: a form letter.

Will he speed up the process for sponsorships for a country in crisis, yes or no?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, we already have.

When that member was the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, he never told the members of the Bloc Québécois to go back to Quebec. He never said they had no business being here to represent their constituents.

A Liberal member for Ottawa South just said that elected members from Alberta have no right to be here to represent the interests of their constituents. It is outrageous. All members have the right and the democratic mandate to be here on behalf of their constituents.

* * *

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, sometimes life is not fair. Luckily, scandals remind us that we have senators. It does not make sense for a senator to be given an allowance for a residence that does not even belong to him. Since senators are not accountable to anyone, I imagine that the Conservatives find this acceptable.

However, those who are accountable, namely the members opposite, are using all sorts of ludicrous diversion tactics, each more juvenile than the next, when we mention electoral fraud. That is a real problem.

I have a very simple question for the Conservatives: will they strengthen the Canada Elections Act or will they condone electoral fraud?

• (1450)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is perfectly normal for senators and members of Parliament to have one residence in their riding and another here in Ottawa. We have asked the Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration to ensure that senators are complying with Senate policies and to take corrective action if they are not.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I remember asking a question about electoral fraud.

This tired government is all about smoke and mirrors. The Conservatives are all talk, no action. They adopted our motion to help Elections Canada prevent electoral fraud, but now they have put that motion on a shelf and are happily looking the other way. There is a clear choice to be made: either they want cleaner elections or they want to protect their friends who committed electoral fraud.

Which side are they on?

Oral Questions

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, we have already implemented the Federal Accountability Act, which made it possible to establish rules with regard to the funding of elections and Elections Canada's objectivity. The NDP violated this law by illegally accepting over \$300,000 from unions.

[English]

Speaking of transparency, maybe the member will take this occasion finally to rise on the question of political finance. After his 29 donations to the separatist party, is he now a federalist?

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of bizarre attempts to deflect, let us talk about the member for Saint Boniface, who went on national TV and tried to pass herself off as a victim of electoral fraud and claimed Elections Canada had ignored her concerns. However, then she had to recant because Elections Canada had red flagged her campaign. Now the trail is leading right back to Conservative Party headquarters.

Defrauding Canadians of their right to vote is not ethical or clean behaviour. Will someone over there stand up and take responsibility? Will they stand up, please, and do the right thing?

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, of course I am prepared to stand up and defend the clean and ethical campaign that our party ran in the last election. The question is whether that member is prepared to do the same.

His party defrauded workers of \$340,000, which it took in illegal union money. The reason union donations are illegal is that workers do not have the power to consent to giving the money. Do those members really expect us to believe they did not know, when all this money was coming in, that it was illegal? Did they really believe we would not find out? Why does he not stand and answer that question?

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, God help them when they are hiding behind those pathological excuses.

Speaking of excuses, we have the intergovernmental affairs minister, who has refused to explain the role the Guelph political operative Chris Crawford is playing in his office. Here is the thing. The Conservatives are telling us they are really glad the beleaguered minister is flying around his riding in his province using his ministerial budget, so then why does he need a director of parliamentary affairs? Are we really to believe that he hired one of the key operatives in the Guelph scandal to book him rooms at the Sinbad's motel in Gander? Is he going to stand up and explain himself?

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, only for the NDP would it be a scandal for a member of Parliament to spend too much time working in his constituency with the people he serves.

It is a scandal because that member would not want to go back to his riding to have to explain to them why he ran, time after time, on the promise of abolishing the wasteful billion dollar Liberal long gun registry, and then, when he had a chance to do something about it, he betrayed those very same constituents.

I am proud to stand with this minister.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s, the Trudeau Liberals brought in the national energy program that absolutely destroyed the economy and cost my constituents and Alberta families their jobs, their homes and billions of dollars.

Comments yesterday by the senior Liberal spokesperson for natural resources show that the Liberals have not changed much since then. When will the Liberals understand that Alberta's energy industry brings incredible prosperity and jobs right across the country?

Can the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism update the House on our government's commitment to Canada's energy industry?

● (1455)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government was elected to work for the jobs, growth and long-term prosperity of all Canadians. We recognize that one of the real engines of growth in our economy is the energy industry, and that Albertans and people across the country, hundreds of thousands of them, work very hard in that industry. They expect to have MPs who represent them and the interests of our national economy.

We have a question for the leader of the Liberal Party. When is he going to fire his critic for natural resources for having attacked the members of Parliament from Alberta for simply representing their constituents, as they are expected to do?

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have no concern for the unemployed. Service Canada is now forcing seasonal workers to prove that they are looking for work by asking potential employers to sign a declaration stating that they are not hiring. Because of the administration involved, some employers are charging fees as high as \$30. When you have no job, you have no money to pay for a job search form.

How does the minister justify making unemployed Canadians pay to get access to their benefits?

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable for employers to ask for a fee for a letter of that kind. That is not the way we want things to be done. The unemployed are responsible for showing that they are looking for work, it is true, but there are a number of other ways of doing that.

They do not have to provide a letter from employers and, certainly, employers must not charge fees for such a letter.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, employment insurance reform is so messed up that even Conservative members, who are usually heartless, are now asking the minister for changes.

The hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe has just realized that his constituents are not happy.

It is about time. We have been saying for six months that the reform does not reflect regional economic realities.

If the Conservatives had held consultations, this would not have happened.

Is the minister going to listen to her colleague from the back benches and support the NDP position now? The government's reform makes no sense.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP position is to have a 45-day work year. That is not acceptable for the employers in this country who are looking for skilled and talented workers. Our government is helping Canadians without jobs to develop their skills and is providing them with the training they need to get those positions.

There are employers who need their talent. We are helping the unemployed to get those jobs.

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after having their way with employment insurance all over Canada, the Conservatives are continuing to wreak havoc on the Gaspé.

They have decided to eliminate winter maintenance and security services in the magnificent Forillon Park.

No more cross-country skiing, no more snowshoeing, no more winter activities, and no more tourist revenue.

The song says “my country is the winter”, not “my country is shutting down for the winter”, as the Conservatives would like.

Why do the Conservatives want to make the Gaspé shut down for the winter?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not true. Forillon National Park will remain accessible during the winter.

[*English*]

Some parking lots will continue to be plowed and be maintained, allowing visitors to enjoy wildlife, to ski and snowshoe.

However, my colleague has to remember that to meet our deficit reduction obligations in Parks Canada, as across all agencies and

departments, Parks Canada is aligning its seasonal hours of operation to better reflect patterns of visitation.

* * *

● (1500)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, mayors and councillors from across the country are here on Parliament Hill asking for help to fix our crumbling infrastructure, and what did they get? They got fabricated stories about the NDP. It is a sad day for thousands of cities and communities when the Conservatives choose to ignore the calls for partnership.

Instead of gazebos and insider deals, will the minister take the politics out of infrastructure projects and say yes to the FCM's demand for long-term predictable infrastructure funding?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member and her party have ideas like a carbon tax of \$21.5 billion, which would increase the cost of every single item for municipalities across the country. They have other ideas like imposing a new tax that would increase the GST by \$6 billion a year.

Clearly, the party opposite only has one priority, getting deeper and deeper into the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

* * *

41ST GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the 2011 election campaign, Elections Canada told the Conservatives that fraudulent calls claiming that polling stations had been moved were traced back to the Conservatives' national toll-free number.

Why did the Conservatives not take immediate action and take the steps necessary to investigate? Why is there no evidence that anyone in their party tried to work with Elections Canada to shut that down? Are the Elections Act penalties too low?

Will the government vote to pass a Liberal bill today that adds strenuous fines to the Elections Act to stop criminal fraud like this from happening in the future?

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, they did not just ask about criminal fraud. My ears must deceive me.

The Liberal Party of Canada rose today to talk about criminal fraud, the same day that a former Liberal minister was charged with three counts in connection with using federal funds to pay for his son's wedding. I am almost speechless—and that never happens as all members know.

As Talleyrand said of the Bourbon dynasty, “They have learned nothing and forgotten nothing”.

Oral Questions

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the question of robocalls the new parliamentary secretary is finding himself getting sucked into the same ethical hole as his predecessor. His company, 3D Contact Inc., made big bucks making robocalls for the Conservatives, securing some 96 contracts and 49 grand in the 2008 election, and none of those robocalls had address tag lines as required by the CRTC.

When will the government take the issue seriously and reveal to Canadians all the information it has on the robocall scam, or will we get another robocall answer from Pierre Poutine?

The Speaker: Order. I will let the hon. parliamentary secretary answer that, but I do not think it is helpful to the House to use terms like that, especially given the rules about using proper names.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

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 incredible to see the Liberal Party stand in the House of Commons and falsely accuse others of things for which its members have themselves already been found guilty and fined by the regulatory agencies for. I guess we should not be surprised. After all, that is the Liberal way. They forget nothing but they learn nothing, and not just in this area. They also want to revive the same sentiments that led to the disastrous national energy program in Alberta.

We will never stand by and support the kind of arrogant and nasty comments that we saw from the Liberals just yesterday.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of the Conservatives' incompetence, Canada signed a lease in 2008 for a building in which our diplomats posted to Moscow will not be able to work until 2016. This means that, for eight years, taxpayers' money will be spent on an empty building, while Canadian staff are being forced to work in another building that offers no protection against terrorist attacks or espionage.

Calling on the RCMP to investigate leaked documents is not a solution. Is the minister aware of this solution? If so, why has he not rectified the situation?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no memo was sent to my office on this issue.

• (1505)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, maybe I will refresh the minister's memory about the following. We have an embassy building in Moscow that does not meet security standards, that is vulnerable to terrorist attacks and opens the door to foreign spies. Instead of calling in authorities to protect our diplomats, Conservatives are calling on the RCMP to investigate the leak.

What is the priority for these guys? Is it protecting our diplomats from terrorism or is it about protecting themselves from transparency?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is passing strange by this member, who just last month was criticizing the government for moving too quickly to ensure the safety and security of our employees. He criticized this government for taking the necessary step of closing down our embassy in Tehran to ensure the safety and security of our employees. The member wants us to have robust diplomacy with Iran and somehow break off ties with Great Britain. That is something this government will not do.

* * *

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night the House unanimously voted in favour of the helping families in need act. This important legislation would help families by providing assistance when they need it the most, when caring for a critically ill child or when a child is murdered or goes missing because of a Criminal Code offence.

Can the minister please tell the House why swift passage of this legislation is needed?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Selkirk—Interlake for his longstanding efforts on this file.

I was very pleased to see the unanimous support of the House for this government bill to support families when they need it most. This new law would demonstrate our support for parents who need time to care for critically ill children or to hold their families together once their child has been subject to a crime.

We are ready to start implementing this legislation in January. I only hope that the other place will expedite the passage of this bill so we can do that.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister from Labrador has had every opportunity to provide an innocent explanation for his messy campaign finances, including anonymous and corporate donations, interest-free loans, illegally discounted air travel and campaign spending way over the legal cap. Now Reg Bowers, his former official agent, claims everything was right when he signed off on the paperwork.

If that is so, will the sitting minister stand and tell the House who changed the paperwork? Was it Bev Oda's autopen or was it the people who changed the invoices for the in and out scheme?

Oral Questions

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 not just that the Liberals accuse other people of things for which they have already been found guilty themselves; it is not just that they had the biggest criminal conspiracy in Canadian history, the sponsorship scandal; it is not just that today a former minister of theirs was charged with using public funds to pay for his son's wedding, but that they are prepared to stand and throw rocks and are not even embarrassed about it. One really has to admire the astonishing degree of arrogance over there.

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[Translation]

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the tourism industry generates 10% of jobs in Canada and brings in billions of dollars in revenues.

