



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 205 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1400)

[*English*]

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

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Chris Alexander (Ajax—Pickering, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks I had the great pleasure of attending several Thai Pongal celebrations, including in my home riding of Ajax—Pickering where the Durham Tamil Association and the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham did a great job showcasing the talents of many Canadians of Tamil heritage.

With Canada now home to the largest Tamil diaspora outside South Asia, I was proud that Tamil Heritage Month was officially launched throughout the GTA on January 9. This great initiative began in my home region of Durham with declarations by the City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Town of Whitby, City of Oshawa and the cities of Toronto, Brampton and Markham soon afterward.

At Thai Pongal, Tamil Canadians give thanks for a bountiful harvest and abundant blessings. They leave the past behind and open themselves to the new. Unfortunately, for four long years since the end of a protracted conflict, the government of Sri Lanka has failed to live up to this spirit. There has been no serious reconciliation and no accountability for alleged war crimes and mass killings. Even basic rights continue to be denied to Sri Lankan Tamils. With the recent impeachment of Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake, the Sri Lankan government has shown a gross disregard for the rule of law.

I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing all Tamil Canadians a great Tamil Heritage Month and a happy Thai Pongal.

• (1405)

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Chinese New Year is soon approaching and I would like to take this opportunity to wish the constituents of Scarborough—Rouge River and Canadians across the country a very happy and prosperous lunar new year.

I also wish to thank the organizations in my riding for their tremendous efforts in cherishing their traditions and making this month of celebration one where all Canadians can explore the Chinese heritage, language and culture. I, for one, always look forward to the dragon dance, the delicious food and meeting with constituents.

During the next couple of weeks, I look forward to celebrating the year of the snake with local residents and community organizations such as Yee Hong, the ACCE, CCC and the Confederation of Greater Toronto Chinese Business Association. The Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto is a pivotal member of the Scarborough community. As one of North America's most technologically advanced centres, it provides recreational, cultural and art facilities for all community members.

Today, I want to thank all community organizations in my riding for the work they do and once again wish the residents of Scarborough—Rouge River a happy and prosperous year of the snake.

Xin nian kuai le—gong xi fa cai. Sun nin fai lok—gong hey fat choy.

* * *

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the beautiful riding of Mississauga South stands an unassuming red brick building, all that is left of Small Arms Ltd., a crown company that produced close to two million rifles, pistols and machine guns during the Second World War. At its peak, it produced 1,250 of the famous Lee-Enfield rifles per day and employed 5,500 people, most of whom were women.

These women stand as examples of all those Canadians who sacrificed and contributed to the war effort here at home during those difficult times. Today they are known affectionately as the “bomb girls”. One of these women is Patricia Brookes, who worked at the Small Arms building and to whom I recently had the privilege of awarding the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her service.

Statements by Members

In 2009, the Small Arms building was officially designated a heritage building. The plan is for it to be developed as a centre for arts, culture, heritage and environmental science. I thank the Mississauga South bomb girls for their contribution to the war effort and to Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, the Prime Minister of Canada tore up bilateral agreements with the provinces to create daycare spaces for our country's children. Instead, the government chose to create a tax credit program that has cost taxpayers over \$15 billion. What is more, daycare fees did not drop by a single penny.

The government also failed to deliver on its promise to create more spaces in regulated daycares. Only 20% of children have access to regulated daycare despite the fact that the number of children under the age of four has increased by at least 11% since this government came to power.

Canadian families are in desperate need of new child care spaces to deal with the challenges of raising our country's children and keeping them healthy.

Not only has this government turned its back on Canada's children, but it has also failed the women and families that have to cope with this disgraceful situation.

* * *

[English]

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, at the request of the Nova Scotia provincial department of education, voted to put five small rural schools on the path to closure.

When you close a small rural school and it is the only school in that community, it makes it very difficult for a small rural community to grow. It makes it difficult to attract new, young families to rebuild the rural economy. I call upon the minister of education and the school board to work with those communities and do what they can to keep at least one school open in each of those small rural communities.

Closing a small rural school when it is the only school in the town has the same effect on that community as closing every school in the city would have on Halifax. It would be devastating to the city of Halifax, but the same thing happens to a small rural community when all of its schools are closed.

* * *

HORSESHOE TAVERN

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of Canada's landmark cultural icons, the Horseshoe Tavern, recently celebrated its 65th anniversary. This is a huge accomplishment.

Often when we think of the arts in Canada, the opera, the ballet and the symphony come to mind. However, it is in the ramshackle clubs, the backrooms, the storefronts and the church basements of the nation where most of the artists that Canada is so rightly proud of first learned their craft.

The Horseshoe has always been a leader in this tradition, providing a valuable training ground for at the time unknowns from Stompin' Tom to Nickelback, k.d. lang to The Tragically Hip, and even a couple of future MPs. No one does this kind of thing because it makes a lot of money. People do it because they love music. They want to share that music and they believe in the great talent that we have here in Canada.

Today I want to pay tribute to one of the longest-running live music venues in North America by wishing a happy 65th anniversary to the Horseshoe Tavern. Thanks for helping put Canadian music on the map.

* * *

● (1410)

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year I proudly voted for economic action plan 2012, which provided funding for the community infrastructure improvement fund. Our goal was to strengthen and improve existing facilities in communities across Canada.

Last Friday, I announced \$44,500 in funding under this program for a replacement evaporator condenser for the hockey rink at River Heights Community Centre, a club integral to my community. Thanks to our investments in infrastructure we are creating jobs and keeping ice rink revenues coming in to the community club with reliable, environmentally responsible ice-making equipment.

Skating with my friends and neighbours last Friday night and seeing them teaching their children how to skate where I taught mine how to skate and where I learned, I was delighted to see that our government's investment in economic action plan 2012 is already making a difference for the residents of my community of Winnipeg South Centre.

* * *

HOCKEY DAY IN CANADA

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the riding and region that I represent, the electric city region of Peterborough, Ontario, is famous and renowned for many things. It was the first city in North America where electric street lights went on, the city that built the generators for the Hoover Dam and Churchill Falls, the home of the world's tallest hydraulic lift lock and the historic Trent-Severn Waterway. It is a place where we grow the grain and then produce Quaker oatmeal, granola bars and cereals for the nation. It is a place where we take our sports seriously.

Statements by Members

Peterborough is a hockey town and not just any hockey town. Indeed no major junior hockey franchise has produced more NHL players than the Peterborough Petes, boasting names such as Yzerman, Larmer, Gainey, Staal, Ricci, Murphy, Pronger, Redman and even Gretzky. We have sent a few coaches as well, lesser known of course, such as Scotty Bowman, Mike Keenan, Roger Neilson, Dick Todd and Gary Green.

This Saturday CBC will be broadcasting live and celebrating Hockey Day in Canada from the base of the Peterborough lift lock along the Trent-Severn canal. I invite all Canadians to tune in and join one of Canada's greatest hockey cities, Peterborough, Ontario, to celebrate all that our game means to Canada and how it unites us as Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

REHABILITATION RESIDENCE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the people of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier received some very sad news: after six years in the Quebec City region, La Colombière residence, a place for social and educational rehabilitation, will have to close its doors for good for lack of funding.

La Colombière, located in the town of Saint-Augustin-des-Desmaures, is a non-profit organization that helped young mothers who were experiencing difficulties get their lives back on track, finish their studies and learn how to be a good mother. A team of professionals welcomed these young women to the residence, a safe place for them to build a new life with their child.

Over the years, the team at La Colombière helped over 175 mothers and children, thereby meeting a real need in the community.

I would like to congratulate and thank Claire Ménard, the founder and executive director of the organization, for her incredible commitment, her perseverance and her extraordinary compassion, as well as her entire team for all their hard work.

The unfortunate closure of La Colombière residence reminds us just how important it is for this government to do something to ensure stable, predictable funding for organizations that work tirelessly to help those who need it most.

* * *

[English]

CANADA-INDIA TRADE

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to building on our strong ties with India to create a partnership that will lead to jobs, growth and long-term prosperity.

A Canada-India trade agreement is a key part of our government's ambitious pro-trade plan, and we are pleased that a seventh round of negotiations toward this goal is concluding today in New Delhi. An agreement would be great news for Canadian workers and exporters. The Canada-India joint study concluded that free trade would boost Canada's economy by at least \$6 billion a year. That means almost 40,000 new jobs across the country.

However, I was disappointed to see the NDP member for Vancouver Kingsway stating in a recent news article that there was nothing pressing about these negotiations and that other topics are of "far larger significance". Unlike the NDP, our government values the Canada-India partnership and recognizes that both business and people-to-people ties are helping us to deepen this important relationship.

I ask that the—

● (1415)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today, the Prime Minister cancelled the child care agreements with the provinces. The result is that the OECD ranks Canada 24th out of 25 countries when it comes to early childhood services. Only 20% of children have access to regulated child care and very few new spaces are being created, leaving parents with difficult choices. Child care should not be an afterthought or a luxury. In fact, a federal court ruled just this week that employers have to accommodate reasonable child care requests.

When European countries invested in child care, they found that each dollar spent returned two more to the economy. However, here in Canada, the Liberals and Conservatives just do not get it. Three straight prime ministers have now broken their promises to create high quality regulated child care, instead squandering billions of dollars on corporate tax giveaways.

Only New Democrats are steadfast in their support for universal, accessible, affordable and licensed child care. For us, early childhood services are an investment, not an expense.

* * *

IRAN

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the notorious Saeed Mortazavi, a man once known as the Butcher of Tehran, briefly found himself inside the same Iranian prison where he ordered the torture of Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi. That torture ultimately proved fatal, and Ms. Kazemi's last days were dark, lonely and agonizing.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has called for those responsible for Ms. Kazemi's murder to be brought to justice. Sadly, today we learned Mortazavi has been released from custody. Ms. Kazemi's family's 10-year wait for justice continues.

Statements by Members

I ask all hon. members to join me in supporting our foreign minister's calls for justice for Ms. Kazemi, and all victims of the barbaric Iranian regime. We call on Iran to uphold its international obligations with respect to human rights and the rule of law and for there to finally be a social contract between the regime and the Iranian people that affords them the basic rights they are currently denied.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today, the Prime Minister, as his mean-spirited first act in office, tore up signed agreements that would have created high quality and low cost child care options for Canadian families. With the help of their co-conspirators in the NDP, the Conservatives tried to pass off their taxable benefit program, a program that has cost taxpayers \$15 billion, as a replacement. Fifteen billion dollars has been squandered and there has been no decrease in child care fees; \$15 billion squandered and no new regulated child care spaces for families; \$15 billion squandered and precious little to show.

As a result of the government's failure, there are licensed child care spaces for fewer than 20% of Canadian children, while the zero to 4-year-old cohort has increased by 11%.

There can be no question that Canadian families deserve a break and a chance to provide every child with the best possible start in life. It is appalling how the Conservatives have failed our children and Canadian families.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago Canadians gave our government a vote of confidence, and we will continue to focus on what matters most to Canadians—the economy.

Our Prime Minister and our government will continue to focus on our economic action plan to create jobs, stimulate growth and ensure long-term prosperity.

In the words of the Prime Minister, our government will never forget that the key to the hopes and dreams of Canadians is the prosperity of our country. For them, for him, for all of us, the economy remains the priority.

Unfortunately, while our side of the House continues to focus on the economy, the leader of the NDP and his party remain determined to impose a \$20 billion carbon tax that will hurt Canadians and the economy.

We urge the opposition and its leaders to get behind our government and help Canadians.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is not alone in

being disgusted by the Conservatives' gutting of employment insurance.

Across the country, Conservatives have been critical of their own party's actions. Even Conservative candidates in the last election are disgusted by what the Conservative government is doing to the employment insurance program. They are saying:

...it makes no sense...a step backwards for the regions...With this reform, entire towns and cities will disappear!

The former Conservative member of Parliament for Gaspé, Charles-Eugène Marin, said, "This is bullshit!"

The Conservatives are turning their backs on the regions. Their most loyal supporters have acknowledged this publicly. The Conservatives' 2011 slogan, "Our region in power", served only to disguise their contempt for the regions.

This reform can destroy the human resources our seasonal industries rely on.

Members of the NDP, reeves, industries, chambers of commerce and Conservatives in eastern Quebec all agree: this reform must be cancelled.

People in the regions, in Atlantic Canada and across the country can count on the NDP to stand up for them against a government that will clearly never respect them.

* * *

● (1420)

[*English*]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today, with the faith and trust of Canadians, we took our spot as the Government of Canada. We promised to stand up for Canada, to cut taxes, crack down on crime and offer families support. That is exactly what we have done. We have cut the GST, not once but twice, introduced measures to keep Canada's streets and communities safe and created a national child care benefit. We have also put an end to the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry and brought marketing freedom to farmers.

Our government took swift action to protect the economy through one of the worst recessions the world has ever seen. With the creation of over 900,000 net new jobs, countries now look to Canada as a strong economic model.

We will strive to make Canada the strongest, most prosperous and united nation by focusing on priorities Canadians care most about, family, safety, pride in their citizenship and the economy.

Our government will continue to stand up for Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have just been caught with their hands in the cookie jar. They orchestrated fraudulent calls and tried to manipulate the non-partisan work of an electoral commission.

To make matters worse, Conservative Party officials lied repeatedly until irrefutable evidence was presented. They finally admitted that they were responsible for the calls, but now they are saying that the situation resulted from an “internal miscommunication”.

We also learned this morning that the company involved in this situation is the same one involved in the Pierre Poutine incident.

When was the Prime Minister informed of the fact that his party was behind these fraudulent calls?

[*English*]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all let me say it is good to see the leader of the NDP here today and on his feet and none the worse for wear.

[*Translation*]

The party has already explained what happened with these calls. The party obeyed the rules set out in the act.

Our public position on the commissions is very clear. Obviously, parliamentarians and the party try to influence the placement of the new electoral boundaries. These efforts will continue, as encouraged by the law.

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve a straight answer. Did the Prime Minister know his party was behind these fraudulent calls, yes or no?

The independence of the Canadian electoral boundaries commission is fundamental to our democracy. Conservatives paid for fraudulent robocalls using a fake company name to misinform voters and manipulate an important part of our democratic system. Worse yet, Conservative Party officials lied to Canadians to try to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. Who will the Prime Minister hold accountable for this fraud?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly I reject the accusations in that question. I think the party has explained this particular matter. As I think the Speaker knows very well, there are electoral commissions in effect to redraw boundaries. Those commissions accept and expect input from parliamentarians, from political parties and from the general public. In Saskatchewan, there has been overwhelming opposition to the particular proposals, but we are simply operating within the process as it exists, and the way indeed it encourages all actors to do.

Oral Questions

THE BUDGET

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, fraudulent robocalls become input in our democratic process.

[*Translation*]

Last year, the Conservatives presented a budget that slashed all essential services for Canadians, including those related to retirement, health and employment insurance.

Since then, they have introduced two mammoth bills that gut environmental protections and destroy accountability measures.

The Conservatives know that Canadians disagree with them on all these issues.

With the budget just around the corner, can the Prime Minister assure us that Canadians will not have to go through the same thing again and that he will not make the same mistakes?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the objective for our upcoming budget is the same as previous budgets: to ensure economic growth, job creation and long-term prosperity.

We are the first government to reduce the deficit without making cuts that affect unemployed workers, retirees and children's education.

We intend to maintain these key programs. We are creating the jobs the economy needs.

• (1425)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, in the last budget the Conservatives chose to cut services to Canadians, who are now paying the price.

The other Conservative priority was to wreak havoc on environmental protection. The budget should not be a catch-all; it should focus on the economic priorities of Canadians.

For five years the NDP has been calling for a permanent infrastructure program to deal with the current deficit.

Will the Conservatives agree to our request?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 2012 budget focused on job creation and the long-term prosperity of our economy.

Obviously, we are going to continue in that same vein.

I want to be clear when I say that we were very disappointed in the NDP when it voted against many measures such as the small business hiring tax credit, improvements to the youth employment strategy, improved economic opportunities for young aboriginals and so on.

I hope that they will support these sorts of measures in the 2013 budget because they will help Canadians.

[*English*]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is funny and sad that the Minister of Finance is already saying that people will be disappointed with this budget. He is off to a great job selling it.

Oral Questions

More people are unemployed now than before the recession and middle-class families are being squeezed.

Budgets are about choices. Will the Conservative be changing their priorities to focus on priorities like infrastructure and creating good jobs? Or will we end up with another budget where Conservatives help their insider friends, attack their political enemies, and ignore the real priorities of Canadians?

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, it was the NDP that Canadians were disappointed with, because they voted against so many good measures to maintain the job creation we have. Here I might cite that we have created over 900,000 net new jobs since the recession in July 2009.

Canadians were disappointed that the NDP did not support a number of measures. Let me continue to cite those measures. One is the opportunities fund, which would have helped a number of disabled people get into the job market. Thankfully, our Conservative government voted in favour of that budget to put that forward. However, the NDP, of course, voted against it.

* * *

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in light of the unprecedented effort by the Conservative Party, and I presume the government, to gerrymander the riding boundaries in Saskatchewan, I wonder if the Prime Minister could give us a categorical assurance today that there will be no special partisan legislation with respect to this matter, but rather that the government will ensure and guarantee that it will bring in a law that would be entirely compatible with the final conclusions of the boundary commission in Saskatchewan and, indeed, right across the country.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me once again be clear on the process.

Under the law, independent boundary commissions are established. Those commissions, and part of the process, is to get widespread input, not just from parliamentarians and political parties but from the general public.

In the case of Saskatchewan, I am told that some 75% of the submissions made to that commission have been opposed to the current proposals. However, in the end, it is the commission that makes the decisions.

Some years ago, the Liberals tried to bring in partisan legislation to overturn boundary commission recommendations. We would never do that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is dead wrong and history will certainly show that that was not the case.

However, I want a clear commitment from the Prime Minister. Can he assure us that the government will abide by the commission's decisions?

Will it stop putting political pressure on a judicial commission, as it has done with the robocalls and even the comments made today by the Prime Minister of Canada?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): I have already answered that question. The government will not make any changes to the process.

[*English*]

However, I can tell the leader of the Liberal Party that he is completely wrong. After the 1991 distribution, both houses of Parliament spent over a year fighting—and I know because I was a spokesperson—Liberal attempts to change legislation to overturn boundary recommendations.

There is a public process. All parties—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please.

The Prime Minister has the floor. We will have a bit of order.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper: Mr. Speaker, the process is independent. However, it allows and encourages parliamentarians, political parties, and all Canadians to make known their views on this matter, and we have done so and will continue to do so.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could ask the Prime Minister, in light of press reports, as we have no other information from the minister, about what is and is not on the table in the trade negotiations with the European Union.

I wonder, given the fact that the Prime Minister gave a solemn assurance to the House before and to the people of Canada that the supply management system of this country would be defended by the government in all of its trade negotiations, if he could he give us a categorical assurance that dairy is not on the table and that, in fact, the dairy farmers of this country will not be sold out by the Conservative Party and his government.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has defended our supply management system successfully in various trade negotiations, and we continue to do so.

In fact, to my knowledge, the only person I am aware of who is suggesting the abolition of the supply management system is a candidate for the leadership of the Liberal Party.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister called—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

Oral Questions

The hon. member for Halifax.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister called the report of the Commissioner of the Environment “useful”.

The problem is that it is only useful if something is done with it. The report lays out how to improve the response to offshore oil spills and protect our waterways where there is hydraulic fracturing.

When will the Conservatives establish “useful” environmental protection policies?

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that my colleague opposite asked this, because yesterday at the natural resources committee, the Commissioner of the Environment said:

I don't have the slightest doubt that this government is absolutely focused on actually closing the gaps we've identified.

Also, in a television program later that day, he said, of his tenure as Commissioner of the Environment:

I have more confidence in this system than I did going in.

It is our government that has seen actual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. It is our government that has protected more parkland than any other government in history. It is our government that it is getting the job done.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Conservatives could read the rest of the report, because there are some pretty stark warnings in there.

Yesterday it was pretty disheartening to hear the Conservative government claim again that it has no responsibility whatsoever to protect Canadians from potentially toxic substances in hydraulic fracturing fluid. Conservatives know that Health Canada and Environment Canada have responsibility over these toxic substances. Industry already agrees that public disclosure is the best practice.

Why is the Minister of the Environment shirking his responsibility?

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday in the House and numerous times in the past, our government knows that the primary responsibility for hydraulic fracturing is with the provinces. This is a jurisdictional issue.

On top of that, our government has a world-class chemicals management plan that has assessed thousands of toxic substances, and we have worked to make sure that industry and Canadians are safe in the management of these. We will continue on this track.

• (1435)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, so it is all right with the Conservatives for companies to inject any kind of chemical into the ground. Canadians do not deserve that.

There are other concerns raised by the commissioner, such as an inadequate liability regime for offshore oil spills. The NDP has

spoken out about this problem since the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster. The Conservatives have done nothing for three years.

Will they implement the commissioner's recommendations or will they again be negligent and irresponsible?

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my colleague opposite of what the Prime Minister said yesterday, that we understand that the fundamental principle of our environmental review system and our environment regime is the polluter pay principle.

We are committed to reviewing this on an ongoing basis. That said, we also know that we need to have strong measures in place to ensure that these spills do not occur. If members look at our responsible resource development package, they can see the measures that we have put in place. Our government has doubled the amount of pipeline inspections and applied more rigorous standards for tanker safety.

This is our government and this is the real record that we have on environment protection.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians would have liked the parliamentary secretary to stand up honestly and say, “We have done nothing about liability, and we are ashamed”. I think that is what they would want to hear.

The Conservatives rammed through the laws that destroy environmental protection, but they will not do anything to fix the nuclear liability problem. The Fukushima disaster cost nearly \$200 billion.

The New Democrats have warned them. Experts have warned them. Now the environment commissioner is warning them. When will the Conservatives start listening and do something before pushing Canadian families off this dangerous liability cliff?

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is just bizarre. We brought the bill forward to raise the nuclear liability limits, and the NDP members were the ones who filibustered it and did everything they could to prevent it from passing.

When it comes to liability limits for tankers, the Commissioner of the Environment said yesterday that “Canada's amounts are absolutely in line with the international system.... In setting those international standards, Canada has been a leader”.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has no idea what it is doing when it comes to protecting the environment. But it is no slouch when it comes to fraudulent calls. At first, the Conservatives claimed innocence and said they had nothing to do with these calls.

However, they were forced to admit that they were behind the calls made in Saskatchewan attacking the credibility of the electoral boundaries commission.

Pierre Poutine is back. There is nothing better than setting up the electoral boundaries to ensure a win at election time. The Conservatives have now politicized the commission's work, which is sad.

When will they start to respect Elections Canada and give it real investigative powers to combat fraud?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is well known that we do not favour the boundaries as they have been outlined. Seventy-five per cent of the submissions from Saskatchewan residents support our stance. We are moving ahead, making sure that the consultations are out there, that Saskatchewan residents continue to know the effect they will see.

In an unprecedented move, one of the three commissioners tabled a dissenting report. We look forward to having those discussions.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the point about these robocalls is that the Conservatives first denied trying to interfere with Saskatchewan voters, and then they were caught red-handed with these harassing calls. That is the fact.

What is more, the Conservatives used Matt Meier, whose company was previously hired by Pierre Poutine. Remember him, the person who misdirected thousands of people with fraudulent voter calls?

What a small world. It looks like Matt Meier and the Conservatives have been caught red-handed this time. Will the government urge the Conservative Party to stop interfering with the non-partisan boundary commission? Will it stop trying to gerrymander?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the miscommunication was already acknowledged and corrected by the party.

What I find interesting, though, is that the NDP is condemning a practice in which it itself engaged. To quote Chantal Hébert, from February 27, 2012:

When [the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain] left the NDP to sit as a Liberal in January, the New Democrats hired a firm to robo-call her constituents... The NDP was not identified as the sponsor of the calls...

However, the party claimed that the calls were not illegal and that they were perfectly comfortable with them.

● (1440)

ETHICS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we did not—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay has the floor.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives did what was okay they would have admitted it in the first place instead of trying to hide underneath their desks.

Let us get to another issue. Let us talk about Senator Come-From-Away, Mike Duffy, who hits up the taxpayer for \$41,000 by claiming to live in P.E.I. Then he is an Ontario voter. Then he tries to scam a health card and is turned down. He does not even qualify for the income tax reduction on residency. When was the last time he even mentioned in the Senate the great people of Prince Edward Island? It has to be at least seven months, which is why the people of Cavendish call him “Mike Who?”