However, over the past decade, Canada has dropped from 7th to 15th place when it comes to the number of international visitors. It therefore makes absolutely no sense that the Conservatives have once again reduced the Canadian Tourism Commission's budget.

The Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism knows full well that underfunding the CTC will only hurt our tourism industry.

Will he do something about this, or is he so busy recounting fictitious tales that he has no time to stand up for the tourism industry?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, just today, I had the honour of meeting with some entrepreneurs from the Canadian tourism industry.

I can assure this House that these people are very proud to work in that industry. They are creating jobs and wealth in Canada. This \$78 billion industry has enjoyed steady growth for the past three years in a row.

Our tourism industry is doing fine, and I am proud to represent it.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for years I have heard from first nation band members across Canada and their message is loud and clear. First nations expect and deserve the same level of transparency and accountability from their elected officials as all Canadians. Currently, first nation governments operating under the Indian Act are the only level of government in Canada not obligated to make basic financial information public.

Can the parliamentary secretary please tell the House what our government is doing to address this?

● (1510)

Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar for her outstanding work on this initiative.

Our government is responding to first nations' calls for greater accountability and transparency from their elected officials. The first nations financial transparency act would ensure that first nations have access to basic financial information such as the salaries and expenses of their chiefs and councils, and increase investor confidence for economic development on reserve.

I urge the NDP and the Liberals to stop standing in the way, do the right thing, and vote in favour of this great legislation.

* * *

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Resolute Forest Products announced 239 layoffs at the Fort Frances mill, which accounts for 37% of the economy in Fort Frances. While the government spends millions on TV ads bragging about Canada's resource wealth and building gazebos and fake lakes, this is cold comfort to the workers and their families hit by these layoffs. In fact, since the Conservatives took office more than 30,000 forestry jobs have been lost in northern Ontario alone.

Why has the government abandoned resource communities and hard-working families in Northern Ontario?

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the forestry industry is still going through a difficult period. This is the fault of the market. Obviously, our government will never manage private companies. We sympathize with the workers in this region who unfortunately received bad news yesterday. It is obviously very difficult for the families, and we understand that.

The problems with the forestry industry are the result of market and product issues. We all use the Internet and use less paper than before. That is a global trend.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I want to begin by thanking him for not yet ratifying the Canada-China investment treaty. His recent trip to India brought to light that the Canada-India investment treaty signed two years ago is not yet ratified, because the parliament of India will have the opportunity to vote on the treaty before ratification.

Could we not demonstrate our commitment to democratic values to the People's Republic of China by submitting the treaty now for a debate and vote in the House?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the leader of the Green Party has her facts wrong. As a matter of fact, we have not concluded a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement with the Government of India. We are obviously hopeful that we will do that. It is a commitment that Prime Minister Singh and I made. We will continue to work hard to complete those negotiations. An agreement is not yet completed, but we do have that as our ultimate objective.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Per Westerberg, Speaker of the parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: I also draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the hon. Madeleine Dubé, Minister of Social Development for New Brunswick.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the House of Commons "Report to Canadians" for 2012.

* * *

● (1515)

TECHNICAL TAX AMENDMENTS ACT, 2012

Hon. Ted Menzies (for the Minister of Finance) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, the First Nations Goods and Services Tax Act and related legislation.

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

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the 10th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held in Akureyri, Iceland, September 5-7, 2012.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in relation to its study of chapter 2, Replacing Canada's Fighter Jets, of the spring 2012 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

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

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP truly believes that the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on replacing Canada's fighter jets does not reflect the evidence that was heard. We believe that it is vital that the bidding process be open, fair and transparent.

In the case of the fighter jets, the process was flawed, manipulated, and not at all transparent. The only justification provided: a 60-word letter. The government's seven-point plan, overseen by the new National Fighter Procurement Secretariat, only examines the F-35 option.

In light of these facts, we believe that the government has lost all credibility in the procurement process. That is why the official opposition had no choice but to draft a dissenting report.

[English]

HEALTH

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to the supplementary estimates (B) 2012-13.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I move that the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Health presented on Friday, May 18, be concurred in.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate this report. I will be splitting my time with another member.

I do find it much more valuable that we are debating this important report from the Standing Committee on Health rather than yet another time allocation motion that the government tries to push on the House. We have now had 29 time allocation motions, in addition to two closure motions, as well as other motions that were simply designed to limit debate in this House.

Routine Proceedings

I am happy today that at least we are debating a report of substance that has to do with chronic diseases related to aging, health promotion and disease prevention. The report comes from the Standing Committee on Health and was tabled in the House in May 2012. This is much more substantive work than trying to deal with yet another time allocation motion from the government.

The report we are debating today deals with the very serious issue in Canadian society of chronic diseases as they relate to aging and to old people. The Standing Committee on Health had a very fulsome debate on this. We heard from witnesses from October 2011 to February 2012. We heard very credible witnesses who told us that chronic diseases cost the Canadian economy about \$190 billion annually. The committee was also told that the treatment of chronic diseases consumes 67% of all direct health care costs, which is a staggering figure. How often do we talk about this issue and consider what the cost considerations are?

We need to have a health care system that responds to people's health care needs but there is now a growing body of evidence that tells us that we need to manage how the system works and we need to manage a lot better on disease prevention and health promotion. If we did those two simple things, we would save the system billions of dollars.

We need to focus better on primary care. We need to ensure that people have access to a family doctor through a community health centre. We need primary care that focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to prevent people from having to go to the emergency room and stand in line for hours and hours or go through procedures that might have been prevented if they had community accessible, community based health care based on health promotion and disease prevention.

The committee heard from a number of witnesses but the report that finally came out was somewhat disappointing. As we have seen with a number of committees, the government members did everything they could to write a report on a sort of A-plus on everything they believe the government has done, in many cases, ignoring what witnesses said in terms of what actually needed to be done to improve the system.

I am very proud that, in this particular report, the NDP members on the committee also submitted a minority report and put forward what we believe were the clear suggestions and recommendations that came from the witnesses we heard.

I will take this opportunity to go through some of those very important recommendations that we have put forward.

First and foremost, we have to go back to the 2004 health accords. These were accords that were signed by the provinces, the territories and the federal government and laid out a plan for 10 years about how we would approach our health care system. They built upon the royal commission that was conducted by Mr. Roy Romanow and his report of 2002 that was called, "Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada".

If we go back to the health accords in 2004, we see that there were some agreements. A consensus was arrived at by the provinces, the territories and the federal government on what needed to be done to refocus the priorities of our health care system and to ensure that we

were getting health care services and support to people earlier, instead of waiting for the onset and management of chronic diseases.

• (1520)

One of Mr. Romanow's key recommendations in 2002 was to have a home care program. As we can see today, many seniors who live alone and do not have the necessary support often end up in emergency rooms or in acute care when they should be getting community-based support and care, including home care. It seems to me that these are very logical provisions that should take place. It was very disappointing for us when participating in the committee and the report that was done to find that a number of these key recommendations were ignored by government members and it was up to us to bring them forward. It was key to actually go back to the Romanow report and look at what he had so soundly put forward about what needs to be done, a key one being home care.

Another issue that was clearly agreed to by the provinces and the territories was to implement a national pharmaceutical program. We know that many Canadians are finding the exorbitant cost of prescription drugs becoming very unaffordable for them. One of the key indicators of rising costs in our health care system is the cost of prescription drugs. It was interesting to note that, in the 2004 health accord, there was an agreement that this would be worked on and we would come forward with some kind of national program that would ensure that prescription drugs were affordable and accessible. One of the most obvious things that could have been done was to ensure that all levels of government worked together for a bulk purchasing plan for prescription drugs. It has been estimated that would save us about \$10 billion annually in our health care costs. We are talking about very big numbers here.

This was a very key recommendation that the NDP put forward in this report on chronic diseases because we understand the need to address some of the inequities in the system and some of the incredible costs that people are facing, for example, with prescription drugs. It is something that needs to be worked on. It is an area of work where we have seen the federal government basically walk away. If we look at the agreements in the accords from 2004 and examine what has taken place since that time, the most obvious and glaring thing is the fact that the federal government has basically abandoned the recommendations and the agreements that were made in that accord. Is it any wonder that we are now facing higher and higher costs for chronic diseases because we are not paying attention to what it is that we need to do in our health care system and we are not paying attention to what was actually agreed to in 2004?

Routine Proceedings

It has been very disappointing to see the failure of federal leadership in this field. Not only have the Conservatives not shown the leadership that is required on the accord, but then we had an incredible situation last year where the Minister of Finance unilaterally came out with a funding formula for health care that, as we know from the Parliamentary Budget Office, will shortchange the provinces and territories by over \$30 billion in the long term. This is very shocking information. The fact that it was unilateral is usually a matter of discussion between the provinces, the territories and the federal government in terms of what those health transfers will be. The fact that the Minister of Finance made a unilateral decision and then the Minister of Health and the Conservative government as a whole basically said that it was not the federal government's business, that it was up to the provinces to decide what do.

I want to be very clear in the House that we in the NDP understand that health care is a federal responsibility under the Canada Health Act. We understand that there has been a very strong role for the federal government. It is absolutely correct that the provinces deliver health care, but the role that the federal government plays in terms of transfers and of showing leadership to bring about agreements, such as we saw in the 2004 health accord, this has been a very important role for the federal government to play. The fact that now we have a Conservative government that has completely abandoned this responsibility presents us with a very serious situation.

• (1525)

I want to end by saying that one other area of the report that we highlighted was the lack of action by the federal government on the recommendations that came from the working group on sodium reduction. I want to mention this because it was really shocking to see that there had been an expert advisory group, the provinces and territories had even agreed and, lo and behold, it was the federal government that disbanded the group, moved away from the recommendations and basically abandoned its leadership.

I am very proud to say that we in the NDP have now tabled Bill C-460, which, if approved, would implement the sodium reduction strategy that was put forward in good faith and worked on for so many years. Again, this is a very critical issue around health promotion and disease prevention. It is an issue that affects those with chronic diseases. This was a very important recommendation in our report, which we will continue to work on.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the comments from the member who happens to be the NDP health critic. Earlier today we heard the Minister of Finance say that they have put this exorbitant amount of money and more into transfer payments with respect to the health accord. He is saying that there will not be any cutbacks.

However, the member is absolutely right. There will be massive cutbacks in health care. Could the member elaborate on what people with chronic illnesses could actually expect from an NDP government with respect to funding and prescription drugs?

• (1530)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, the NDP launched a national campaign in September of this year. We are now going across the

country, consulting and speaking with Canadians in public health forums. We are holding expert stakeholder meetings. We have had an incredible response.

It is really quite ironic. We face a government that has refused to talk to Canadians about health care. It has walked away from the table. The government does not consider health care its responsibility, yet the response that we are getting out in local communities and in the polls from the Canadian Medical Association is that the number one issue for Canadians is for the federal government to take leadership on health care. The government is going in the complete opposite direction from what Canadians want. What we are hearing from Canadians when we go out in our public forums and talk with people is that this issue of drug costs and how high and unaffordable they are for so many people is something that is now very serious.

We even have situations where, for example, a cancer patient in New Brunswick who is paying an average of \$60,000 for cancer drugs is being urged to move to British Columbia where those costs would be covered. We can see the inequities across the country. There are provinces that are working very hard, such as Nova Scotia and Manitoba, to deal with this but it is not within the framework of a national collaboration around drug costs.

The member is right when she raises this as a very specific question, because it is one of the key concerns that Canadians have. It is really very bothering to me that there is so much that the federal government could easily do from an economic point of view of saving billions of dollars and also from a social equity point of view in terms of making sure there are not these inequities in our health care system, yet the government has walked away.