Instead of trying to defend their buddy, Senator Duffy, will the Conservatives try defending the taxpayer and get \$41,000 back from this guy?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as has been said many times in the chamber, all parliamentarians are expected to maintain a residence both in their home region and here in the national capital region.

The Senate is, as we know, doing a review of its current rules and ensuring that they are properly applied to all senators.

* * *

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act establishes independent commissions in each province, each headed by a judge. These commissions serve in good faith and expect non-interference from political parties, and especially from the government.

No party with a basic sense of ethics would contemplate attempting to pressure a boundary commission to reverse its proposals by conducting a robo-con propaganda campaign against it.

Why is the Conservative government now interfering with the Saskatchewan boundary commission?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The process allows and encourages the public to make submissions. At the end of the day, the commission will make the decision.

However, 75% of the submissions they received during the initial process were in favour of the boundaries remaining the way they were. We stand with Saskatchewan residents in asking that the commission re-evaluate the work it did and re-establish the boundaries as they have been.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no Canadian buys that excuse, nor do they buy that there was an internal communication problem to explain the political interference caused by the Conservatives' robocalls.

The Conservatives have admitted that they were behind this most recent manipulation, at a time when a parliamentary committee is examining the commission's report.

The parliamentary committee must examine the report objectively and in a non-partisan manner before responding to the commission.

Why does the Conservative government want to undermine the committee's work?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong about the process encouraging political interference.

[English]

In fact, as the member mentioned, there are actually parliamentary hearings into this. Obviously there is political input, although the final decisions are independent.

I will bet dollars to doughnuts that we will be able to find a lot of NDP submissions to these parliamentary hearings.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had to rely on the EU for accurate information on the Canada-European trade agreement.

The latest CETA version, reportedly now on the Prime Minister's desk, is said to accept European patent protection and therefore impose additional drug costs on Canadians in the range of between \$900 million and \$1.9 billion.

Will the Prime Minister be honest with Canadians? Is it his intent to sign an agreement that will result in higher drug costs for Canadians?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the hon. member's question. As a matter of fact, I reject much of what the hon. member says.

The reality is that our negotiators are focused on remaining issues. We are working on behalf of Canadians. We are working to produce jobs and opportunities for Canadian exporters and Canadian workers, and we will continue to do that.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there are no negotiations going on at this time, because the file is on the Prime Minister's desk.

I would like to come back to the issue of the dairy industry. The federation and some of its members were here. This is an important sector: 12,700 dairy farms and over 218,000 jobs. We do not want to hear any petty political answers; we want to be assured that the

Prime Minister will not go back on his word and that he will protect supply management.

Yes or no, will he commit to protecting supply management? It is important to Canada.

● (1445)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, our position on supply management is very clear, and it is the same position that we have maintained in various international negotiations. Actually, a candidate for the leadership of the Liberal Party is the one suggesting the abolition of the supply management system.

* * *

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development told this House that under his government there has been "a steady increase in graduation rates for first nations".

Sadly, sadly—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: —just hold the phone, boys—

The Speaker: Order, please. I have asked hon. members before. If they wish to applaud a colleague, they can do so when they are finished putting the question or are finished answering the question, but not in the middle of it.

The hon. member for St. Paul's.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Sadly, Mr. Speaker, here is the truth from his department: 2009, 35%; 2010, 33%; 2011, 35%, and last year, 35% again.

Will the minister admit he was wrong and that this is a serious problem and commit that budget 2013 will fix this?

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are taking serious action to ensure that first nations students have access to a quality education, just like every other student in Canada.

That is why we have launched intensive consultations on the development of a first nations education act. We want to have that in place in September 2014 for the school year. We have already had one of our regional round tables in Nova Scotia, and we will have one on Friday this week in Saskatoon.

We are moving forward, and we are achieving success.

* * *

CHILD CARE

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today, the Prime Minister cancelled the national child care agreement. The Conservatives promised to create more child care spaces, but like so many promises, they failed to deliver. The reality for many parents is that regulated child care spots are few and far between, and parents are left with very difficult choices.

Oral Questions

Why can the Conservatives not make life easier for parents and address the critical shortage of affordable, regulated child care spaces in Canada?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are the party that believes that parents are the ones who should decide for their own children. That is why we brought in the universal child care benefit six and a half years ago now, and that has provided help to over three million Canadian children. That is \$100 a month to help let the parents choose how their children are raised and where. Even if they decide to do it themselves, we will support that.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, clearly the minister has absolutely no intention of treating parents fairly. However, she is throwing out the baby with the bathwater when she fails to even acknowledge that child care also makes good economic sense. In Quebec, the child care program boosted its GDP, creating \$1.7 billion in revenue provincially and \$700 million for the federal government.

Why can the Conservatives not admit that a national child care program is both fairer to parents and makes good economic sense?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do have a national program that is accessible by all parents. It allows them the freedom to choose whether they want to stay at home and raise their children, have granny look after them or go for traditional daycare.

However, traditional daycare is not available to all parents. It is simply not there. That is why we also gave the provinces a lot of money with which they have created well over 100,000 new child care spaces so that parents would have that option as well.

We are there for parents and for parents' choice, in other words.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, too often, the Conservatives turn their backs on veterans. Their so-called action plan in response to the ombudsman's recent report is no plan at all. According to the ombudsman, "the changes to the...application process...fall short of ensuring procedural fairness."

Instead of proposing half measures to try to hide the problem, why do the Conservatives not do what is necessary to help the veterans who are being denied disability benefits without any justification?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear on this subject in the House. Not only are 70% of the applications that are submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs approved, but veterans receive a positive response 85% of the time across government. That is why we welcome the ombudsman's report. What is more, we have adopted measures to continue to keep veterans better informed of the information being used to process their claims.

The real question is why, every time we introduce measures to improve veterans' living conditions, the NDP fails to support them or, even worse, votes against them.

[English]

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when we become the government, we will show veterans how they should be treated in this House.

The reality is that these veterans had to go before a politically appointed board with information the adjudicators have but that they do not have. What fairness is that?

The ombudsman was very clear. He said that the department must make it fair so that the veterans, when they appeal for their benefits, have all their documents in advance so that there can be a level playing field when the discussions take place.

Will the minister now commit to this House, to the people of Canada and to the veterans community that when veterans appeal for benefits, they will get all the documents they so richly—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are already committed to making sure that our veterans have a fair procedural process. That is why our adjudicator had access to all the information.

We want to proceed in an efficient manner. That is why we are streamlining this process as well as making sure that the response is provided in a timely manner.

The response is positive for the veterans 85% of the time. When will the NDP support our initiatives and vote with the government to fund our veterans initiatives?

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hold that change in government.

The NDP and Liberals have chosen to ignore the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, victims organizations, immigration lawyers and experts and have voted against the faster removal of foreign criminals act. They are voting to allow foreign nationals who break the law to remain in Canada.

With the final vote on this bill taking place tonight, can the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism please update this House on our government's commitment to protect the safety and security of Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for too long, too many serious, dangerous, convicted foreign criminals have been able to delay their deportation from Canada for years and in too many cases have gone on to commit new crimes and create new victims in Canada. Canadians have had enough of this.

When people come to Canada and violate the privilege of residency here by being convicted in a court of law of having committed a serious crime, they lose the privilege of staying in Canada and should be deported quickly. This new law will do just that. We hope that the NDP and Liberal parties will listen to victims' rights groups and support the faster removal of foreign criminals act.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since the Conservatives first began gutting the employment insurance program, they have been claiming to want to address the shortage of workers in the regions. Well, I have some news for them: there are no jobs.

To complicate matters, the economic situation is preventing the creation of a sufficient number of new jobs. It is easy to understand.

Rather than trying to create jobs, the Conservatives are trying to punish seasonal workers. It does not make any sense.

Why not help people in places where the unemployment rate is on the rise to find jobs rather than punishing these poor workers?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a shortage of workers across this country, even in the east. That is what I am hearing from many employers every week.

We are trying to connect unemployed workers with the jobs that are available in their area of expertise and their region. It will be better for them, their families, employers and the economy. We are trying to help people find jobs. The NDP should help us do it.

• (1455)

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government is making a mess of the EI system. I was talking to Frances this weekend, one of a whole flood of constituents who have been calling my office because they cannot get through to Service Canada to deal with their problems. In Frances' case, she said she had been calling every hour on the hour for a week, and all she got was an answering machine that said, "Sorry, call back please. We're busy".

Can the government explain to Canadians why it is messing up the EI system? It cannot even manage a call centre. Please explain that.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Far from it, Mr. Speaker, we are helping Canadians get back to work.

There are shortages of workers across this country, even in the east. That is where we are focused on helping people get the jobs that are available in their areas. As a last resort, too many employers have

to bring in temporary foreign workers to fill the jobs, because there have been disincentives in employment insurance that keep people from working when they could, when they would be better off, and their families would be better off, if they did so.

We are helping Canadians get back to work.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP successfully pushed the finance committee to study tax havens. The U.K., the U.S. and Australia all have published official estimates of how much these tax havens are costing them, but the Conservatives' position is to cover their eyes and pretend it is not happening.

Could the Minister of National Revenue tell the House why she is not interested in finding out just how much of these tax revenues go missing?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very interested in how much of this money goes missing, and that is why we aggressively pursue all information we receive. We take this issue seriously. That is why our government has increased the number of CRA experts on this file by roughly 40% from the last year of the Liberal government.

Since 2006, CRA has audited thousands of cases and has identified more than \$4.5 billion in unpaid taxes through our efforts on aggressive international tax planning. This is compared to just \$174 million the last year the Liberals were in office.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are quick to brag about money they have recovered, but they do not know how much money has gone missing.

[*Translation*]

It is entirely possible to calculate how much revenue the government is losing as a result of tax havens. Other countries have done it.

So why will the minister not commit right now to finding out how much revenue the government is losing and to solving this problem once and for all?

[*English*]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a serious issue. Under this government, we have taken a leadership role with our international partners.

At finance committee, when asked about the issue, former Secretary General of the OECD and Liberal cabinet minister Donald Johnston had this to say: "The progress that has been made...over the last five years [in Canada has been] remarkable".

*Oral Questions***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we live in a big, diverse country where all regions contribute in different ways. Some are more affluent than others, and I applaud that success, like the riding of Ajax—Pickering, where the EI rate is under 7% and household income is over \$100,000. However, their Conservative member believes that people in Canso, Nova Scotia, where the EI rate is over 17% and household income is under \$36,000, should be happy to take jobs at Tim Hortons. The problem is, the closest Tim Hortons is two hours away, because it is rural Canada.

Where are the rural members of the Conservative caucus on these changes?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come from a very rural part of Canada and I am proud to do so. My constituents have been telling me that they support the changes we are making.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Human Resources now has the floor.

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, my constituents are applauding the changes because so many of them are trying to find jobs. They are getting the help they need from Service Canada in identifying opportunities in our area in their skill range. There are also small business people who are trying to find skills and talent to work for them. The new systems are helping them do that and they are helping those people who are getting those new jobs. It is a win-win for rural Canada.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister should get out of her limo and she should kill her job-killing EI plan.

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Seasonal employers are calling on the government to put an end to this bad reform that is affecting their industry and depriving them of the skilled workers they need.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Mr. Speaker, we are at risk of losing our best workers. It will be difficult to attract and retain the best talent. That is what the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in the Atlantic region is saying.

Will the government listen to these job creators or will it stubbornly continue to kill jobs?

[*English*]

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of employers' associations who are with us on this. Let me cite a few.

The government's changes to EI reform are a positive and integral step in addressing the challenges for Canadian industry.

That was from the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

One area I commend the government for looking at is the removal of disincentives for people who take, for example, part-time work. Too often we penalize people who've wanted to go to work...

That was from the president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Hon. Perrin Beatty.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after the government dismantled the farmer owned and operated Canadian Wheat Board, the minister appointed unelected directors to rebrand the institution. It has not been a success. So much so that they are reverting to 1950s pin-up ads to sell wheat.

The new CWB ad symbolizes the Conservative agenda, setting farmers and women decades back.

Since the minister appoints the directors to run the show, will he tell his buddies to take the ad down, or is this how he really sees western Canadian men and women?

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the question. The ad in question was put up by the board. Its spokesman, Dayna Spiring, did some focus group testing on it, and 90% of the responses on their email have been very positive.

At the end of the day, where the member is actually totally wrong is in the unprecedented success that western Canadian farmers have enjoyed under the freedom to market their own product. Now, with the rail review legislation before the House of Commons, I ask her to support that and move it through so they can continue to have a banner year.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality about the appointed directors is that it is the minister's responsibility to appoint them and if he wants the ad down, he should unappoint those directors who put the ad up in the first place.

Since the Wheat Board was dismantled, the Conservative appointees are creating instability and confusion for many farmers. We have heard from a lot of them. In fact, they actually alienated prairie farmers across the country. Instead of listening to farmers, Conservatives would rather play ideological games, and we see that with this ad.

With an ongoing hog crisis and cuts to risk management programs, it is a shame the Conservatives really are not listening to all prairie farmers. Why are they taking hard-working farmers for granted?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have done no such thing. I know the other day I was chastised me for the amount of lobbyists I had visit me. That is called consultation. We continue to do that with farm groups and with everybody involved in the whole value chain across the agricultural sector. We will do that because we agree there is a bright future out there.

Every time we do start to move forward in a positive way, the NDP members stand up, rail against it and vote against it. That is unfortunate.

I have attended every major agricultural event across western Canada and into Ontario this year. I have enjoyed doing that, meeting with grassroots farmers. They agree we are on the right track and they will continue to support us.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on the well-being of Canada's veterans. When questions arose about the potential risks of exposure to depleted uranium, the Minister of Veterans Affairs struck an arm's-length committee of international medical experts to study the issue. The committee spent countless hours meeting with witnesses and reviewing evidence from around the globe. The minister promised to make this report public so veterans and Canadians could be assured they would have the best information available.

Will the Minister of Veterans Affairs please update the House on this important promise?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie, who makes an outstanding contribution to the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Like all Canadians, our government wants the care provided to veterans to be based on the latest scientific data, and we all want to have access to that data.

I am therefore pleased to inform the House that the report of the independent scientific committee on veterans' health is now available on the Veterans Affairs website.

I invite members of the veteran's affairs committee to have a look at the report and study it carefully.

* * *

● (1505)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives continue to fail to protect the health of Canadians. Now they are allowing general sale of energy shots with 200 milligrams of caffeine each. Two of these shots exceed the adult allowable caffeine dose. The U.S. is investigating deaths linked to energy drinks. Mexico banned the sales for anyone under age 18. The minister's own advisory committee asked her to limit drinks to

sales behind the counter in a pharmacy, yet she continues to ignore the advice. Lowering the limit of caffeine slightly is not enough.

Will the minister wake up and do her duty to protect the health of Canadians?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, Health Canada has been very clear that caffeinated energy drinks are not recommended for children. Our government announced a new approach to regulating energy drinks and would include limits on the level of caffeine in these products. It also includes improved labelling in order to support the consumers and parents in making informed choices. The new measures will help all Canadians make informed decisions about the amount of caffeine they consume.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development on December 4, 2012, the Minister of International Cooperation was unable to give us an idea of the number of projects he had approved under CIDA's partnerships program. He promised to forward that information to us.

Now it is February, and we are still waiting for his response.

What exactly is going on? Does the minister have something to hide or is the memo containing the information buried under a pile of projects awaiting approval on his desk?

[*English*]

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing about burying anything. We are quite open and transparent. All of our projects are online, available for the member to access. If she needs more information, we will be happy to provide it to her.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last month, the federal court ruled with respect to Métis and non-status Indians. As the court stated, this decision is not about “the interpretation or application of particular rights either under the Constitution or under specific agreements, nor is it about aboriginal rights”.

In regard to this litigation, could the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development please update the House on the next steps?

Points of Order

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government must ensure that programs and services for aboriginal peoples are fiscally sustainable. We continue to work in partnership to enhance the economic opportunities for Métis and non-status Indians. Given that the federal court decision raises complex issues, it is prudent for Canada to obtain a decision from a higher court. After careful consideration, Canada has filed an appeal and this case is now before the courts.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, eastern Canada is not the only part of the country experiencing the devastating effects of employment insurance reform.

Right here in the parliamentary restaurant, workers will get a taste of the minister's bitter pill. Every summer, employees are laid off from July to September while the House is closed. They will have to find lower-paying jobs within 100 kilometres. If they do not, their benefits will be cut.

The next time the minister goes for lunch, will she call those people bad guys, bad unemployed workers? If I were her, I would keep such thoughts to myself.

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP is talking nonsense yet again. We will help these people find jobs during the summer so that they can work and earn more money. Will that not be better for them and for their families?

That is why we have enhanced the job alert and job bank system to help them find new jobs. If they want to come back to Parliament to work in the fall, we will welcome them back.

* * *

● (1510)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, despite the Bloc Québécois motion calling on the government to protect the integrity of supply management, which was adopted unanimously here in the House, Ottawa is about to sacrifice some of the rights of dairy producers in its negotiations with the European Union. The federal government is prepared to allow the duty-free import of thousands of additional tonnes of cheese. This concession is clearly unacceptable.

Can the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food confirm that this is the case? Why is he refusing to talk to dairy producers at their annual conference? What does he have to hide?

[English]

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where is the hon. member's question is coming from? We have been clear in

every aspect of the CETA negotiations with the Europe Union. We regularly consult with provinces and industry.

Part of the member's question was about supply management, although he spoke so fast I could not hear it all. However, we certainly defended the supply managed sector.

The reality is that this is a good agreement for Canada and we will negotiate in the best interest of Canadians and only sign a deal that is in our best interest.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister indicated that the electoral boundary commissions actually seek participation of political parties, members of Parliament and the public in their process, the member for Toronto—Danforth got up and said that the non-partisan commissions expect non-interference from the political parties and that no party with a basic sense of ethics would interfere.

I thought I would check it out. The Prime Minister did refer to certain—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Peter Van Loan: I am tabling some documents, and I am just explaining the documents. He referred to submissions having been made by members of the NDP. I started on the east coast, and I have here a submission to the boundary commission that I would like to table from the NDP member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl. I have another submission from the NDP member Mr. Jack Harris. I apologize. I meant the member for St. John's East—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. There is so much noise, I do not know what members are complaining about. The minister knows he cannot use names. He needs to refer to ridings or titles.

I assume the minister is seeking to table some documents. It is very tough to hear.

Are they in both official languages?

Hon. Peter Van Loan: They are in both official languages. In the second document I was submitting I inadvertently read the MP's name. He is the NDP MP for St. John's East. I apologize for reading his name in the House.

This is also a submission respecting boundaries. I have only started on the east coast. I have only done Newfoundland, but so far 100% of the NDP MPs have tabled such submissions on the boundary process.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to the alleged point of order, these submissions were made by members of Parliament, not by political parties.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, 10 reports of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the following activities: the 261st session of the IPU Executive Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, from September 8 and 9, 2011; the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group in Paris, France, September 12, 2011; the annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations in New York, United States of America, November 28 and 29, 2011; the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, United States of America, February 29, 2011; the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group in Paris, France, March 5, 2012; the 264th session of the IPU Executive Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, August 29 and 30, 2012; the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group in Paris, France, September 17, 2012; the 127th IPU assembly and related meetings in Québec City, Canada, October 21 to 26, 2012; the Annual 2012 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, Back to basics: Connecting politics and trade, in Geneva, Switzerland, November 15 and 16, 2012; and the annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations, New York, United States of America, December 6 and 7, 2012.

• (1515)

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian Delegation of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association respecting its participation to the fourth part of the 2012 Ordinary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and mission to Dublin, Ireland, which is the next president of the Council of the European Union, held in Dublin, Ireland and Strasbourg, France from October 1 to 10, 2012.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, 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 meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Inari, Finland, November 13, 2012.

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition wherein the petitioners raise the issue that water levels in Lake Huron have dropped four to five feet since 1999. A potential solution could be building compensating structures along the St. Clair River to offset the increased outflow caused by historic dredging activities.

Here are some of the benefits that pertain to their economy: allowing freighters to increase carrying capacity, saving millions of dollars; preserving biodiversity; maintaining public docks and

recreational amenities; and allowing homeowners to efficiently have access to water.

[Translation]

The petition calls on the government to take action on dropping water levels in the Great Lakes, specifically Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

[English]

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ALFALFA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

In the first petition the petitioners request a moratorium on genetically modified alfalfa.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with a subject near and dear to my heart, which is the enshrining of property rights for Ontario residents in the Constitution.

The petitioners point out that property rights are a hallmark of a free society, that property rights, property ownership and the use of enjoyment of property, ought not be taken away from individuals without some sort of compensation. The petitioners ask for this to be enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They ask that this be done using the section 43 amending formula in which both the House and the Ontario legislature adopt an amendment. The model for this is section 16.1 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was adopted in New Brunswick about 20 years ago.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians from my own riding of Guelph, southwest Ontario and across Canada, who wish to register their concerns regarding the impacts of genetically modified organisms. Since we cannot be entirely sure what the impact of licensing and release of certain genetically modified crops will be on other crops, farmers, and our exports, the petitioners request a moratorium on the licensing and release of new GMOs and request an independent review of existing GMOs that are currently in the Canadian marketplace.

SHARK FINNING

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

In the first petition the petitioners are calling for an importation ban on shark fin to Canada. The practice of shark finning results in an estimated 73 million sharks a year being killed for their fins alone. Over one-third of all shark species are threatened with extinction as a result of shark finning. Measures must be taken to stop the global practice of shark finning and to ensure the responsible conservation and management of sharks.

Routine Proceedings

EXPERIMENTAL LAKES AREA

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I submit a petition concerning saving the ELA, Canada's leading freshwater research station. The petitioners call upon the government to reverse the decision to close the ELA research station and continue to staff and provide financial resources to the ELA at the current or higher levels of commitment.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ALFALFA

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition on behalf of hundreds of my constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country regarding a moratorium on GM alfalfa. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to impose a moratorium on the release of genetically modified alfalfa in order to allow a proper review of the impact on farmers in Canada.

• (1520)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition that is tabled on behalf of hundreds of residents from my riding of Sudbury, from around Sudbury and Nickel Belt, and residents on Manitoulin Island.

The petitioners are calling upon the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to address the declining water levels we are seeing in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. State water levels in Lake Huron have dropped four feet to five feet since 1999. It has also been in the media today that this is a big concern.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to this House wherein the petitioners state that Canada's 400-year-old definition of human being says that a child does not become a human being until the moment of complete birth, contrary to 21st century medical evidence, and that Parliament has a solemn duty to reject any law that says some human beings are not human. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons and Parliament to confirm that every human being is recognized by Canadian law as human, by amending section 223 of the Criminal Code in such a way as to reflect 21st century medical evidence.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too wish to table petitions from Ontario residents calling for action by the federal Minister of the Environment, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of Natural Resources and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to take expedited action to protect the Great Lakes. In the case of Lake Huron, that lake has dropped more than five feet. I have personally witnessed this drop over time while visiting friends in Georgian Bay. It has a major impact on navigation and ecology. We implore the government to take action.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to begin, I would like to thank Ms. Thompson for sending me this petition and for getting so many signatures.

The petition calls on the Government of Canada to accept the science of climate change and table a comprehensive climate change plan, to identify the current value of government buildings and infrastructure, to determine the potential effects of climate change and extreme weather conditions on these assets and, finally, to project the costs of protecting these assets from climate change.

[*English*]

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions. The first one is from petitioners who are calling on the federal government to build speed bumps along the St. Clair River because they are worried about the drop in Lake Huron's water level. By doing so, it would allow freighters to increase carrying capacity as they move from the shipping channel, saving the industry tens of millions of dollars a year. It will restore and sustain the tourism industry on the Great Lakes. It will work to restore property values, and it would preserve the biodiversity of the Great Lakes.

PARKS CANADA

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): The second petition I am submitting is from residents who are very worried that the hours of operation of the Rideau Canal and the Trent-Severn Waterway have been reduced. They are calling on Parks Canada to return these two sites to the 2011 operating hours and length of seasons in order for all Canadians to safely enjoy these waterways.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is from Canadians who are worried about our environment. They are asking the Government of Canada to legislate a ban on bulk oil tanker traffic on the B.C. north coast. They are worried that the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline would carry oil over 1,000 kilometres, from the Alberta oil sands to the coastline, and would cause problems for the B.C. coastline.