The report that we are debating today is an opportunity for us to focus the limelight on these key questions and to make it clear that there is a progressive vision for health care in this country, and it is coming from the NDP.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party had tabled a dissenting report to this report for all the reasons that were spoken of here today by the NDP. One of the most important things is that the life expectancy of Canadians was 80.9 years. We were at the top of the world charts in terms of life expectancy. That is now dropping, attributed to diabetes, childhood obesity, cardiovascular disease and all these chronic diseases, which are preventable.

The Minister of Health and the federal government have a clear responsibility to prevent disease and to promote health. It is not good enough to say we would like to do it and then do nothing. In our dissenting report we stated that we heard from every witness who presented to this committee. They had clear recommendations and they all agreed on the recommendations. These were experts. However, the government's report does not contain a single one of those recommendations made by witnesses.

I would like to ask the hon. member if she does not think it has actually become a farce when expert witnesses come to committee and present clear, concrete, factual, evidence-based arguments, bring recommendations to support the right thing to do to stop this slide in longevity in the country and to stop chronic disease, and the members of committee from the government side continue to block it. Witnesses waste their time bothering to come. It is disrespectful to witnesses and it does not show any kind of care on the part of the government or the minister to protect the health of Canadians in this country, to prevent disease or to promote health.

That is what the report should have been about. It is not. It is a whitewash report. It says nothing and it does nothing.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, the member is entirely correct. Both the Liberal Party and the NDP put together minority reports because there was such a high level of frustration at the committee. What ended up as the main report really did not contain the flavour and impetus that came to us from many of these great witnesses that we heard.

It is not just our committee. I know that this is being felt across a number of committees, in fact, probably all committees. It is very disturbing that we now have within this Parliament a government that is so intent on being non-transparent, non-democratic, hiding from the truth, squashing debate, squashing the testimony of witnesses and making sure that these reports are basically a whitewash lauding the government. That is not the way Parliament is meant to work.

I am very proud of the report that we put together because it totally zeroes in on the key issues that we need to address when it comes to chronic diseases related to aging, and on what we can do in a positive sense to make our health care system affordable, high quality and accessible to every Canadian no matter where they live, to make sure it is a public health care system.

● (1535)

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour on a point of order.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert also rose to speak and I do not think you were able to catch her eye. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 62, I move:

That the member be now heard.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know, if you had been glancing in the government's direction, the chief government whip had stood and was starting to deal with his motion. You may recognize a member from the opposition, Mr. Speaker, but then I also had a point of order recognizing that the chief government whip be now heard. He was clearly into the start of his motion at the conclusion of the questions and comments.

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary is correct, the chief government whip was standing and speaking. However, I recognized the hon. member for Beaches—East York and the first point of order I heard was from the hon. member for Dartmouth—

Routine Proceedings

Cole Harbour. I recognized him, he has moved his motion and now the House shall decide.

Shall the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert be heard?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1615)

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

(Division No. 498)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Benskin
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brousseau
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Groguié
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Liu
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Rousseau	Sandhu

Routine Proceedings

Scott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Turnell — 101

Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Baird
Bélanger
Benoit
Bernier
Block
Braid
Brison
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chisu
Clarke
Coderre
Cuzner
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dion
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Eyking
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Flaherty
Foote
Gallant
Glover
Goodale
Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
Pacetti
Payne
Poilievre
Rae
Rajotte
Regan
Rempel
Rickford
Scarpaleggia
Seeback

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Aspin
Bateman
Bennett
Bergen
Bezan
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Clement
Cotler
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Dreeshen
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher
Fry
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Hsu
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mayes
McColeman
McLeod
Menzies
Miller
Norlock
Oliver
Opitz
Paradis
Penashue
Preston
Raitt
Rathgeber
Reid
Richards
Saxton
Schellenberger
Sgro

Shea
Shory
sor)
Smith
Sorenson
St-Denis
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 183

Shipley
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sopuck
Stanton
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Valerioté
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

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 Western Arctic, Parks Canada; the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, National Defence.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Beaches—East York.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the results of that vote confirm the wisdom of my colleagues.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Health, I am happy to stand and support the motion. One cannot underestimate the timeliness of the subject matter before us. The study that was before the committee was long overdue. The solutions that the issue demands are also long overdue. This was crystal clear from the attention this issue received in Canada and internationally and it was confirmed beyond a doubt by the evidence received at health committee. I confess I was not there to hear all the evidence in person, having only been assigned to the health committee in time for the drafting of the report. That process did afford me the opportunity to familiarize myself with the evidence that came before committee.

The evidence was quite stunning. It opened up not only to me but to all members of committee the scope of the challenges we faced with the issue of chronic disease. It opened up as well the opportunities that were before us for tackling these challenges. We need to ensure that the response we make to these challenges is commensurate with those challenges.

Unfortunately that is not the case before us today in the report. We heard the evidence and we could not reconcile that with the recommendations in the body of the report. This is why the House will find attached to the report a dissenting opinion from the NDP members of the standing committee.

Before getting to the issue of the recommendations, let me take a moment to scope out the issue of chronic diseases.

Routine Proceedings

Let me begin with the fact that this is not just a Canadian problem. It is international in scope and it is a problem of such importance and scale that it caused the United Nations to convene a “high level meeting” of the General Assembly in an effort to shake the international agenda on this issue. This was only the second time in the history of the UN that the General Assembly met on a health issue, the other one being the issue of AIDS. According to the World Health Organization, the purpose of this high level meeting was for “countries to adopt a concise, action-oriented outcome document that will shape the global agendas for generations to come”.

I would like to quote from the declaration that emerged from that high level meeting in September 2011. It said:

We, Heads of State and Government and representatives of States and Governments, assembled at the United Nations on 19 and 20 September 2011, to address the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases worldwide, with a particular focus on developmental and other challenges and social and economic impacts, particularly for developing countries...

This includes Canada as well.

• (1620)

It goes on to describe the issue as “A challenge of epidemic proportions in its socio-economic and developmental impacts”.

It notes:

—with profound concern that according the WHO in 2008, an estimated 36 million of the 57 million global deaths were due to non-communicable diseases, principally: cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, including about 9 million deaths before the age of 60, and that Nearly 80 per cent of these deaths occurred in developing countries.

To be clear, this is not an issue that is just recognized by the World Health Organization and it is not just an issue of developing countries. This issue is recognized by countries and political jurisdictions around the world.

What one notes from the evidence and research available to the public on this issue is that there is considerable discussion on the incidence of chronic disease both related to the issue of aging but also across the population in general.

A central preoccupation of the evidence before the committee and in the public realm is the fiscal and economic burden of chronic disease. Going outside of Canada, the Centres for Disease Control in the United States estimates that 75% of health care costs in the U.S. are related to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis and obesity. The Canadian Medical Association told us at the committee that there was no reason to believe Canada was any different.

In fact, we heard at committee from the Public Health Agency of Canada that cost to Canada of chronic disease related to aging but also across the population was \$190 billion, \$90 billion for the treatment of those diseases and another \$100 billion incurred in economic costs to Canada in the form of lost productivity. The Public Health Agency's estimates that is equivalent to 67% of all direct health care costs in Canada.

It should be noted that numerous studies within provincial jurisdictions come up with numbers of the same order. That is to say that chronic disease is responsible for a very high percentage of very high costs.

According to the UN declaration, and all sorts of evidence before the committee as well as research in the public realm, and I quote from the UN declaration, that “with profound concern, non-communicable diseases are among the leading causes of preventable morbidity and of related disability”.

I want to focus on the word “preventable”. The common risk factors are well known and controllable. Tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and lack of physical exercise rank among the top of these.

However, the report further recognizes the role that social determinants play with these diseases, such as the conditions in which people live and their lifestyles. These are also contributing factors to the rising incidence and prevalence of these diseases. For example, poverty, uneven distribution of wealth, lack of education and a number of factors that go into these social determinants are known as “contributing factors”.

I will cite some of the evidence that made it into the report. Right upfront, there was a lot of discussion about healthy eating, obesity and physical activity levels. The committee heard that the burden of chronic disease was related to dietary patterns as well as rates of overweight and obesity and the level of physical activity of Canadians.

Witnesses stated that healthy eating reduced the risk of developing chronic diseases. It was suggested that 90% of type 2 diabetes, 80% of coronary heart disease and one-third of cancers could be prevented by healthy eating, regular exercise and by not smoking. Members were also told that as many as 48,000 deaths per year in Canada were related to poor nutrition.

Of particular concern is the issue of childhood obesity. These rates have quadrupled in the past three decades.

• (1625)

There is much more to discuss about this. I think the numbers that I have shown tell us that this is an issue of great importance and scope and that this report deserves further study in particular, as well as the government's response, the minister's response and the dissenting report of the NDP members of the committee.

Pursuant to Standing Order 60, I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

Routine Proceedings

And five or more members having risen:

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

● (1705)

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

(Division No. 499)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Benskin	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brousseau	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Freeman
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Liu
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Numez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Quach
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Rousseau
Sandhu	Scott
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Turnel— 96

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Andrews
Armstrong	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson

Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Coderre
Cotler	Cuzner
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dion
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Footo	Fortin
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodale	Goodyear
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	Hsu
Hyer	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lamoureux
Lauzon	Lebel
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
May	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	Pacetti
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Plamondon
Poilievre	Preston
Rae	Raith
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor)	
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	St-Denis
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	Weston (Saint John)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 186

PAIRED

Nil

Routine Proceedings

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion defeated.

Questions and comments.

• (1710)

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while I had some hesitation about the member giving a speech, he showed me very quickly that he had an incredible grasp of the subject. I am glad that the members opposite voted to support him, because I certainly enjoyed listening to what he had to say.

I would like to ask the member if he would comment on the fact that provinces like Nova Scotia, in 2016, are going to be subject to a change in how health care is going to be funded, which would have quite a dynamic and negative impact on the ability of that province to fund health care in any equitable way in relation to other provinces in this country. I wonder if the member would please comment on why it is wrong that the government is heading in this direction.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I think the record will show that it was in hesitation that my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour actually voted against me.

Yes, the government will take about \$31 billion to \$36 billion out of health care transfers beginning in 2016, which is contrary to its pre-election promise of a 6% escalator in health care.

I have seen studies on the issue of chronic disease coming out of Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia, like a number of other jurisdictions in Canada, has studied this issue and its estimates of the cost to the health care system in terms of direct costs for treatment, as well as costs to the economic productivity of that jurisdiction, are in line with all the other estimates that other jurisdictions in Canada, and, frankly, in North America, have performed. I anticipate that Nova Scotia, like other jurisdictions in Canada, will have problems providing health care to its citizens.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, chronic disease and aging are very serious issues in Canada for which there should be federal and national leadership. However, there is a huge vacuum in that respect. Whether it is on chronic disease and aging or other issues like child obesity, for example, the government has been very lacking. The Liberal Party has talked about it for a great deal of time over the years. It is something that needs to be recognized.

From our perspective, we need to not only increase the amount of debate on the issue but, more important, we need to start working with our provincial counterparts and demonstrate some leadership to ensure we are able to tackle this issue from a national perspective. We can only do that if we co-operate and provide leadership with the provinces.

Would my colleague agree with those comments?

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do agree with my colleague's comments.

The fundamental root cause of the issue here is that the government disavows any responsibility for health care in this country. It is right there in the second paragraph of the report. It reads:

In undertaking this study, the Committee recognized that the administration and delivery of health care services is the responsibility of each province or territory. Guided by the provisions of the Canada Health Act, the provinces and territories fund these services with assistance from the federal government in the form of fiscal transfers.

The government limits its responsibility for health care to the issue of fiscal transfers. However, the issue of chronic disease in Canada is a national issue that requires a national response. As I said in my speech, it has been tagged by the Public Health Agency of Canada as a \$190 billion health care problem for Canada. It is incumbent upon our federal government to show leadership on this issue in supporting treatment and preventive means to limit chronic disease in Canada.