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first is from petitioners in Chilliwack, Vancouver and other locations in British Columbia, supporting my private member's bill, Bill C-442, which calls for the creation of a national Lyme disease strategy. I am hoping for support across all sides of this House.

• (1525)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, second, I am presenting a petition from residents of Vancouver calling for the current administration to respect what had become a moratorium, since 1972, on supertanker oil traffic on the B.C. coastline, and to make this permanent and legislate it.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions.

*Government Orders***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I seek support for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study on the Defence of North America, twelve members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States of America, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Victoria, British Columbia, in the Winter-Spring of 2013, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I seek support for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study on the Defence of North America, twelve members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Washington, D. C., United States of America, in the Winter-Spring of 2013, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

FASTER REMOVAL OF FOREIGN CRIMINALS ACT

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC) moved that Bill C-43, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for giving me one last opportunity to talk about Bill C-43, an important bill that will enable us to keep our communities safer.

This bill was part of the Conservative Party's election platform during the most recent election. It will improve our immigration system by speeding up removal of foreign criminals.

I have already had a chance to summarize the essence, the key features of this bill. However, during recent debates in the House, some MPs have raised some concerns about the bill and have criticized it. I would like to use my 20 minutes to respond to all of those concerns and criticisms.

● (1530)

[*English*]

Rather than reviewing the bill in the way I did at second reading and at report stage, I think it would be more profitable for the House if I respond to individual criticisms made by members in the debate, particularly at report stage in the House.

First, I will go through the points that I have heard raised in no particular order. One of the criticisms suggested that the bill will divide families, causing emotional and financial damage, especially for children whose parents would be removed from the country as a result of the bill.

The first has over 2,000 signatures, primarily British Columbians from Vancouver, Revelstoke and Prince George, calling for stronger animal cruelty legislation. They call upon the House of Commons to work with the provinces to ensure federal and provincial laws are constructed and enforced, which will ensure that those responsible for abusing, neglecting, torturing or otherwise harming animals are held appropriately accountable.

The second petition has over 400 names in support of my bill, Bill C-322, which calls upon the government to enact laws to prohibit the importation or exportation of horses for slaughter for human consumption, as well as horse meat products for human consumption.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too have some petitions concerning the water level of the Great Lakes. This particularly affects my communities of Killarney and French River. As my colleagues have said already, there are solutions to this problem.

I would like to inform the House that there has been work planned for almost 100 years. The first work order for compensating structures goes back to 1917, but was never acted on by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. If action was taken as soon as possible, it would have economic considerations, ecological advantages and would help the local communities.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Wascana on a point of order.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, in the flow of events of routine proceedings, there was some discussion I understand among the parties earlier pertaining to travel motions that might relate to some committees. I wonder if there is anything to report on that matter.

The Speaker: I do not have advance notice of it.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

I remind members that under the current provisions of the Immigration Act, a foreign national who is given a custodial sentence by a Canadian criminal court of six months or longer is criminally inadmissible to Canada and a deportation order is issued for them. They have lost the right, the privilege, of living in Canada by virtue of their serious criminal activity and the finding of a Canadian court in that respect. That was not a decision made by the government, by law-abiding citizens or by the Minister of Immigration. The decision to commit a serious criminal act is the decision of the criminal, who must be held responsible for his act.

When Canada has opened the doors of generosity and opportunity to a foreign national, essentially all we ask to maintain that privilege in perpetuity is that they live in Canada for two out of five years as a permanent resident or become a citizen or simply do not commit a serious criminal act. To suggest that the government would somehow be responsible for “dividing family members” if a serious foreign criminal is removed is perverse. The decision to become inadmissible, to be deported, is a decision the criminal has taken by virtue of his act, a decision that has been confirmed following due process by a Canadian court of law.

Should that permanent resident being removed following deportation have family members in Canada, they are not required to stay here. They are welcome to go back to their country. The notion that Canada is dividing a family is absurd. There is a certain, I would call it, soft bigotry implicit in the attitude that people can only stay in Canada and they cannot go back to any other country in the world with their family members. How condescending to suggest that people cannot pursue fulfilling lives in other countries around the world. I reject that categorically. I say that if people commit serious crimes, they have lost the privilege of staying in Canada as a permanent resident.

Second, we hear from members of the opposition, and this is one of the more hysterical arguments from the member for Winnipeg North, that the government is somehow characterizing hundreds of thousands of permanent residents as criminals with the bill, when the exact inverse is true. The vast majority of immigrants whom we welcome as permanent residents are law-abiding people, who would never dream of committing a serious crime and who expect that those who do should lose the privilege of staying in Canada.

As a government, every year on average we admit 257,000 permanent residents. It is the highest sustained level of immigration in Canadian history and the highest per capita levels of immigration in the developed world, adding almost 0.8% to our population per year. That is 260,000 permanent residents.

However, over the past five years we see on average about 800 permanent residents per year who commit serious violent crimes that carry penal sentences of six months or more. In 2010, it was 849; in 2009, 1,086; in 2011, 564. It is about 800 on average. That is a tiny fraction of a per cent of the number of permanent residents in Canada. At any given time we have about 700,000 to 800,000 permanent residents, so about one-tenth of a per cent actually commit serious crimes. Therefore, to suggest that the bill has a general application to all or most permanent residents is perverse. To

the contrary, it focuses only on the tiny minority who commit serious crimes.

Let me then follow up on the argument of the opposition that the bar for the accelerated removal of foreign criminals is too low. I am told by the member for Winnipeg North that if a teenager is caught growing six marijuana plants he or she would be removed from Canada. That is ridiculous. The relevant criminal offence is possession of narcotics with the intention of trafficking. The member also gave the bizarre hypothetical scenario that a foreign teenager travelling to the United States and acquiring illegal ID to buy a drink at a bar when he or she is under age would somehow be deported from Canada.

I will say this. I was an opposition critic and I know it is difficult. There is a lot of legislation and it is often complex material. However, I at least made an effort to familiarize myself with the bills that I was responsible for debating. I would read the bill and the relevant research notes. I would commend that practice to the member for Winnipeg North. He might find his interventions in the debate taken somewhat more seriously if he actually bothered to read the legislation, because section 24 of C-43 states:

For the purpose of subsection (1), serious criminality must be with respect to a crime that was punished in Canada by a term of imprisonment of at least six months or that is described in paragraph 36....

It states “punished in Canada”. Being arrested for a misdemeanour in the United States, such as buying alcohol under age as a minor, is not being punished in Canada and it is certainly not punishable in Canada by a term of six months or more.

I do not know why the member and the Liberal Party in particular keep diminishing the severity of the crimes that would be affected by the six-month bar in Bill C-43, which by the way already exists in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act as the benchmark for serious criminality leading to a deportation order. In 2010-11, custodial sentences were imposed in about one-third of guilty adult criminal court cases completed, similar to the proportion seen over the past decade. In 2010-11, the majority, 86%, of all sentences to custody were relatively short, at six months or less. Only about 10% of custodial sentences were sentenced to a period of six months to two years less a day, and 4% received a sentence of two or more years.

The crimes that would be affected by the bill by removing the IAD appeal, which is used as a delay tactic for deportation, would be those sentenced to six months or two years less a day, that is, 10% of custodial sentences. Again, only 33% of criminal convictions lead to a custodial sentence. We are talking about 10% of the most serious crimes committed in Canada. In fact, it is even less than that. It is the 10% of those that get custodial sentences, so we are talking about the most serious crimes.

Government Orders

•(1535)

The opposition keeps trying to pretend that the benchmark is low, but in fact in the real criminal justice world, the sorts of crimes that are committed by foreign nationals that we are seeking to address in the bill include: assault with a weapon, carrying a sentence of 13 months in jail in one case, two years less a day in another; the possession of a schedule 1 substance for the purposes of trafficking, two years less a day; sexual assault, 18 months in jail in one case; break and enter, including possession of tools for breaking and entering and theft, 13 months; robbery, 18 months in jail; multiple counts of forgery, et cetera.

We are talking about serious crimes and I have repeatedly referenced the cases of Vietnamese gangster, Jackie Tran; the Guyanese criminal, Patrick De Florimonte; the Romanian fraudster responsible for forgery and conspiracy to commit fraud, Gheorghe Capra; Cesar Guzman from Peru, who sexually assaulted a senior citizen. The Liberals would allow that man to still access an IAD appeal and delay his removal by four years. Then there is the case of the assault with a weapon, drug possession, drug trafficking and failure to comply with court orders of Jeyachandran Balasubramaniam, who managed to delay his deportation for seven years.

Canadians do not think that is acceptable. To the Liberals, sexually assaulting a senior apparently is not a serious crime. That is explicitly their position on the bill, that it is not a serious crime and that a foreign national who has raped a senior citizen should be able to delay his deportation. We respectfully disagree. We suggest that the moment the penal sentence is done, in this case that of Mr. Guzman, the person should be taken in a paddy wagon from prison to the plane and removed from Canada because they have lost the right to be here.

The opposition also says that the bill strips due process away from the accused. Again, that could only be said by people who have not read the bill. The people affected by losing the IAD appeal in the bill have already received all of the natural justice and due process available in the Canadian criminal justice system, fully compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They have an appeal right. They can appeal their criminal conviction. They can appeal their penal sentence. All we are saying is that once Canada's fair criminal justice system has decided they are a serious criminal, they should not be able to appeal their deportation order because they have abused the privilege of staying in Canada.

The member for Winnipeg North keeps suggesting that one case we raised, that of Clinton Gayle, is not relevant to the bill. Clinton Gayle was a Jamaican criminal, a repeat criminal, who, after years of avoiding deportation, murdered Toronto police constable Todd Baylis and shot another police officer.

Let me be clear: On November 6, 1989, Clinton Gayle was convicted of the offence of possession of a narcotic for the purpose of trafficking. He was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of two years less one day. Those are the kinds of sentences that have led to the IAD appeals. Often courts have given sentences of two years less a day specifically to give access to IAD appeals. Indeed, Mr. Gayle used that loophole and on March 1, 1991, the deportation order was filed against him and on that same day he filed an appeal against the decision. It took 16 months, until June 29, 1992, for the Immigration

Appeal Division of the IRB to dismiss the appeal of his deportation order.

•(1540)

It is true that after 1992, through incompetence on the part of law enforcement agencies, he was not removed. He ought to have been removed. However, here is the point. If Bill C-43 had been in place back in 1991-1992, the paddy wagon would have gone to the prison on the last day of Mr. Gayle's custodial sentence, put him in the back and taken him to Lester B. Pearson Airport and put him on a plane back to Jamaica. He would never have been allowed to get out on our streets in the first place and Todd Baylis would be alive today.

Yes, he ought to have been removed in 1992, but he never should have been able to delay his deportation in the first place. That is the point. That is why the Canadian Association of Police supports Bill C-43. It is why the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police endorses the faster removal of foreign criminals act.

[*Translation*]

It is also why victim advocacy groups support this bill.

[*English*]

Here is a lovely one from the opposition. We heard them quote Amnesty International and the Canadian Bar Association expressing concern that the bill would no longer allow access to applications for permanent residency on humanitarian and compassionate grounds for people who have been found to be involved in war crimes, crimes against humanity, serious human rights violations and organized criminality.

We are so generous, some would say generous to a fault, in our country that even many of these people have had access to our asylum system and that all of them benefit from what is called a pre-removal risk assessment prior to being removed. Everyone, even the most objectionable terrorists and organized criminals, gets some form of independent legal assessment on whether or not they would face risk if returned to the country of their nationality. That is how we discharge our responsibility under the convention against torture, the 1951 refugee convention and, indeed, the Charter of Rights.

[*Translation*]

We have an obligation not to remove foreigners whose safety could be at risk if they are deported.

[*English*]

We have a process for this. However, the humanitarian and compassionate process is in addition to the pre-removal risk assessment and in addition to the asylum process.

Only the NDP and Liberals could suggest that a member of the mafia, that someone involved in serious human rights violations should have special consideration on humanitarian grounds.

Government Orders

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Consider Léon Mugesera, a Rwandan national responsible for genocide in his country. According to our legal system and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Mr. Mugesera was one of the people responsible for inciting the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan civilians 20 years ago. It took us 21 years to deport Léon Mugesera.

I believe that one of the reasons for the delay is that he applied for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds twice. Léon Mugesera showed no humanitarian compassion toward victims of the Rwandan genocide. In my opinion, Canada is in no way obliged to provide special consideration on humanitarian grounds to a person who has committed genocide.

[*English*]

Quite frankly, I encourage the opposition parties to reconsider their foolhardy opposition to the bill, because if they do not, I look forward to letting Canadians know at the next election about the position they have taken.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those were interesting remarks from the minister. Many things come to mind, and I will be able to expand on those when I have the opportunity to address the bill.

There is no doubt that the Liberal Party has been very clear about individuals who are permanent residents and who commit crimes of the nature the minister has made reference to. We, too, want to see these individuals deported. Serious crimes should be taken seriously. I have also advocated, and will continue to do so, that there needs to be a consequence to all crimes committed.

The minister gets really focused on issues to try to generate the media that he seeks out on a daily, if not weekly, basis. I want to ask the minister a question. We have foreign nationals who are in Canada without status. In the past I have asked how many of those foreign nationals in Canada do not have status and the minister does not know. Many of those foreign nationals without status actually commit crimes.

What action has the minister taken in the last six years to deal specifically with the number of foreign nationals in Canada who do not have status and who commit crimes? What action has the minister taken with regard to those people?

• (1550)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, foreign nationals whether they have status or not in Canada are affected by the same provisions for inadmissibility and deportation as exist, whether they are permanent residents or out of status.

First, we have substantially increased resources to the Canada Border Services Agency by some 800 the number of front-line CBSA officers. They are the people responsible for removing foreign national criminals, for example, from Canada. As a result of the increase in those resources, we have seen the number of removals go from about 13,000 to over 16,000. There has been a huge increase in the number of removals, including of convicted foreign criminals, be they out of status or with permanent residency.

Second, the member is quite right, and I grant him this point, to criticize the government for not knowing how many out of status foreign nationals are present in Canada, which is precisely why we are now moving forward with the introduction of an exit information system. It should have been done a long time ago. It should have been done years ago, I grant that. It should have been done under the previous Liberal government, but it was not.

We are getting that right. We will now know how many foreign nationals are illegally in Canada and therefore will be able to remove them much more efficiently.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the House that we supported the bill at first reading so that it would be sent to committee. I would also like to state that the NDP will never be in favour of keeping serious criminals who are not Canadian citizens in Canada.

That said, I would still like to talk about the minister's discretionary powers. The bill releases the minister from the responsibility of considering, on humanitarian grounds, any children who would be affected by potential deportation.

What can the minister tell us about how the best interests of children will be served by this bill?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who in the NDP research section is responsible for this myth, but the bill does not address the removal of minors.

Perhaps what she meant to say is that after this bill is passed, we would not accept applications on humanitarian grounds from war criminals, those involved in genocide or members of the Mafia. Perhaps she is worried about their children.

All I can say is that in our system, a child's best interests are always considered. Once this bill is passed, we will not accept applications on humanitarian grounds from the worst criminals in the world.

[*English*]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to my constituents in Mississauga East—Cooksville, the riding I proudly represent here. It is a very diverse riding. There are a lot of new immigrants who are very hard-working and law-abiding.

I have heard some criticism of the bill from them, but not the type of criticism members have heard from the opposition during the debate. Many people actually think the bill is too lenient, that it does not go far enough.

I would like to ask the minister for his opinion on that.

• (1555)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, that is certainly the bulk of criticism I have heard, particularly in my work with Canada's cultural and immigrant communities.

Government Orders

I cannot say how many fora, round tables, discussions, public meetings, interviews and open line calls I have been on. There have been hundreds where these kinds of issues have come up. Almost without exception, I have heard from people who chose Canada as their home an attitude of no tolerance toward those who have come here and committed crimes.

Frankly, I admit the bill has been criticized by a number of people for not taking a sufficiently robust approach toward the accelerated removal of foreign criminals. We are seeking to maintain a balance.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned that if permanent residents committed a crime that received more than six months or more as punishment in Canada, the government wanted to deport them, but it was not separating families, that the rest of the family had a choice to stay here or leave the country.

As an example, if children are brought into our country when they are three years old, they grow up here, spend their entire lives in Canada and because of their home country or because of their understanding, assume they are a naturalized citizen. Then they have their own children. Therefore, their children are Canadian citizens and grow up in our country as citizens. Then the original children, who are still a permanent residents, are now being deported. Is the government now saying that those children, who are Canadian citizens, have the choice to leave the country if they want to or they can go live in another country?

The original people are now being sent to another country, which is not home for them. They do not know anything about that country. They grew up in the country, lived as Canadians, but did not take out citizenship. Is that fair?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, what is not fair is committing a serious crime and expecting there will not be consequences for it. What is not fair is victimizing Canadians, sometimes repeatedly, and violating the privilege of one's residency.

Under Canadian law, there are, and always have been, two categories of nationals under immigration law. They are either Canadian citizens or foreign nationals. Foreign nationals who obtain permanent residency can remain in Canada in perpetuity as long as they are residents here for two out of five years and do not commit a serious crime.

The question from the opposition implies that the government should somehow create a third category. We should somehow automatically grant citizenship to people who do not even bother to apply for it, who may not qualify for it.

If that is the position of the NDP members, I invite them to put forward a bill proposing to do just that. I suspect it would not get much support.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to share my time with the hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. member for Newton—North Delta have the unanimous consent of the House to share her time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again to take part in this important debate.

As I mentioned at report stage, the New Democrats wanted to work across party lines to ensure the speedy removal of serious non-citizen criminals. To that end, I introduced nine reasonable amendments to the bill at committee to curb the excessive powers of the minister and restore some due process. However, they were all rejected by the Conservative majority.

I will give some examples because it would be instructive for the House to hear exactly what we dealt with.

With one amendment in particular, we proposed to do two very different things to limit the overly broad ministerial power to declare a foreign national inadmissible based on public policy considerations.

First, we suggested taking the minister's own guidelines, which he presented to the immigration committee, and codify them in the legislation word for word. When the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration visited us on October 24, he even suggested this approach when he said, "the committee may recommend that we codify these guidelines in the bill".

Second, and perhaps more important, the amendment introduced a new threshold for the exercise of this power. Specifically, the minister must have reason to believe that a foreign national would meet one of the listed requirements in the guidelines. Despite the minister suggesting this course of action, his Conservative MPs voted it down. We can see that they are not interested in working together to get a better result.

We also proposed a number of reasonable amendments to restore the ability of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to consider humanitarian and compassionate grounds. By rejecting these amendments, the best interests of children implicated in these cases will no longer be considered.

In its brief to the immigration committee, Amnesty International put its concerns this way:

Eliminating the possibility of humanitarian relief for these types of people runs afoul of international law. Denying individuals access to this process might result in them being sent to torture...or persecution.

The Canadian Council for Refugees pointed out that:

These inadmissibility sections...are extremely broad and catch people who have neither been charged with, nor convicted of, any crime, and who represent no security threat or danger to the public.

It is also worth pointing out that the TCRI, which represents 142 community organizations in Quebec that assist immigrants and refugees, submitted that:

—this complete exclusion of H and C considerations in these contexts is contrary to Canada's international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which among other things provides protection of family rights and security of the person...it also violates Canada's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child...

Government Orders

While we may agree that dangerous violent criminals should be removed from Canada as quickly as possible, we had hoped the Conservatives would also recognize that it was important to ensure the minister could still consider the protection of children in these cases. The amendments we moved would have helped dull one of the sharper and more mean-spirited edges of the bill.

The committee studying the bill heard a number of concerns about provisions in the bill that increased the penalty for inadmissibility for misrepresentation from two years to five years and precluded a foreign national from applying for permanent residency status in that period. In fact, many witnesses said that five years was overly punitive, especially when misrepresentation was made by inadvertent error.

In its submission, the Canadian Council for Refugees pointed out that a five-year inadmissibility was excessively harsh in cases of minor infractions when a person was acting under some form of duress. It offered two of many examples where this would be an unfair punishment: first, a woman who did not declare a husband or child because of social and family pressures, and sometimes fear; and second, an applicant who was not personally responsible for the misrepresentation because of an unscrupulous agent or even family member filling out the form for them.

•(1600)

It is the second case I find particularly troubling. I believe that we must make sure to punish those who are criminally misrepresenting themselves, not the victims of shady consultants.

While the CCR recommended that we simply delete this clause, once again, being the NDP, we proposed a moderate alternative. Our amendment created an exception for permanent residents and foreign nationals who are inadmissible for misrepresentation that is demonstrably unintentional. We thought that struck the right balance. Yet once again, there was no movement from the other side on this very reasonable change.

Much has been said in this House about the section in Bill C-43 that redefines serious criminality as a crime punishable by a term of imprisonment of at least six months, which has the effect of precluding access to an appeal. I want to make it very clear to my colleagues across the way that our major concern with these provisions is that they limit due process for permanent Canadian residents, many of whom have been here their whole lives and know nothing about the culture or language of the country to which they would be deported.

With all of this in mind, I moved an amendment at committee stage to mitigate some of the worst effects of this clause. The amendment did two things, which I will address separately.

First, I made a modest proposal that we exempt conditional sentences from the terms of imprisonment, thereby ensuring that convictions that are not as serious as more egregious crimes, as is the case with conditional sentencing, are not caught by the provision. This was a suggestion made by the Canadian Bar Association and others during their testimony to the immigration committee.

In fact, the national president of the Canadian Somali Congress told the committee that we should definitely make an exception for a conditional sentence versus jail. In its current form, the bill does not

do that. There could be a situation where a permanent resident, facing jail time, may be sentenced by a judge, in the community's interest, to a conditional sentence due to the fact that the person is gainfully employed. Because of the nature of conditional sentences, conditional sentences take longer to fulfill. Ironically, that would actually lead to the capture of this person with this legislation, because it would exceed six months.

The second thing this amendment was intended to do was restore access to appeal for those convicted of crimes outside of Canada or for those who have committed acts outside Canada. I believe it is the Immigration Appeal Division that is the appropriate body to properly evaluate these cases.

We know that in many countries, simply being a member of the opposition party can get an individual charged and convicted of a serious crime. Due process to evaluate these cases is essential in a free and democratic country like Canada, another moderate NDP proposal struck down by the Conservatives.

The go-it-alone, ignore-all-experts approach of this government was on full display as the Conservatives voted down all the official opposition's very reasonable amendments. New Democrats wanted to work across party lines to ensure the speedy removal of serious, non-citizen criminals. However, the Conservatives did not want it to work that way, and they did not work with us to make this legislation better.

Canadians want this Parliament to work together, and they want us to work together in the public interest. Unfortunately, Conservatives refused an opportunity to do just that.

Once again, before I hear speeches about how much my colleagues and I love criminals, love people who are engaged in all kinds of crime and want to protect the criminals, let me make it very clear. We were clear at committee and have been every time we have spoken in this House: We are committed to expediting the process of deportation of serious criminals who put Canada and Canadians at risk. However, we cannot stand by while due process is missing, while so much power is enshrined in the hands of a minister and while we stand in contravention of not only the UN but possibly of our own charter as well.

Government Orders

•(1605)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find the last point hilarious, because the member criticizes me all the time for not using discretionary powers more often. I am constantly lobbied. Do people see the MPs who gather around me every day after question period? They are asking me to exercise ministerial discretion, positive discretion. They want positive discretion used by the minister for folks they would like to see enter the country, but they do not want me to use negative discretion to ensure that, for example, anti-Semites and people who provoke violent homophobia cannot enter the country if they are otherwise admissible. We are just looking for a balance between ministerial discretion positively and negatively exercised.

The member once again raises this canard about limiting access to the humanitarian and compassionate applications, but she never mentions for whom. We are talking about people who are inadmissible for human or international rights violations, under section 35, for serious criminality, under section 36, and for organized criminality, under section 37.

I have a point-blank question for the member for Surrey. Does she believe that members of the Mafia should be able to apply to stay in Canada on humanitarian grounds? Does she believe that people like Léon Mugesera, who was responsible for inciting the Rwanda genocide, should get special humanitarian consideration, yes or no?

•(1610)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, the minister does have discretion, especially when we are looking at visa applications and things. Many of us go to him because we cannot understand the reason for rejection, in many cases, so we go to him for clarification.

What we are looking at in this piece of legislation is a concentration of power whereby the minister can deny entry to visit Canada to anybody based on public policy. Public policy pretty much captures the whole universe.