• (1715)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason we are discussing this report in the House today and debating this issue is that time and again we have heard the government make statements about what it is doing to prevent, protect and ensure that Canadians are safe and have good health care but the facts do not support any of that. When we discuss issues as important and urgent as this one, the whole parliamentary tradition of debating these issues at committee and bringing in expert witnesses to speak on these issues, we find that this is all short-circuited at committee. The government does not listen to witnesses and continues to ignore them.

This report is a glorified toothless report. It says nothing, does nothing and only pats the government on the back. The government did not listen to any of the recommendations that any of the witnesses made.

The Liberals put forward a dissenting report. We listened to the witnesses and heard what they had to say. They were experts, not only in health, chronic diseases or aging, but they were also people who talked about the other factors that we need to take action on to deal with this problem.

When we look at the demographics of the aging population, the problems they face and the costs to the system providing health care and medications, we see this as a really important problem. The problem is that it was given short shrift. The report does not reflect what the committee heard, which is why we felt a need to bring forward a dissenting report. Debating the issue brings this to the attention of the public and ensures that parliamentarians understand the nature of the issue of chronic disease and aging.

Demographics tell us that we will have an enormous increase in our aging population. With the first set of baby boomers entering retirement in 2011, we are looking at an enormous number of people who will become aged and who will be suffering from chronic diseases.

We heard from witnesses at the committee who said that chronic disease was not a natural component of aging. We heard that for many seniors who have chronic diseases today, it is because enough is not being done to prevent disease and to promote health in Canadians starting from the early stages. We now find that we have an epidemic of one in four children being obese and who are at risk of having type 2 diabetes or heart disease. We know that but we do nothing about it.

Routine Proceedings

I heard an echo across the floor from someone who said that we all know that. Well, if the member knows it, why is the government not doing anything about it when it has the power to do something?

Sixty per cent of diseases are preventable. They are not only caused by viruses, bacteria and the breaking down of organs. They are also caused by poverty. Poverty is the greatest indicator of ill health. Many seniors live in substandard housing or have no access to housing. Nutrition and the ability to have good food is important. The ability to look at how people eat and how they are housed are not things that we look at in the budgets that are presented in House. These massive budgets are also never given the opportunity to be debated or discussed at any length in committee or to have recommendations that are meaningful and accepted. None of this happens. It is all a whitewash that goes on around here.

Under her mandate, the Minister of Health has the responsibility for health promotion and disease prevention for all Canadians, but, specifically, to deliver health services to the first nations, the Inuit, the RCMP, the armed forces and veterans. Nothing is being done to help them.

We never hear about housing in any of the budgets. In the last two budgets, the word "housing" was not even mentioned and yet substandard housing is one of the things that all witnesses invoked as a major cause of ill health. It definitely stems from poverty.

We also heard that the ability to look at regulating foods was important.

● (1720)

We know that the biggest cause of chronic disease right now is cardiovascular disease. We know that the biggest cause of chronic disease in aging is diabetes. We know that those are all preventable.

The minister has the ability to regulate. All the indications given to the federal Minister of Health from all of the experts, not only within her department but by a committee of experts who advise the minister on these issues, were that she must regulate trans fats in food but she has refused to do so. She has been advised to regulate energy drinks, which are now causing serious arrhythmia and other problems, and even death in young people under the age of 18, but she has refused to do it. We know about the amount of sodium in foods. This is evidence-based stuff. The minister has been advised to take steps to regulate these things but she does not do it. The minister is abdicating her role. The government pats itself on the back for what it is doing to promote health and disease prevention but it is doing very little.

We also know that the cost to medicare will be very high because one in four people will depend on pharmaceuticals as he or she ages. One in four seniors depends on prescription drugs right now. Seniors cannot afford the costs because of something that was mentioned but was never responded to by the Conservative government and the minister. What are we going to do about the cost of drugs for chronic diseases? People who cannot afford their medications buy their medications until they feel a little better and then go without for a couple of months but then they get sick again. Then they take it for another month or two because that is all they can afford. That is not how to treat people who are ill.

In fact, this is something that was recognized by the premiers and the health ministers of the provinces and territories and by the federal government when the 2004 health accord was signed. Everyone from the government loved to ask what it mean. Into that accord was put \$41.2 billion over a period of 10 years. That money had a 6% escalator clause attached to it. The government continues to say that it is increasing transfer payments by 6%. Well it was a signed document for 10 years. There was nothing the government could do to stop the 6% escalator. However, it is promising that as soon as the 2004 accord sunsets it will start slashing the transfers within two years by 50%. The federal government is even walking away from the work that was going to be done by the accord and the work that the provinces need to do to deal with the aging demographics.

This is what we heard at committee. This is what witnesses continue to tell us, and they had some solutions. Going back to the accord, it said that there were five things that people needed to do to ensure that Canadians got the health care they needed when they needed it and that Canadians remained as healthy as they could. We have seen that Canadians today have reached a longevity of 80.9 years. That is now sliding. The longevity rates are going down. In other words, people are becoming ill as they age. They are dying sooner. They are disabled more often. We see a rise in mental disease. We see a rise in depression among seniors. We see a rise in Alzheimer's disease. We see a rise in stroke and in cardiovascular disease.

The accord suggested five objectives that were agreed on by the premiers. One of them was to look at how one deals with chronic disease in terms of delivery of health care. The provinces agreed that they would work with the federal government and that there would be a flexible jurisdiction. That is written in the accord. I would advise anyone in this House to go on line and read the accord. It was agreed by the provinces and the federal government that they would look at a shared jurisdictional responsibility to deal with an aging population, the rising cost of health care and the appropriate need for drugs. The current government walked away, in 2006, from working on anything that would deliver chronic disease care in the community and in the home, as opposed to in the hospital, which is a costly and inappropriate way of doing it.

● (1725)

That was one of the objectives, and the second was to look at a pharmacare strategy to deal with the cost of drugs for people who are chronically ill and cannot afford them. That was agreed to in the accord and signed. Nothing has been done. The government walked away from that segment of the table.

We have a farce of a report being written that pays absolutely no attention to what the witnesses said. We have a government that pays absolutely no attention to what was signed and agreed to in a health accord with Prime Minister Martin at the time, when the premiers and provinces all agreed to look at key issues of how and when we deliver care, and to whom. The government wants to abdicate its role, although the money is there and the 6% escalator clause is there. The government is doing diddly-squat because we know it does not really care about medicare and would love to see it go away and become fragmented, with every province and territory trying to do its own thing. That, we know, would be impossible because many provinces cannot afford it.

The government is actually going to penalize provinces even further. I understand the need for cuts, but we have to talk about what is going to happen to people who really need care, especially with chronic disease and aging.

This document that we are debating does not reflect anything that we heard at committee. While it provides the data, it follows that up with recommendations that say and do nothing. That is why both opposition parties agreed to write their own dissenting reports to echo what they heard. It is a farce when witnesses come to committee and speak with expertise and knowledge, presenting demographics and evidence, and are actually ignored. When none of their recommendations are listened to or taken into account, it becomes a joke.

I suppose the hidden agenda of the government is probably to do away with parliamentary committees altogether. Then no one would tell the government what to do, which would further its dictatorship and its lack of responsibility for people. Even if it does not want to take responsibility for the health of Canadians, it has a fiduciary responsibility for the health of aboriginal people, which is getting worse. We know that.

We see what is happening, but the government has done absolutely nothing to deal with the issues of health promotion and disease prevention. Saying that it is doing something is not good enough. The witnesses gave concrete recommendations, all of which are not only doable but would also prevent disease, promote health and consider issues of affordable drugs and the delivery of chronic disease care in communities, which is cheaper and more cost effective, with better outcomes than anything else. All of this is based on data; it is evidence. This is not something people are making up as they go along, but the government refuses to act on it. The Minister of Health refuses to take any kind of concrete action whatsoever. The government is looking at cutting transfer payments to the provinces down the road, and the latter will not even have the ability to take care of Canadians as a result.

This report is worthy of debate. It is a pity that government members do not see the need to debate it here, because they have fast forwarded and rubber stamped whatever they had originally started with. The original position of government members has not changed regardless of what they heard. It did not influence them in any way. The moving stories, the ability to come up with real concrete action, none of it swayed the government.

As a physician, I know that we could do better. I know that there are things we need to implement. Government members continue to

Private Members' Business

use the mantra, "Don't look at us, it's a provincial jurisdiction", while they sit and do nothing as the fifth largest provider of health care services in the country to the RCMP, the armed forces, aboriginal and Inuit people and veterans. They continue to fall down on the job. Veterans have had to take them to court to deal with their chronic problems, such as mental illnesses and post traumatic stress disorders, and their access to housing and good burial services when they die and have no money.

Why does the government have to be forced to do this? The mantra that the government has no role to play in the lives of these people is a joke. Why do the Conservatives want to form government if they have nothing to do and do not believe they have any role to play in the lives of Canadians? This is worthy of debate. It is a pity that the government does not debate it. It is a pity that the government continues to use all sorts of nice words and to present shiny objects for people to look at, but does nothing with any teeth to change it. This is going to get worse and Canadians will suffer.

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Vancouver Centre will have six minutes remaining in her speech when the House resumes debate on the motion and the usual 10 minutes for questions and comments.

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time. Accordingly, the debate on the motion will be rescheduled for another sitting.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

The House resumed from November 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-424, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (contestation of election and punishment), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-424 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

• (1810)

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

(Division No. 500)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevington

Private Members' Business

Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe	Chong	Clarke
Boivin	Borg	Clement	Daniel
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Davidson	Dechert
Brahmi	Brison	Del Mastro	Devolin
Brosseau	Caron	Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Casey	Cash	Dykstra	Fantino
Charlton	Chicoine	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Chisholm	Choquette	Flaherty	Fletcher
Chow	Christopherson	Galipeau	Gallant
Cleary	Coderre	Gill	Glover
Comartin	Côté	Goguen	Goodyear
Crowder	Cullen	Gourde	Grewal
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day	Hayes	Hiebert
Dewar	Dion	Hillyer	Hoback
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Holder	James
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé	Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kent
Dusseault	Easter	Kerr	Komaricki
Eyking	Foote	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Fortin	Freeman	Lauzon	Lebel
Fry	Garrison	Leaf	Leitch
Genest	Genest-Jourdain	Lemieux	Leung
Giguère	Godin	Lizon	Lobb
Goodale	Gravelle	Lukiwski	Lunney
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia	Mayes	McColeman
Hsu	Hughes	McLeod	Menegakis
Hyer	Jacob	Menzies	Merrifield
Julian	Kellway	Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Nicholson	Norlock
Larose	Latendresse	O'Connor	Oliver
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Liu	Paradis	Payne
MacAulay	Mai	Penashue	Poillievre
Marston	Martin	Preston	Raitt
Masse	Mathysen	Rajotte	Rathgeber
May	McCallum	Reid	Rempel
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud	Richards	Rickford
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Saxton	Schellenberger
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Seeback	Shea
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair	Shiple	Shory
Murray	Nantel	Smith	Sopuck
Nash	Nicholls	Sorenson	Stanton
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti	Storseth	Strahl
Papillon	Patry	Sweet	Tilson
Péclet	Perreault	Toet	Toews
Pilon	Plamondon	Trost	Trotter
Quach	Rae	Truppe	Tweed
Rafferty	Ravignat	Uppal	Valcourt
Raynault	Regan	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Rousseau	Sandhu	Vellacott	Wallace
Scarpaleggia	Scott	Warawa	Warkentin
Sellah	Sgro	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	St-Denis	Sky Country)	Wilks
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Stoffer	Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Sitsabaiesan	Thibeault	Williamson	Yelich
Stewart	Tremblay	Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
Sullivan	Valerioté — 132	Young (Oakville)	
Toone		Zimmer — 153	
Turmel			

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Canman	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

The House resumed from November 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-370, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada) as reported (without amendment) from the committee, be concurred in.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recording division on the motion to concur in Bill C-370 at report stage under private members' business.