My respect for the minister rose when he came to committee, put out some principles, and said that he could live with them. He urged the committee to examine them and put them in at committee. Unfortunately, his colleagues did not even support him in that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the minister started off his opening remarks, he talked about the families having an option. If a family member breaks the law, the whole family can leave the country. That is what he is implying.

The minister might want to think about what it is I am saying. Imagine a family of three or four that immigrates from country X to Canada. They have been living in Canada for 15 or more years. A child who was three years old at the time is now 19 or 20. That individual commits a serious crime and ultimately has to serve seven months in jail. That individual is going to be deported if he or she did not receive citizenship. The minister's answer seems to be that the family can still stick together. All they have to do, all of them, is move back to the country of origin as a family unit.

Do you think this is an appropriate answer coming from a minister? Do you feel that this legislation would lead to families being broken apart?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I presume that the hon. member for Winnipeg North is not asking the Chair that question. I would remind all hon. members to refer to one another by riding names.

The hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Mr. Speaker, a serious concern we have with this legislation is the fact that right now, anybody who gets a sentence of even six months can be deported, even today, under the current legislation. However, that person has a right to appeal. Before they did not have the right to appeal after two years. Now the threshold has been dropped to six months. What is being taken away by the bill is the right to appeal for those who receive a sentence of six months to up to two years. We have serious concerns around that and the lack of due process.

Punishing the whole family does not seem like natural justice to me. We have to look at the impact on the whole family. Sometimes the family may not even be aware of some of the crimes being committed by the individual.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we resume debate, 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 Nanaimo—Cowichan, the Canada Post Corporation; the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, Foreign Investment; and the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, National Defence.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me time to speak to this bill.

Last week, after introducing a bill notable for its repressive and primitive ideology, supporting its position with rare exceptions and rejecting the official opposition's amendments, the government imposed a time allocation motion to cut off debate on Bill C-43. This behaviour is unacceptable. Clearly, the government wanted to muzzle MPs who would have liked to talk about this bill.

I believe that it is our duty to condemn the government's attitude at all stages of the legislative process for Bill C-43. The government has been narrow-minded, its arguments demagogic, its ideology backward and its approach undemocratic.

Rather than listen to criticisms put forward by the official opposition, groups advocating for the rights of refugees, and immigration lawyers, the government chose to impose its will unilaterally at the expense of genuine democratic debate. The Conservatives are flouting the humanitarian tradition that has distinguished Canada for decades, choosing instead to undermine the principle of basic human rights.

We agree that non-citizens who commit serious crimes in Canada must be dealt with quickly. However, we are concerned about the fact that this bill gives the minister vast discretionary power without appropriate checks and balances.

Government Orders

This approach is all the more regrettable given that Bill C-43 will soon have serious negative consequences on many fronts. First, the number of deportations will rise sharply, and some of those deportations will be outrageous. The most striking example of this is the measure stating that offenders' family members may be affected by deportation policies. Many individuals will be deported to countries where they have no ties just because the government refuses to recognize that the proposed measures are excessive and will short-circuit the usual legal process.

It is also important to note that Bill C-43 substantially broadens the notion of serious criminality, now characterized as crime punishable by a sentence of six months or more, conditional or otherwise, regardless of whether the crime was violent. For example, a first offence punishable by a six-month conditional sentence—the offender will not actually spend time in jail—will still result in the deportation of the offender.

The minister will bring in a double punishment, accompanied by removal and no chance for appeal regarding the deportation, which goes against our judicial principles.

Furthermore, as Alex Neve from Amnesty International Canada said, the lack of relief mechanisms means that the circumstances will not be taken into account. This type of situation shows that Bill C-43 makes no sense.

Amy Casipullai, the senior policy and public education coordinator for the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, said that the restrictions could affect more visible minorities because of the racial profiling certain police forces engage in. Not only will visible minorities be more likely to be arrested, but now, they and their families could also be removed without appeal, without any recourse. But the Conservatives chose to ignore this reality and instead accuse the witness of siding with criminals.

Similarly, a number of experts, including lawyer Jean Lash, have said that people with mental illnesses sometimes commit crimes as a result of their illness. Michael Bossin, a refugee lawyer, also argues that people with mental illnesses would face undue hardship if they were deported to a country where mental illness is often stigmatized.

● (1615)

Since refugees from war-torn countries are more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress, it makes sense that people are concerned about how Bill C-43 will affect them. However, the Conservatives are stubbornly ignoring the reality on the ground and would rather disregard this aspect.

Other restrictions imposed by Bill C-43 make absolutely no sense. If people are prohibited from being accompanied to an interview with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, they are prevented from receiving advice and support throughout the process. This can clearly be a hardship for them.

Bill C-43 would also indiscriminately standardize the consequences of a misrepresentation. Whether or not a misrepresentation is deliberate, it results in a five-year inadmissibility.

All of the new discretionary powers granted to the minister, without any checks and balances, will create the potential for abuse.

We proposed an amendment to require the minister to be accountable and transparent regarding these discretionary powers. Unfortunately the Conservatives rejected this suggestion.

Based on public policy considerations, a concept that is not defined in the act, the minister will be able to label someone as a threat without any justification, without having to explain his decisions and, most importantly, without any checks and balances.

That is what happens with a bill that ignores criticisms, suggestions from the official opposition and comments from outside witnesses.

Bill C-43 will have disastrous results because of the significant flaws in the bill. It restricts the right of appeal without regard for the repercussions, curtails refugees' rights without consideration of our legal principles, expands the minister's discretionary power without any checks and balances and establishes a policy of mass deportation without consideration of the circumstances.

Instead of tackling the problems of serious criminality, the government is imposing a set of measures that will cause significant harm to individuals who do not deserve this type of treatment.

The Conservatives' determination to go it alone, to decide unilaterally and to avoid debate and discussion will have consequences. The first of these will be a defective policy whose flaws will surface quickly.

Bill C-43 is another stain on the Conservatives' immigration record.

The government's message is the following: the Conservatives will consider anyone who is not a bona fide Canadian to be a foreigner who cannot make a mistake. Even worse, not only can foreigners not make a mistake, but they will also be deported and, with this bill, their family can be booted out as well.

Canada has traditionally considered itself a country that welcomes immigrants and a leader in the protection of basic human rights.

The Conservatives are betraying this tradition by introducing a bill rooted in rhetoric that turns back the clock and makes unwarranted changes that will have serious consequences.

● (1620)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I hear this kind of speech, I have to wonder whether it was written by one of the NDP's young staff members who are part of the Québec solidaire party. That speech had an appallingly demagogic tone.

It is completely ridiculous to insinuate that this bill is regressive and that it goes against basic human rights.

Does the hon. member really believe that a war criminal, someone who has no respect for human rights, should be able to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds?

Government Orders

Did she speak about the victims of war criminals? Did she speak about the victims of the Rwandan genocide who complained to me that it took 21 years to deport Léon Mugesera, who was responsible for inciting it? Does she think it was reasonable for Mugesera, the person responsible for inciting the Rwandan genocide, to be able to submit two applications to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds?

I do not want a general answer. I think that the hon. member should provide a direct response.

Should Mr. Mugesera, who was responsible for inciting the Rwandan genocide, be able to invoke humanitarian and compassionate grounds?

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, the minister should look into the meaning of demagogic. I think it applies more to him than to my speech.

Our democracies have evolved in terms of basic rights. In the absence of proof to the contrary, real democracies have always sought to ensure that everyone's basic human rights are respected.

Bill C-43 does not respect the basic human rights of individuals.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from the numbers being provided by the minister and the parliamentary secretary over the last number weeks, we understand there are approximately 800 offences, serious crimes, being committed by permanent residents on average in any given year.

Does the member agree that there would be great deal of benefit if the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration got a report on those crimes by category? I ask because what we often hear is the extreme element. We do not necessarily know the proper context of those 800 crimes being committed. Does the member see any value in the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration looking into that?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé: Mr. Speaker, the government likes the headline effect. It exaggerates the significance of examples that are obviously exceptions. Bill C-43 is clearly the perfect way for the Conservatives to impose their ideology.

My colleague is absolutely right. Let us talk about facts, about solid evidence. It would be a good idea to analyze all of these different crimes and categorize them. That would provide more conclusive data on which to base an objective decision to implement this kind of bill.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address Bill C-43 this afternoon and to put on record what I believe is an important perspective.

First and foremost, if the minister genuinely wanted to get rid of foreign criminals or permanent residents who were committing all these crimes, I believe there is a lot more the minister could have done other than just bring in the legislation. We in the Liberal Party do believe that permanent residents who commit serious crimes

should be deported, and it should be done in a timely fashion. We do believe that. We are not, to quote some government members, supporting criminals staying in Canada indefinitely. At the end of the day, we believe that there needs to be consequences. It is not too much to ask people who are coming to Canada to behave in a good fashion. A vast majority of permanent residents have done that.

The Liberal Party, in its time in government, generously opened the doors to immigrants from around the world and advocated for responsible behaviour in Canada, and we will continue to do so.

The bill goes back to June of last year in the dying days of the session. The Minister of Immigration had a big press conference and he had all sorts of PowerPoint slides. The minister spared no cost on this. He wanted to make a powerful statement, which all Canadians needed to know, that the government is committed to the faster removal of foreign criminals. He loved the headline and he wanted every media outlet to report that fact.

Many experts, many different stakeholders have said the bill is so far-reaching that the minister has gone overboard. In reality, that is really what has happened. He has gone a little overboard. If the minister really wanted to do Canadians and all residents a favour, maybe he should invest a little more in our border services and in resources for immigration.

I asked him how many foreign nationals do we have in Canada today who are not here legally who are committing crimes. I applaud the Minister of Immigration. He gave a somewhat honest answer. He recognized that he did not know. He has been the minister for six years and he does not know. Crime is a really important agenda item for the government, apparently. Yet he has no idea how many foreign nationals are in Canada today, let alone the fact that he does not even know how many of those foreign nationals are committing crimes. Why? Because he is more focused on the bigger picture, the big headline.

That might be good possibly for future leadership bids, but in terms of serving Canadians, I would suggest that there is a lot more that the Minister of Immigration could have done to deal with this issue, which is important to Canadians and all residents who live here and call Canada their home. The minister could have adequately resourced our services so that the people who commit these hideous and serious crimes could be deported in a more timely fashion. That is what we expected from the Minister of Immigration.

We have a number of concerns about Bill C-43. One of them is using public policy to deny entry. The minister said, "It is okay. Trust me. I can determine what refugees are irregular arrivals". Members will remember that piece of legislation. The minister wanted that power. This is the minister who said, "It is okay. I can determine what country in the world is a safe country", even though we had other legislation that passed that said it should be dealt with by an advisory board made up of professionals, people who have expertise in a wide variety of issues such as human rights.

Government Orders

•(1630)

Now we have the minister, once again, wanting more power. He wants to be able to, through public policy, decide who should not be able to come to the country. One could say maybe that is just the Liberal Party talking and being critical of the minister but, no, all we have to do is look at what was said in the citizenship and immigration committee.

In committee Barb Jackman, a constitutional lawyer, said:

I have no doubt that the public policy grounds will lead to denying people admission on the basis of speech.

There were other individuals. This is a quote from the testimony of Michael Greene from the Canadian Bar Association on the same topic:

We believe this power is unlimited, unaccountable, un-Canadian, and unnecessary. It doesn't have a place in a free and democratic society that cherishes civil liberties and fundamental freedoms.

This is not the Liberal Party saying this, and contrary to what the minister likes to say, which is that these lawyers are all lefties, social activists and so forth, these are people who are committed enough to share their ideas and their thoughts when they recognize that the government has gone overboard and who take the time to come and make a presentation to our committee. We should appreciate that.

There are other issues. Misrepresentation is now increased, from two years to five years, in terms of when a person would actually be able to reapply for immigration purposes to come to Canada. Again, the minister says that if people are filling out the application, by God, they should be honest, and if they are honest, they do not have a problem. Therefore, why would someone oppose increasing the time penalty from two years to five years when someone has been dishonest?

I am sure that the minister is aware of things such as unintentional or innocent misrepresentation. I am sure the minister is aware of bad immigration lawyers and employment agencies that provide misinformation. It is not always the applicant who might be at fault.