Private Members' Business

● (1820)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 501)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Andrews	Angus
Armstrong	Ashton
Aspin	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Baird	Bateman
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Benoit
Benskin	Bergen
Bernier	Bevington
Bezan	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Block
Boivin	Borg
Boughen	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brisson	Brosseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Caron
Carrie	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Chisu	Chong
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Clarke
Cleary	Clement
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Daniel	Davidson
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Flaherty
Fletcher	Footo
Fortin	Freeman
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Gill
Glover	Godin
Goguen	Goodale
Goodyear	Gourde
Gravelle	Grewal
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hassainia	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
James	Jean
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)

Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kellway
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Lauzon	Laverdière
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Michaud	Miller
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nicholson
Norlock	Nunez-Melo
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Patry
Payne	Péclet
Penashue	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Poilievre	Preston
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Rousseau
Sandhu	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Scott	Seeback
Sellah	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffler	Storseth
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Thibeault
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Toone
Tremblay	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Turmel	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Williamson
Wilks	Woodworth
Wong	Young (Oakville)
Yelich	Zimmer — 284
Young (Vancouver South)	

NAYS

Members

PAIRED

Hyer— 1

Nil

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

The Speaker: The hon. member for North Vancouver is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Mr. Speaker, I voted in favour of the motion. I am not sure that my vote was counted properly.

The Speaker: The member's vote was included.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FIREFIGHTERS

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of Motion No. 388.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 388, under private members' business.

• (1830)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 502*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Bezan
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Braid
Brisson	Brosseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cannan
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Chong	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Clarke	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Footé	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Grogue
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hawn
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)

LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Lobb
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patri
Perreault
Plamondon
Rae
Ravignat
Regan
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Smith
Stewart
Storseth
Thibeault
Toone
Trost
Valerioté

Leaf
Lizon
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rafferty
Raynault
Rousseau
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis
Stoffer
Sullivan
Tilson
Tremblay
Turmel
Weston (Saint John)— 150

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Block
Breitkreuz
Butt
Calkins
Carrie
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Grewal
Hayes
Hoback
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leitch
Leung
Lunney
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Norlock
Oliver
Opitz
Payne
Poilievre
Raitt

Private Members' Business

Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Toews	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 134

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

BULLYING

The House resumed from November 19 consideration of the motion M-385.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion M-385.

● (1840)

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

(Division No. 503)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Bezan	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Brown (Barrie)	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Christopherson
Cleary	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Footé
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)

Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jacob	Julian
Kellway	Lamouroux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaesan	Smith
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Thibeault	Tilson
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valeriote— 134

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Bellavance	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galpeau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Jean
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauson	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman

Private Members' Business

McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Plamondon
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 149	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:42 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

PATENT ACT

The House resumed from October 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-398, An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The member for Guelph has six minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like its predecessor, Bill C-398 would amend the Patent Act to facilitate the manufacture and export of generic pharmaceuticals to address public health problems afflicting many developing and least developed countries, countries that most urgently need our assistance.

We know that treatment of AIDS prevents transmission. Science says so. Treatment of this terrible disease with antiretroviral medicines can reduce the total virus load in the body in an HIV sufferer to negligible amounts, which means the next step is to get that man or woman the medicine.

Under the current framework, Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, the compulsory licensing process, which is based not only on the specific kind of drug but also specific quantities, is further complicated by making each of those requirements specific to the importing country. Throughout the entire life of the current legislation only one country benefited, Rwanda, leaving the manufacturing company, Apotex, so frustrated that it stated it would not use CAMR again until it was reformed.

Many of the recipients in greatest need cannot wait much longer. Most recent statistics, which date back to 2010, estimate that 34 million people are suffering from HIV-AIDS, 50% are women, 3.4 million are children and 22.5 million sufferers are in sub-Saharan Africa, among some of the world's poorest, least stable countries. Without effective access to medicines enabling treatment, the numbers keep growing. By the end of 2010, HIV-AIDS accounted for 1.8 million deaths that year, deaths that we have come far enough, scientifically and medicinally, to have avoided.

Years ago I witnessed the terrible impact of this disease, while it ravaged the population of Central America. While doing international aid work in Honduras, I was in San Pedro Sula, which had the highest incidence of AIDS across the continent at the time.

Groups in my riding are well aware of the impact too. An incredibly compassionate community, I am pleased that Guelph is home to Dr. Anne-Marie Zajdlik and the Masai Centre for Local, Regional and Global Health and the "Bracelets of Hope" campaign.

The centre has a really incredible story. In 2003 a young boy named Masai was born to two HIV positive parents, yet through skilful and effective treatment, Masai was born HIV negative, something that would have been nearly impossible had he been born in Africa. Even if he had managed to be born HIV negative, without the proper treatment his parents would likely have joined the growing statistics of AIDS related deaths leaving behind broken families and orphan children.

It is frustratingly simple, really. There is a terrible problem with a workable solution.

The bill before us is substantially the same as the one we passed in March, 2011, but slightly streamlined. Bill C-398 includes the amendment pertaining to the definition of pharmaceutical products, including wording specific to the World Trade Organization General Council's decision of August 2003, reflecting international agreement on eligible drugs. Importantly, it also includes a one licence solution, enabling generic manufacturers to simultaneously sell multiple times to any country listed in schedule 2, cutting down on repetitious and burdensome red tape.

I would like to briefly address four myths about the bill.

The first myth is that the bill would weaken safeguards against the diversion and illegal sale of medicines. In fact, all safeguards currently in CAMR are maintained in the bill, which adds a further requirement for manufacturers to post certain information online that makes the process even more transparent.

The second myth is that the bill would remove measures to ensure the quality of exported medicines. In fact, Health Canada review continues to be required for all drugs exported under CAMR. There is no measure in the bill that would amend the Food and Drugs Act.

Private Members' Business

The third myth is that the bill would be contrary to Canada's obligations under WTO respecting intellectual property rights. In fact, CAMR and Bill C-398 are the Canadian implementation of agreements reached by all countries at the WTO, including Canada. Leading international legal experts all agree that the one licence solution proposed in Bill C-398 complies with WTO law.

The fourth myth is that like its predecessor the bill would remove the two-year limit on a licence. In fact, this was not carried over to this bill and the limit is not removed.

● (1845)

Also important to remember is that the bill continues the practice that generic manufacturers can only ship certain quantities of drugs. Listed countries must provide a notification of the quantities they need to the WTO. Generic manufacturers are only authorized to provide that notified quantity to those listed countries.

When this bill's predecessor was last before Parliament, I made the appeal that if we did not vote for the bill, we would wake up tomorrow and, as a country, would be no better able to help 7,100 newly-infected people with HIV. Nor would we be in a position to prevent another 7,100 people from becoming infected two days from now.

It is as true now as it was then. The problem has not changed. If anything, it continues to get worse. The solutions are present. It is time we move the bill to committee, make the necessary amendments and start to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

I implore all members to support the bill.

● (1850)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the bill that my colleague has brought forth. I rise with a sense of regret and shame for a country that has failed to deliver on a promise that it made nearly 10 years ago. As a result of that failure and that promise that was never kept, we have witnessed children, men and women suffer and die because we did not get a chance to provide medications.

We built the system. This is important to recognize when we go back and look at the past. Bill C-56 was the original bill. It was nicknamed Jean Chrétien's aid to Africa act. We said at that time that we would put a system in place that would be the envy of the world. It would allow generic drugs to get to those who were suffering, whether it be from HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria. We promised.

When Parliament recessed Bill C-56 came back to the House as Bill C-9 in 2004. We made another promise. Experts appeared at committee a couple of times. We brought in witnesses. We had expert testimony from many people from around the world. People testified to make sure that we were WTO and TRIPS compliant, that we were within the mandate with regard to allowing the patented drugs to be generically created and distributed, and that we would follow certain rules. Basically, we wanted to create an open and accountable process. Instead we built a monster that really has only been exercised once in all of these years. It really is a monster, because it is preventing us from stopping death and suffering.

Why is it important? Lots of numbers get thrown out and there have been some improvements over the years. The reality is that many people are still suffering. I cannot understand it when I look at the problems being faced in sub-Saharan Africa. What are we doing when children are becoming the heads of households because their parents are dying? We are taking out the capacity for the family unit to be effective. These children are losing the knowledge of how to raise themselves, how to become successful, how to get an education and work co-operatively with others. We are undermining people because we are not providing the resources that are there.

There is a will out there. I want to read some comments from organizations that are in favour of the legislation, because it needs to be noted that they did their part. They did their part for many years on the Hill as we have moved this issue forward.

When we moved Bill C-393, the previous legislation, it ended up dying in the Senate. Unfortunately, we are back here today. It is important to move this legislation again to committee because it does have a few changes, some improvements and some compromise. It is not like we did not compromise along the way. At one point I submitted over 100 amendments to the original bill at industry committee because we knew the legislation was so badly constructed. The Canadian access to medicines regime was built to defeat itself.

The organizations that did their part include the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Grandmothers Advocacy Network, Results Canada, the Federation of Medical Women of Canada, the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Ontario Nurses' Association, UNICEF, Bracelet of Hope, World Vision, the United Church of Canada. A whole coalition, a rainbow of organizations have come together and worked together.

There have been some important changes and there is some hope. We were fighting with the brand name drug companies along the way. We have gone through a whole range of issues about certain countries being listed and certain drugs being listed, and fought back and forth on all of those things.

● (1855)

However, now there has been a shift in their position. In a letter dated November 19 from research-based pharmaceutical companies to my leader, the hon. member for Outremont, it says they are open to looking at a more constructive approach. They list a series of concerns. Some I do not think are as valid as others, but there are important ones to note. They talk about transparency, amount and term, anti-diversion, eligible countries, eligible medicines and safety appeal mechanisms.

Private Members' Business

The good news is that there is no reason for any member now to vote against the bill. If a member is voting against the bill, he or she is voting directly against the pharmaceutical companies, the generics, and all the organizations I mentioned, that want to see this move forward. I thank them for coming to the table this time. In the past, we have witnessed a relationship that has been rocky at best. However, at this moment in time there has been a change in position. We are going to hopefully see this legislation move to committee so we can start to deal with some of the issues they raised to improve the legislation.

It is important. We have set an example internationally with this legislation. If we can get the changes here, other countries can also get some changes. We have a situation where some of the global funds are diminishing, so we have an issue with supply and management right now, and the costs.

I will conclude that I have come here today speaking out of frustration and disappointment, but there is a glimmer of hope this time. I am hoping all the members understand that there is nobody else out there against moving forward, so let us do it together with all members' support.

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-398, An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes), which would amend Canada's access to medicines regime. In considering how I will vote on this bill and my approach moving forward, I will be clear that no one is more to the front my mind than the people in the developing world who need drugs and help.

While the spirit and intentions of this bill are laudable, the proposed amendments would not achieve their intended effects and would prove costly to our economy and damage our credibility in the world. The case for Bill C-398 rests on a few basic myths.

The first myth is that the Canadian access to medicines regime does not work. In fact, Canada is the only country in the world to have used this kind of regime to export medicines. In 2007, it took the Canadian government only 15 days to issue a licence, resulting in the shipment of nearly 16 million tablets to Rwanda for the treatment of HIV-AIDS.

A second myth is that Bill C-398 will save lives. This bill would in fact do nothing to save lives or deliver a larger quantity of essential medicines to developing countries in need. Rather, Canada's approach in funding medicines for those who need them most is saving lives and will continue to do so.

These amendments will not change the economics of drug supply. Less costly alternatives will always be available from emerging markets. Canada is not and will never be a low-cost producer, such as India or other emerging economies. India supplies over 80% of donor-funded antiretrovirals to developing countries.

This is not only about one country. Brazil, Thailand and South Africa also produce a significant amount of affordable medicines. We should not be surprised that even after CAMR was requested and used successfully to send medicines to Rwanda, that country soon found a more affordable alternative source in India.

The bill also ignores what the World Health Organization's panel of independent medical experts from the developed and developing world have said. Over 98% of the medicines on the World Health Organization's list of essential medicines are either generic or not patent protected in the developing world.

Developing countries are telling us that patent protection is not the issue. Despite some improvements in public health, the real challenge facing them is a lack of resources, which is yet another reason they always go for the most affordable source, which will always be the emerging markets.

Canada is addressing the real issue of resources by delivering aid to fight serious public health problems, such as HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Our government's plan to fight disease and deprivation is delivering results through our leadership on key global initiatives. Canada has been a leader in supporting the global fund to fight HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. This fund has become one of the most important instruments for countries in need to access lower cost medicines. In 2010, our government pledged \$540 million to the global fund, bringing Canada's total commitment to more than \$1.4 billion.

Through the global fund, 3.6 million people living with HIV-AIDS currently receive treatment and 1.5 million HIV positive pregnant women receive treatment to prevent mother to child transmission. According to the global fund, Canada is the top contributor on a per capita basis.

Canada has also pledged \$149.6 million to the Stop TB Partnership's global drug facility to procure quality assured anti-tuberculosis drugs. Since shipments began in 2009, the number of people receiving modern TB treatment has increased from 32% to 61% of estimated sufferers.

We have pledged \$450 million over 10 years to the Africa health systems initiative towards strengthening health systems to ensure that facilities and expertise are in place to make effective use of the medicines we deliver.

Canada has also provided \$2.85 billion to champion the Muskoka initiative on maternal, newborn and child health. Through the Muskoka initiative, Canada has taken action to support the provision of medicines, vaccines and the other actions needed to prevent and treat diseases that are the main causes of maternal and child mortality. In Afghanistan, we have trained more than 1,455 health workers. In Mozambique, we have increased the number of women giving birth in health facilities to 64%. In Tanzania, we have provided primary health care services to more than 43 million people.

- (1900)

These and other Canadian-led efforts are yielding positive outcomes. According to the joint United Nations program on HIV-AIDS and the World Health Organization, an estimated 8 million people living with HIV in low and middle-income countries were receiving antiretroviral therapy at the end of 2011. That is a 25-fold increase over the last decade, and I do not want that number to be skipped over.

Private Members' Business

According to the World Health Organization, the number of people receiving proper treatment for tuberculosis has almost quadrupled, from 1.9 million in 2000 to 7.7 million in 2010, and the incidence rates are declining worldwide.

We have a proven track record and we will not rest while millions suffer in the developing world.

A third myth is that Bill C-398 would comply with our international obligations. However, it would clearly remove the central protections in our laws. Canadian jobs are at stake as we become less attractive for trade and innovation and lose access to vital international research partnerships that lead to the development of lifesaving medicines in Canada.

The bill would remove the notification requirement, the quantity requirement on licence when issued, the requirement to name the recipient country and application and the eligibility requirements for countries that could use CAMR. All of these would violate our international obligations. There is even a risk of diversion of medicines into the wrong hands rather than go to people in countries who truly need them.

Bill C-398 would also have unintended consequences of creating delays in shipments by introducing more discretion into the regime. Currently, if an application, one, identifies a listed drug and country, two, includes the WTO notification and three, provides information about the relevant patents, the Commissioner of Patents has no choice but to grant the licences. The proposals in Bill C-398 would require the commissioner to exercise discretion regarding eligibility. This could introduce delay and an opportunity for patent holders to challenge the licence in court. Why would we add red tape to the system?

Canada's approach is addressing the real problem by leading global initiatives to provide medicines against HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria for those in need. The bill would not deliver more lifesaving medicines. Instead, it would harm our economy and our trade and research partnerships.

It is for these reasons that I urge all hon. members of Parliament not to support Bill C-398, but instead to focus on the many things that Canada is doing that are making a real impact on the lives of the people around the world who most need it.

• (1905)

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and speak in support of Bill C-398. As others have said, the bill is an act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes). In summary, the act amends the Patent Act to make it easier for manufacturers and exporters of pharmaceutical products to address public health problems affecting many developing countries and least developed countries, especially those resulting from HIV-AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics.

I have to say that I am somewhat shocked by the words of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Industry, who is clearly signalling that the government will be voting against the bill. I do not want to get away from my comments on the bill and its importance, but there is another serious issue here, which is that Parliament is not allowed to work the way it should. If the government has concerns

about this private member's bill, then it could bring forward some sensible amendments that might fix some of the problems.

In the previous vote, I did see some courage coming from the government's Conservative backbenchers for a change. A private member's motion passed tonight. That is unusual. It passed because, for once, some Conservative backbench members decided to stand up against the wishes of cabinet.

I would plead with the Conservative backbench members to look at the bill. Does it need changes to address some of the concerns the parliamentary secretary talked about? I would not say that all of his concerns were wrong because they may not be, but the government has the authority, power, legal advice and drafters to assist in making the bill all that it should be. We are not just talking about widgets here. We are talking about lives in other countries. We are talking about people.

I know the parliamentary secretary meant what he said with respect to his concerns in Africa and other countries. I believe him on that point. However, the fact of the matter is that if this place were working properly, it could fix the bill to accommodate the concerns of government and save some lives in the global community. That is what we should be focusing on, not whether or not it meets this little factor or that one.

I was here with Prime Minister Chrétien when the previous bill passed in an attempt to help Africa. It was the right thing to do. However, there were some problems with the technical and regulatory requirements in terms of moving generic drugs into Africa, and we did not achieve Prime Minister Chrétien's intent and objectives because of those overburdening criteria. However, we can fix this bill to do that.

In simple terms, the purpose of the bill is to improve access to needed medicines in developing countries by allowing generic drug companies to make and export essential drugs to a list of countries. Why is that important? Let me turn to a UNICEF Canada fact sheet, which explains it better than I could: increased access to ARV medicines is required for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV-AIDS and to treat children who are infected with HIV. These are the facts.

I agree with the parliamentary secretary when he said that some progress has been made. That is true. However, more progress, and rapid progress, needs to be made. We have the ability in the industrialized world, and in Canada, to help out in terms of preventing AIDS, and that is what we ought to be doing.

Private Members' Business

●(1910)

The facts on mothers is that only 48% of pregnant women receive the most effective regimes for preventing mother-to-child transmission. On infants, only 42% among the estimated 1.49 million infants born to mothers living with HIV received antiretroviral medicine to prevent HIV transmission from their mothers. Children represented 7% of those receiving antiretroviral therapy and 14% of the people who needed it. Of the more than two million children estimated to need antiretroviral therapy, only 23% had access to treatment versus 51% for adults.

The fact sheet goes on to talk about the solution, which is that greater access can be achieved in part by reducing the cost of commodities, such as ARV therapy. UNICEF supports this bill and believes it would go some distance to saving lives, which is what is important at the end of the day.

Why, from Canada's perspective, is this bill important? I do not think I can do any better than quote my colleague from Kingston and the Islands when he talked about why it was so important that Canada is one of the main countries that does this. He stated:

Some medicines are expensive and the point of CAMR is to make available to developing countries safe, generic versions of medicines manufactured in Canada and to do it within international rules on trade and on intellectual property rights. It is intended to provide the competitive pressure to reduce the cost barrier to those countries that would never be able to afford the medicine but would greatly benefit from it and where people are in dire need of the medicine. We know that other countries can produce generic drugs but the Canadian product is produced with higher standards in quality control and it will provide competition on that basis.

That spells out why it is important that Canada is a country using, through its authority, its ability to move generic drugs to countries and the people who need it.

In the beginning, I talked about the bill that was introduced in a former Parliament, in 2004, and that some will try to use that as an excuse that there is already a law in place to deal with the problem and ask why the changes in this bill are required. It is quite simple. I, in part, suggested it before. In 2004, Parliament passed a bill, known as the Jean Chrétien Pledge to Africa, that created what is now known as Canada's access to medicines regime, or CAMR. However, evidence has shown that the technical and regulatory matters within the bill have made it less than effective and Bill C-398 would fix those problems.

Canada is part of a global community and we can show the global community that Parliament can act in a responsible way to save lives around the world. If the government, as the parliamentary secretary has said, has concerns, then some amendments should be put forward to address those concerns that industry or whoever may have. We have a responsibility to other citizens around the world.

I urge members on all sides of the House to support this bill and move it forward so we can save lives around the world.

●(1915)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have the privilege today to speak to this incredibly important bill on behalf of my constituents from Surrey North.

The bill was put forward by my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie. Bill C-398 is an act to amend the Patent Act, basically drugs

for international humanitarian purposes. It is known as medicines for all.

If passed, the bill will ensure affordable treatment for diseases, such as HIV-AIDS, malaria and TB, for the world's poorest who are suffering and dying without treatment for these and other diseases because they cannot afford medicines.

One child dies every three seconds in the world for the want of quality treatment medicines. One in two children born with HIV will die before his or her second birthday.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, 22 million people are currently infected with HIV-AIDS. It is an area that has been the hardest hit by this pandemic. It has 68% of the global total and 90% of the world's children with HIV-AIDS. HIV impedes maternal health and is responsible for an additional 61,000 deaths of mothers per year. Only one-third of the patients living with HIV-AIDS who need treatment receive it, and children are the most underserved group.

We know that Canada's access to medicine regime, known as CAMR, is broken and that it needs to be fixed in order to allow Canadian generic drug companies to send life-saving medicines to people who so desperately need them. That is precisely what the bill would do. It would simply fix the existing regulations that are mired in red tape. The bill would get rid of the unnecessary red tape that prevents CAMR from fulfilling its own mandate. CAMR is supposed to allow for the export of the generic versions of pharmaceuticals to developing countries but it is broken. The New Democrats are proposing this practical solution to fix this for once and for all.

Generic competition is the single most important factor in reducing the price of medicines for these people. In the case of some HIV-AIDS drugs, generic competition has reduced the prices by as much as 95%.

Gains have been made in the treatment for people living with HIV-AIDS but only one-third of those who need treatment actually receive it. In some countries, access to treatment is being reduced rather than increased.

When it comes to HIV-AIDS, cheap medicine is the prevention. Research has shown that early and aggressive treatment of HIV infected individuals with antiretroviral drugs, also known as ARVs, reduce the transmission of disease by 96%.

Bill C-398 is one tool at our disposal to ensure that affordable treatment reaches as many of the world's poor as possible. We, in this House, have the power to make this happen and I would strongly urge and argue that we have an obligation to make this happen. I urge members across the aisle to urgently pass the bill. It is my sincere hope that members from all parties will support this legislation. This is a moral imperative. It is a matter of conscience. It is a matter of compassion. It is basic humanity.

Private Members' Business

The bill proposes a reasonable, one licence solution that would allow generic manufacturers to supply approved medication to any eligible country on the WTO list of countries that are in need of affordable medicines.

This need is dire. CAMR is broken and it is failing to meet its goal. In five years, CAMR has been used only once to supply a single order of three in one AIDS medicines to Rwanda, but this one instance required years of effort and was so complicated that CAMR has not been used since then.

● (1920)

This needs to be fixed. For a solution that we already have in place, it has taken far too long. We can provide those drugs to those nations.

The bill already passed in the House of Commons with a healthy majority in March 2011, but sadly it died on the order paper in the other place. Again, I respectfully ask my colleagues on all sides of the House to help ensure that this time the bill passes in the House. It needs to be passed in an urgent way. It just makes sense to me. That is why 80% of Canadians support this initiative. That is why organizations such as UNICEF, World Vision Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Federation of Medical Women of Canada, the YWCA and the Canadian Federation of University Women support this initiative.

The bill would not cost any money to taxpayers either, not a penny. We can provide access to affordable, quality medicines to enable people in African countries and other developing nations to survive and thrive, without costing Canadian taxpayers a cent. Also, the market for medicines in poorer countries represents a very tiny portion of global sales for brand name pharmaceuticals. For example, the entire continent of Africa totals about 2% of their sales. Canada's largest generic pharmaceutical manufacturer, Apotex Inc., has publicly committed to making a three-in-one AIDS drug suited for children in developing countries if CAMR is reformed.

CAMR reform would also be fully compatible with the World Trade Organization's regulations and treaties. The WTO has repeatedly stated that compulsory licensing to increase the supply of affordable medicines to poorer countries is in keeping with WTO regulations and international legal experts endorse this position.

We can help restore Canada to a position of leadership in terms of our response to these global public health crises. Public health crises including HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria represent massive human, social and economic burdens for developing countries, significantly impeding their development. Only one-third of the patients living with HIV-AIDS who need treatment receive it, and I have said that children are the most underserved within this group. The need for treatment is increasing, yet funding is shrinking. The global fund that helps fund HIV-AIDS, TB and malaria is under particular strain. CAMR reform would encourage further generic competition, which would in fact enable the global fund and governments to stretch their limited dollars further.

The bill would be one tool at our disposal to ensure that affordable treatment for diseases such as HIV-AIDS, malaria and TB would reach as many of the world's poor as possible. We made a promise to developing countries when we established CAMR. We have failed in

that promise. It is time to right the wrong for the sake of those who are suffering without the medicine they need so badly and for developing countries that are in desperate need of affordable medicines to address public health crises.

I again urge the House to unite in a global cause so that we can make a difference in the many parts of the world where help is needed. I urge my Conservative and Liberal colleagues and all members of the House to vote in favour of the bill, so that we can be compassionate and we can look after those who are in need of medicine throughout the world.

● (1925)

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in this place and speak to private member's Bill C-398. At the outset I would like to thank our parliamentary secretary, the member for Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont, for his longstanding work within the autism community. We understand his passion for doing the right thing in the case of autism, and we also know his compassion not just for the underprivileged and those in need here in Canada but also around the world. I want to thank him for his involvement in this debate.

Our government is committed to fighting public health challenges in the developing world and we support the underlying humanitarian objectives of Canada's access to medicines regime. We are of the view and accept that the bill is well-intentioned. We believe that those who drafted the bill have tried to fix a worthy cause, but make no mistake, the bill fails and falls far short. These amendments will not deliver on the stated objectives listed. They will not deliver more affordable medicines to the developing world and will not save lives.

This is the type of bill that I have often thought is an ideal one for the opposition. It is a bill by which the opposition members can find and bring forward a cause with passion, but when we study it and see what it will accomplish, it will end up hurting the cause.

There has never been a government in Canada that has implemented this type of bill, for very good reason. It can cause great harm and in the long run let people down. I am disappointed to say that Bill C-398 will not enable us to deliver more medicines to those who need them in the developing world. Instead, it may be a hindrance.

Private Members' Business

Even if the bill passes, Canada would not be an affordable source of medicines for the developing world. We will simply not be able to compete on price with emerging markets, as our parliamentary secretary pointed out. In fact, according to data from the World Health Organization, India is the largest supplier of antiretrovirals to developing countries. It supplies an estimated 80% of donor funded antiretrovirals to the developing world.

Bill C-398 will not address any of these realities of the lower costs in emerging markets. Developing countries will continue to choose available lower cost alternatives, and while Canada boasts a world-class generic pharmaceutical industry with high manufacturing standards and an acknowledged commitment to supporting access to medicines initiatives in the developing world, its strength is not to compete on price with countries such as India, South Africa and China.

This is particularly the case for the supply of low cost HIV-AIDS products. Generic manufacturers in the countries mentioned are able to price their products for less on average than any developed country can. That includes us in Canada. The major international procurement efforts for the developing world are focused almost exclusively on those emerging markets mentioned by our parliamentary secretary.

The Canadian generic pharmaceutical industry stated in its testimony before the House of Commons standing committee in 2007 that it had neither the ability nor the inclination to become “the generic breadbasket to the developing world”. The bill does not change that. The Canadian access to medicines regime is still available to countries that need it. Canada is the only country to have used this tool to export medicines successfully.

● (1930)

Prior to Canada using the regime to import drugs in 2007, there is the example of Rwanda that my colleague pointed out, which was already procuring generic HIV drugs, primarily from India, at a steadily declining price. Today Rwanda does not need Canada's access to medicines regime for those drugs. Canada can be involved in many other ways. India is now supplying Rwanda with the same product produced by Apotex under Canada's access to medicines regime at a much lower price than we would provide.

That is not to say that Canada no longer has a role to play in Rwanda. Our government continues to be a significant contributor to the global fund, one of the key development partners supporting the HIV-AIDS response in Rwanda. The work of the global fund and other funding mechanisms have generated significant improvements to the AIDS response in Rwanda. According to recent World Health Organization guidelines, Rwanda has one of the highest rates of antiretroviral coverage, reaching almost 90% in 2010 from 13% in 2004. HIV prevalence is now less than 3% in the general population of Rwanda. That is a remarkable success story.

The conclusion to be drawn from the Rwandan scenario is that, when there is a need for them, the tools we have work. Canada's access to medicines regime did its part to help the Rwandan people, as did Canadian and partner funds put towards purchasing generic drugs from countries with competitive pricing. While the government's commitment to addressing public health problems in the developing world is unwavering, we have significant concerns that

Bill C-398 would result in the elimination of many elements of the regime that hold it in balance.

The approach proposed in Bill C-398, the so-called “one-licence” solution, would hinder innovation and research in Canada. In addition, many of the bill's proposed changes would violate our international trade obligations. The approach suggested by the bill would allow the Commissioner of Patents to grant an export licence without first verifying whether the importing country has made the necessary notification. In fact, a licence would not only be issued without knowing where the product will be shipped and the identity of the buyers, but also with no indication of the amount being purchased. This would cause serious transparency problems and would increase the potential for the diversion of drugs away from the people who need them the most.

The bill would also remove protections that provide incentives for research into new and innovative drugs and medical devices. This research benefits all Canadians by improving our knowledge, generating research infrastructure and creating more highly paid skilled jobs in Canada. It leads to innovations that will help people live longer, healthier and more productive lives. It is also key to our international humanitarian efforts as we strive to develop medicines that will benefit those in need.

Canada's access to medicines regime and regimes like it are only one tool in the global box. When evaluating the system, it makes much more sense to look at results, namely, whether the global supply of lower-cost medicines has increased based on Canada's leadership.

It has been said before, but I would like to remind the House of some of the remarkable statistics that show how Canada's support for global initiatives has made a difference in the treatment of public health problems in the developing world. Canadian taxpayers have provided \$540 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in 2011-12. Through this fund, 3.6 million people living with HIV-AIDS currently receive antiretroviral treatment.

It is a worthy cause with the right intentions without a doubt. Those who support this have a passion to see people helped. However, we need to do it in a way that is sustainable and productive, a way that keeps our treaties with those countries over the long term and would not push us to the periphery.

● (1935)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of this bill, which I support.

Private Members' Business

Canada's access to medicines regime was created in 2004 with support from all parties. At the time, the bill arose from a commitment by the Government of Canada. It was passed unanimously, meaning that it was supported by the House and all parties. That is why I have a hard time understanding why so many members are opposed to this bill. It is not proposing anything new. It is not a trap. It remedies a problem, period.

It is clear that there is a problem with Canada's access to medicines regime since it has received only one request, namely an order for drugs for triple therapy for treating people with HIV-AIDS in Rwanda. Even then, the company that made the request said it would never use the program again because it was too complicated.

Canada's access to medicines regime currently allows generic versions of pharmaceutical products to be exported to developing countries in order to fight various pandemics and epidemics such as HIV-AIDS, but also tuberculosis and malaria, to name a few.

I do not have enough time today to get into the details of this very important bill, but we would do well as Canadians and parliamentarians to support this bill. We made a commitment to these developing countries. As the member who spoke before me said, it is important for Canada to save lives in those countries.

[English]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last few months I have heard from many stakeholders about Bill C-398. I have met with brand name and generic pharmaceutical companies. I have met with NGOs. I have met with so many Canadians who want to see this bill passed. In the last week, alone, I have received over 2,800 emails of support in my office. The grandmothers have collected over 23,000 signatures in support of this bill through their cross-Canada petitions.

Bill C-398 has the support of more than 80 international NGOs, including Médecins sans Frontières, Apostolic Faith Mission in Lesotho, the Church of Scotland, and the U.K.'s Stop AIDS Campaign. Within Canada, there are over 250 NGOs and community groups in support of this, including World Vision, Results Canada, AQOCI, Care Canada, UNICEF, Oxfam, and organizations, such as the City of Prince Albert and the HIV Network of Edmonton. We have the support of faith leaders across the country.

We know that generic manufacturers support this bill, and they are ready to provide a one-dose AIDS medication for children should this bill become law. Importantly, the brand name pharmaceutical companies of Canada have written to us to say that they do not oppose this legislation.

Like us, like all the others, Rx&D want to make CAMR work. They have stated their guiding principles and we are in agreement with them. These include transparency with respect to the product and the amount of product. We agree, and Bill C-398 addresses this. They want to see flexibility with respect to the amount of product that is sent overseas so there will be enough to meet public health needs, and of course we agree with that. Their concerns about anti-diversion are fair, and they are addressed in the legislation. Their concerns about eligible countries are fair, and we are open to discussing that at the committee stage. Like them, we agree that the products should be approved by Health Canada. In fact, Bill C-398

does not change that. Finally, they speak of the principle of an appeal mechanism, which is also fair. We have no problem with that.

Like hundreds of NGOs, and like most Canadians, 80% like the generic companies. The brand name pharmaceutical industry is ready to see this bill at the foreign affairs committee. My colleagues across the aisle should be ready for that too.

In fact, the only people who seem to oppose this legislation are some colleagues on the other side, who have been misinformed through outdated and misguided talking points. Their opposition to the bill is based on incorrect information or a lack of information.

In this respect, I was a bit surprised to hear the parliamentary secretary on the matter and to realize the Minister of Industry does not seem to know the industry is on board with this bill. That is a bit surprising. I have heard things, such as the bill removes the need for notification of quantities and things like that. I am flabbergasted. Have these people read the bill? The bill does not do that.

I heard very briefly that it would be costly to the economy. That is not the case. I have heard that CAMR works, but people who are involved in it say it does not work, that it does not change the economics of drug supply. That is wrong. Competition brings the prices down. A portion of medicines are already generic, but this bill is aimed at those medicines that are not generic. I will not go down the list, because unfortunately I do not have time.

It is so important that we, as parliamentarians, vote on this bill based on the correct information. It would be a very sad day if my colleagues on the other side of the House refused to join the consensus that includes pharmaceutical companies and 80% of Canadians.

● (1940)

I urge them to remember when they vote that this bill would save lives. I encourage all of my colleagues to take the time to study the bill. My door is open to them. Next Wednesday, let us vote for life, let us vote for CAMR reform.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the yeas have it.

Adjournment Proceedings

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 28, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1945)

[English]

PARKS CANADA

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I raised a question a number of weeks ago about the cuts to Parks Canada across the country, especially in my riding in the Northwest Territories, where over the past six years the Conservative government has been very proud to promote the development of parks. The government talked about that in its answer, but my question dealt with the lack of attention to important funding for parks.

In particular, I referred to the Nahanni National Park expansion. When voted on the bill in the House of Commons, there was unanimous consent because the minister at that time, the Hon. Jim Prentice, gave me a letter indicating very clearly that the government was going to invest considerably in capital in Fort Simpson to improve the ability of the park to deliver services, promote tourism and do all those things. As well, a larger staff was going to be hired in the park. In the Conservative budget this spring, we saw a cut to those promises.

We still have not seen any capital investment in the park and this is breaking a promise that the Conservatives made to the people of the Deh Cho region of the Northwest Territories to establish a very large park. Taking the land of that park was a commitment on the part of the Government of Canada. It was a gift of the people of the Deh Cho to Canada. There is a requirement for respect. Respect says we stick with the deal that we made. When we make a deal like this that is good for Canada and the people of the north, we should stick with it. In its budget, the government broke its promise to the people of the Deh Cho.

I would like the government to restore the funding and staffing positions of the Nahanni National Park, as it should be. This park was expanded by over 20,000 square kilometres. The Nahanni National Park is a world-class tourism opportunity. To beggar the park at this point in time is exactly the wrong thing to do. This is a jewel in the Canadian park system.

Across the entire north, there have been sacrifices on a number of occasions with national parks. What have we seen out of that? We saw the loss of over 64 positions throughout the three northern territories. The three northern territories carry 12 national parks in Canada. Twelve of the 44 national parks in Canada are in those three territories. The commitment of the people of the north to national parks is large. Why is the government failing in its commitment to

ensure that parks work effectively and efficiently and promote the economic well-being of the communities of the north?

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Western Arctic is absolutely right. This government does take enormous pride in its record with regard to national parks, particularly in northern Canada. We also take our commitments extremely seriously, especially those we make at election time or before elections. Therefore, I will not dwell on the member for Western Arctic's failure to implement his own commitment to his own constituents with regard to the elimination of the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry. He can deal with his own conscience and his own constituents on that point.

However, with regard to parks he is right. Our northern parks contain some of the most inspirational landscapes that we have. They define the essence of this country from the Yukon's Kluane National Park and Reserve to the bison roaming the boreal forest of Wood Buffalo National Park, or to the towering mountains of Auyuittuq in Nunavut, a relatively new creation. Our government will continue to protect these lands for future generations.

We have a special record with regard to national parks in this Conservative party from Banff forward. That is why our 2010-11 Throne Speech was committed to establishing significant new protected areas.

Under the northern strategy and Arctic foreign policy statement, we will designate new national parks in northern Canada, plus a new national marine conservation area in Nunavut's Lancaster Sound. This commitment is best exemplified by our decision to protect the south Nahanni River watershed, which the member mentioned, one of the planet's great rivers.

In 2009, in collaboration with the Dehcho First Nations, our government delivered the sixfold expansion of the Nahanni National Park Reserve. As the member mentioned, at 30,000 square kilometres, it is now Canada's third largest national park.

Just this past summer, our Prime Minister travelled north to announce the creation of the 4,850 square kilometre Naats'ihch'oh National Park Reserve with the Sahtu Dene and Métis people.

In 2006, Parks Canada's protected network covered approximately 277,000 square kilometres. Since then, we have added 50,000 square kilometres of nationally significant lands and waters, an area seven times the size of Lake Ontario.

In addition, we have taken actions that will eventually lead to the protection of another 100,000 square kilometres of natural areas. All told, our government has taken and will continue to take the actions necessary to produce a 53% increase in the size of Parks Canada's protected areas network.

This work to expand our world-class national park system not only protects the environment, it is an important investment in the economic sustainability of northern communities.

Parks Canada is a significant face in 22 communities in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. With the creation of each new national park and national marine conservation area, that presence grows.

Adjournment Proceedings

As we work to finalize measures to implement this budget, it will still maintain 330 employees across the north and over 35% of Parks Canada's staff employed in the north self-identify as aboriginal. We will continue to work with northern communities to ensure the economic benefits of new national parks accrue to them and their children.

• (1950)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada's position does not bode well for the creation of new parks. It does not bode well for the co-operation of people to create new parks if the government creates new parks but does not live up to its promise to protect the resources in those parks and to give them the intrinsic nature they require to grow and expand as important parts of the northern economy and of the economies of the regions of the north.

The Dehcho people gave up a very important piece of natural real estate with many significant resources in it for that park. We expect the Government of Canada to live up to its commitments.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Western Arctic understands as well as any Canadian that this venture, this investment, this effort to protect and conserve land, habitat and wildlife, is a long-term venture. In order to protect it over the long term, we need to be strong as a country, as do successive governments. One of the elements of strength is the ability to balance a budget, to maintain fiscal sustainability. We will not apologize for our efforts to do things more efficiently in our national parks.

However, we are working with the people of the north and the northern communities, as well as 330 employees across this vast area, of which 35% are self-identifying as aboriginal with roots in those communities, toward a goal we all share, which is to bring Canadians and the wider world to see these treasures and these unique landscapes.

Tourism in Canada generates \$72 billion in economic activity per year. Parks Canada is a major stakeholder in the success of that industry over the long term.

• (1955)

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak today about the question I asked the government on September 17. My question was mainly about transparency and the release of information about the program to replace the CF-18s.

Virtually no progress has been made in the past two months. When I asked my previous question, I wanted to know how the government could honestly say that it was implementing the Auditor General's recommendation when a series of emails clearly showed that the Department of National Defence had tried to influence the report and was rejecting the conclusions.

In the meantime, we have learned that the famous national fighter procurement secretariat, which is supposed to review the entire acquisition process and provide Parliament with revised specific costs, will obtain information about the life cycle costs of the F-35s from the Department of National Defence. We are talking about the very same department that was deemed incapable of managing the

procurement program that it had bungled from the beginning, a department that kept two sets of books, one for the department and one for the public, to ensure that it would not have to reveal the true cost of this program.

I am not sure this is what the Auditor General had in mind when he talked about due diligence. The truth is that the sole-sourcing of fighter aircraft is the biggest military procurement botch-up in Canadian history. It is even worse than what the Liberals did.

The Auditor General said that the process has to be done again. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services says that she is looking at other options, while the chief of the air force staff says that, to his knowledge, other options are not being looked at. The Department of National Defence confirms that, yes, other options are being studied. No one is saying, or seems to know, what the other options are. We have complete silence.

On top of that, the special committee that was set up to study the Auditor General's report has been gagged. However, the NDP and the Auditor General are not the only ones sounding the alarm. A few days ago, an article appeared expressing the concerns of one of the American air force's best pilots. Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Niemi, a former F-22 test pilot, said that the American air force was making a mistake by acquiring an all-stealth fleet. In his view, stealth may have advantages, but the disadvantages must not be forgotten; this is something to be taken seriously.

His comments remind me strangely of those we have repeatedly made in committee for months, when the F-35s are discussed. The government may seem not to want to listen to the NDP, so perhaps it should pay attention to what a stealth aircraft test pilot says. He goes on to say that, in his opinion, stealth provides no advantage in conflicts such as those in Afghanistan or Iraq, since 2003, and it cannot guarantee success in future struggles. The F-22, the F-35's big brother, remains inferior to older fourth-generation aircraft in some scenarios.

All the evidence seems to suggest that there is reasonable doubt about the choice of replacement aircraft for the CF-18s, evidence that the government is ignoring month after month. After announcing in July 2010 that Canada would be buying 65 F-35s, the government is backpedalling and saying that the decision has not yet been made. But, in light of the non-existent work and the different stories about the F-35 secretariat, I would like to ask the government if anyone really has any idea of how botched-up this program is.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to respond to questions from my hon. colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue. The starting point for our discussion here today is the Auditor General's report released this spring, on April 3, 2012. I would like to talk about the government's strategy for responding to the questions raised by the Auditor General and carrying out such a major project.

Adjournment Proceedings

If we really want to get the right aircraft to replace the CF-18, I would say first of all that we cannot rely solely on what some American pilot said. There are differences of opinion on the future of these military capabilities, which are very important to us and our allies. We need to have a much broader analysis process. Our government began working on that a few months ago.

• (2000)

[*English*]

By introducing the government's seven-point action plan, we will fulfill and exceed the Auditor General's recommendations. Let us be clear: we have effectively pushed a restart on the replacement of the CF-18s. No decision will be made until the action plan is complete.

This action plan defines how due diligence and transparency will be applied as we move forward with replacing Canada's fighter jets. As part of the action plan, the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat was established. It is a part of Public Works and Government Services Canada. The secretariat has the lead coordinating role as the government moves to replace our aging CF-18 fleet. It will provide the due diligence, oversight and transparency necessary.

There is also a deputy ministers' governance committee overseeing the work of the secretariat. It includes two independent members, Mr. Denis Desautels, a renowned former auditor general, and Dr. Kenneth Norrie.

The secretariat is making great progress in implementing the seven-point action plan. I encourage my parliamentary colleagues, including the hon. member, to consult the secretariat's website, which is updating us all on the work being done at regular intervals.

The evaluation of options to sustain a Canadian Forces fighter capability well into the 21st century is under way and will involve a full evaluation of real choices. This detailed evaluation will provide the best available information about the range of choices that could meet the needs of our men and women in uniform.

This work is being led by National Defence and facilitated by the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat. It will be subject to approval by the deputy ministers' governance committee and we will report back to Canadians when the evaluation is complete.

The secretariat will commission an independent review of the acquisition process to date. A request for proposal was issued on October 26, 2012 to select a company to conduct this review. The third party will provide us with the lessons learned so that we can look to improve the way we conduct similar acquisitions in the future.

[*Translation*]

Let us be clear about the objectives of this review. We do not wish to cast aspersions the Auditor General's work.

[*English*]

I would like to repeat that the government has accepted his findings and recommendations, but while this work is under way, other items in the action plan continue to advance, including the annual update, which will be tabled in Parliament relatively soon. The action plan commits the Department of National Defence,

through the secretariat, to provide annual updates to Parliament on the costs of the F-35, which is one option for the replacement of Canada's CF-18s. The first update will be tabled shortly and allows for the independent review of the figures in the report.

As part of this annual update, the Treasury Board Secretariat has commissioned the independent review that will help set a consistent life-cycle costing framework to report costing estimates for this project. This will enable National Defence to more effectively report costs to Parliament and the public in the future.

We also commit Industry Canada under the action plan to continue identifying opportunities for Canadian industry to participate in the F-35 joint strike fighter global supply chain, a supply chain and opportunity that has brought enormous benefits already to many Canadian communities.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, military procurement of this magnitude is normally subject to a tendering process, but that never happened. No supplier other than Lockheed Martin was ever taken seriously. To try to justify this action, a statement of operational requirements was written that was tailored to the F-35. The Conservatives are saying that they are going to examine all the options to see what the best choice is for the Canadian air fleet, but there is nothing to show that such is actually the case.

Has the statement of operational requirements been rewritten so that it is not tailored to the F-35? Is the secretariat seriously examining other options? What other options are being examined? Unfortunately, we still have not received any answers.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member already knows, Lockheed Martin was competing with another company to develop the F-35. This happened under another government, the Liberal government, and with the oversight of an American government.

Canada's options are being very carefully examined. As I said, the F-35 is just one of the options.

[*English*]

The funding envelope for the acquisition of a replacement aircraft has been frozen. All elements of the seven point action plan will be completed before we make a decision on how to replace the current fleet of CF-18 fighter jets. The government's action plan is a comprehensive response to the Auditor General's recommendations and conclusions in chapter 2 of his spring 2012 report.

There has been more progress than hon. members in this House have acknowledged to date and there will continue to be progress, due diligence, transparency and healthy debate in this House before a decision is taken.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (2005)

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands

adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:05 p.m.)

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