However, in the legislation, the minister does not care about that. He is prepared to ignore that issue completely and say that it does not matter. He does not care why it might have appeared on the form. That person will have to wait five years because of something that they might not have even been aware of and, for all intents and purposes, they thought they were being completely honest and straightforward on the application. However, there is no extra consideration whatsoever being given to that. It is a mindset. This is something where the Conservatives and the Liberals really differ.

Liberals believe in immigration in the true sense of the word. We believe that immigration is what has helped build our country to what it is today. We do not believe that if people land in Canada they have to become citizens or they are not good citizens of our land. The current government believes that if people land in Canada and have been here for three years, they had better be getting their citizenship or they plant a seed of doubt in terms of why they would not be getting their citizenship, that they are not as good as the rest of us for not getting their citizenship. If we listen to the rhetoric and the many comments that come from the minister, one can easily draw that sort of a conclusion.

I raised the issue in terms of children and the issue of family breakup. I must have hit a chord because the minister began his comments with it. We have families that immigrate to Canada every day, families of three, four, five and larger. I found the minister's response amazing. He said that if one member of a family commits a crime, it is not a problem. Their family does not have to stay in Canada. They can all leave Canada because that one person has to leave.

•(1635)

There is no evaluation or true sense of compassion in terms of what the circumstances behind the crime or the action were. Truth be known, it is not as black and white as many would like to think it is. I sat on a justice committee. That is why I said before that I believe in consequences for all crimes, period, whether they are committed by Canadians or permanent residents. I believe there needs to be consequences for crime, and I believe also that all my caucus colleagues support that.

Where the Liberals differ is that we are a little more sympathetic to the understanding of situations. That is why, for example, we believe it is appropriate to let judges have some judicial discretion. That is something in which we have a little more faith, the importance of an independent judicial system. However, the government does not recognize that at all. It is straightforward.

This was interesting. I cited three examples and the hon. member only made reference to two of the examples when we talked about youth crime. One of the crimes I mentioned was a 20-year-old with six pots of marijuana. On occasions I have explained in the House that, yes, those are for trafficking purposes. That is nothing new. The hon. member's comment was that the bill only relates to trafficking. Fine. I have acknowledged that in the past.

Does the minister not think there are 18-year-olds trafficking marijuana in high schools? Do I have news for the minister. It is there. It is real. It is happening today, not only by people who immigrated when they were two-year-olds but by people who were born in Canada. I will tell the hon. member something else. At times young people make some stupid decisions. If a person were in Canada since they were a one-year-old and they are now 20 years old and they get caught doing something stupid, is that justification for deporting that person in all cases? I would argue that it is not, not in all cases. The minister would ultimately argue, yes.

By my saying what I just said, the minister will say the Liberal Party supports people who sexually molest seniors, and I believe he tried to imply it. That is absolute rubbish, but that is one example the minister gave. The reality is that the minister is prepared to see a 20-year-old deported to a country he or she has never known, even though that person was a one-year-old when they came to Canada, because they had six pots of marijuana growing and attempted to sell it to some buddies.

Before one starts throwing stones, one needs to reflect on their own human behaviour.

At the end of the day the other example the minister gave was about using false identification. As opposed to hearing it from me, let me read exactly what was said in committee. I would ask the minister to really listen to this. I quote:

Government Orders

Using a false or fraudulent document is an offence under section 368 of the Criminal Code and carries a maximum potential penalty of 10 years. A 20-year-old permanent resident who is convicted of using fake identification to get into a bar while visiting the United States is inadmissible under IRPA because of a foreign conviction.

It does not matter that the U.S. court punished him with only a \$200 fine. Paragraph 36(1)(b) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act does not require any particular sentence, only a foreign conviction.

● (1640)

This is coming from someone who represented the Canadian Bar, dealing with immigration work in the past, a presenter to the committee. The minister says that we have to do our homework. Part of the homework is listening to what people have to say when they come to the committee. I am just repeating something said before committee, and if one follows that example through, I think it would surprise a lot of people.

I brought up three issues. The one that the minister did not make reference to was a 20-year old taking his camera or cellphone into a movie theatre, recording some cool show he has just seen and then showing it in any way. Well, he is out of luck if he does not have his citizenship, even though he may have been here since he was one or two years old.

The point is that the government, in bringing forward this legislation, has gone too far and over-reached. We in the Liberal Party recognize the need to ensure that permanent residents who commit serious crimes should be deported. We believe that it should be done relatively quickly. There are ways that the government could be far more effective, if it genuinely wants to make our communities safer places to be. I cited that point at the very beginning, and I think it is an appropriate way to close.

If the government wants to prevent crimes from taking place in the first place, if it wants to deport those who are here illegally and who should not have been here in the first place, not because they committed a crime but because they have over-stayed, and if it wants to deport permanent residents who have committed serious crimes, the best thing it could do would be to invest in immigration services that facilitate that. The government could invest in our border services. If the government were prepared to do that, then it would be far more effective in making our communities safer places.

There are many other things that people should be reflecting on before this bill comes to a vote. I would suggest that the government did not listen to the types of amendment that we brought forward, some serious amendments, at committee.

I appreciate the fact that one of those amendments was modified by the government, where the minister uses his ability to deny access and would be obligated to submit that in a yearly report. At the very least, the House would then know when and how often the minister used that ability. We were hoping that the amendment would pass the way we suggested it, but I am glad that the government did recognize that particular Liberal amendment and made some modifications. However, for the most part, with that one exception, many other amendments that could really have improved the legislation were not passed.

● (1645)

As a final thought, I do believe that we need to look at a country like France that recognizes children who immigrate there as being more a part of their society, because of their age when they immigrated. Here I could give the example of someone in a tragic situation who had immigrated as a child and through a horrific accident became a foster child, which, no doubt, has happened in the past.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that we are discussing Bill C-43, but I was fascinated to hear the member speak about the fact that the minister should understand that the trafficking of marijuana is taking place in high schools all over the country, despite the fact he is from a party that believes we should spend a lot of time legalizing marijuana.

I am not quite sure where he was going with that, but subject to that, he does continue to recite three or four examples while never providing a concrete example of a situation he is suggesting could happen and has actually happened. He has never come forward. He ties together everything that he thinks will work into some sort of proposal without actually coming up with any evidence.

However, the member mentioned having spent time listening to witnesses who presented at committee. I thought it would be good to ask him what he thought of what one of the witnesses at committee, Sharon Rosenfeldt, the chair of Victims of Violence, said:

As an organization that works with victims of violent crimes and their families, we applaud this proposed change. We feel that streamlining the deportation of convicted criminals from Canada will make our country safer. Limiting access to the Immigration and Refugee Board's Immigration Appeal Division, and thus reducing the amount of time that convicted criminals may spend in Canada, is an important proactive step in ensuring the safety of all Canadians.

We were all at committee and heard that witness. The member for Winnipeg North is saying that we should be listening. What does he think of the comments by Ms. Rosenfeldt?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would like to think I am exceptionally sensitive to victims of crime. It does not matter whether the person is an immigrant, a permanent resident or a Canadian citizen, when a crime is committed there needs to be a consequence.

To get a better appreciation of that, I would encourage all members of Parliament to talk with victims of crime. Doing that helps all us to better appreciate what it is to be a victim. That is one of the reasons I say that we should be preventing some of these crimes from happening.

One of the things we can do with Citizenship and Immigration to do just that is to start looking at the number of people here in Canada who do not have legal status. Here we are not talking about hundreds of people, but thousands. A percentage of those people are, no doubt, committing crimes, but this is something that the government has done absolutely nothing about. I suspect there are many victims' advocates who would say to the Government of Canada: "Shame on you for not dealing with that particular issue". We should be dealing with it and the best way to do that is by dealing with resource issue in regard to border controls and immigration services.

Government Orders

•(1650)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the immigration critic and deputy immigration critic. They are doing excellent work to improve the government's bills. These bills tend to be flawed, and we are not too sure what they are based on.

I would like to ask my colleague from Winnipeg North whether he thinks this bill was based on statistically valid facts that show a need for greater ministerial discretionary powers. Did the government look at how other countries deal with this issue and whether their approaches are successful? I am talking about countries that may have changed their immigration policies.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question, but I do not believe the bill is justified by the 800 the minister now refers to. I never heard about the numbers of permanent residents committing crimes until we actually hit the committee stage. There was no indication that this was going to be an issue until June of last year, when the minister made a huge announcement. I think there was a lot of material missing. It should have been included if I were to say the legislation were well thought out prior to its introduction. I do not believe it was.

I believe this is more a case of the minister wanting to come across as tough on crime more than anything else. One of the victims here is the House of Commons, because we were never really legitimately brought in so that we could become engaged on the issue prior to the introduction of the legislation, let alone the stakeholders and communities from coast to coast to coast. I am sure all Canadians are concerned about it and would have loved the opportunity to participate and provide guidance, which would have made the bill a better piece of legislation.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in short, the member is saying that we get a large piece of this legislation. It is understandable that the consequence of committing violent or sexual offences should be that the person has to leave the country.

I ask the member to help me understand this better. Is he telling me that an 18-year-old who has been here since he or she was one years old and never became a Canadian citizen and crosses the border, drinks under age and becomes guilty of that offence, and attracts a fine of \$200, should have no appeal after that? That child could be ripped from their family and sent back to some country they have never visited and have no understanding of whatsoever, whose language they do not know, and where they have no family members. Is that what the member is trying to explain?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question and, sadly, we heard that at committee. A professional came before the committee and made that case. The quote I referred to actually came from the committee. The government has failed to address that issue of someone using false identification.

As the minister tries to make himself look good, it will be achieved at substantial cost because of how far-reaching this legislation is. Many people will have to pay the price of the House passing sloppy legislation. It has gone too far. No one in the Liberal Party is trying to prevent people who have committed serious crimes

like rape, murder and so forth from being deported. We are not trying to do that.

Earlier today the minister had another news flash. This time it was that he was going to take away Canadian citizenship from those who have dual citizenship but are deemed to be a terrorist or something of that nature. I might be putting it a little out of context, but that was the news flash. We will find out in tomorrow's new media.

Again, why does the minister not focus on citizenship? We have people who have qualified for citizenship waiting for years. We are not talking about a few; we are talking about hundreds of thousands who have qualified but are still waiting to receive their citizenship. However, because the minister is so negligent in providing the direction and resources necessary, he is missing the point and not doing what he should. He could be doing so much more, whether getting criminals out who should not be in Canada or making sure that people get citizenship in a timely fashion. The minister needs to readjust his priorities.

•(1655)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Resuming debate. There are about 18 minutes left.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only disappointment I have today is that I only have 18 minutes instead of the 30 that would be allocated. I am starting out a little disappointed, but nonetheless the clock is the clock. At 5:15, the bells are going to ring. We are going to come back in the House to vote, and we are going to vote on the very bill we are speaking to this evening. Bill C-43, the faster removal of foreign criminals bill, is going to pass because every person on this side of the House is going to support this piece of legislation. We are going to carry it over at third reading and send it to the Senate.

There is hope and opportunity for our colleagues who sit on the other side of the House to play a role in changing part of our immigration system that should have been changed decades ago. They could support the legislation this evening and see it pass. We could perhaps do what we did with Bill C-11 in the previous Parliament, and pass an immigration bill unanimously that will start the process of refugee reform in this country.

I listened closely to the member for Winnipeg North. He continually says to all of us that he wants to see a stronger piece of legislation, a stronger justice system, that would ensure individuals who commit serious crimes and are not Canadian citizens are not allowed to stay in our country once they have served their time in jail.

Government Orders

The member liked listening to some of the witness at committee because they indicated they supported his perspective. One of our witnesses, Ms. Rosenfeldt, provided a passionate and detailed and descriptive understanding of why the bill should pass. The member's favourite piece to talk about is the trafficking of marijuana and how we could ever think that anyone who grows six plants would be trafficking. Ms. Rosenfeldt gave us a detailed description of how much trafficking an individual could do with that much marijuana. Nonetheless, the member for Winnipeg North was not prepared to listen then, and unfortunately it sounds like he and his party are not prepared to listen today.

We promised in our platform during the election in May 2011 that we would implement this piece of legislation. The minister committed to doing the same shortly after the election. We introduced the legislation in the House prior to the summer.

It was interesting to hear the immigration critics for the NDP and the Liberal Party ask at the time the minister deposited the bill why he was doing it, as there would be no time to study it before the House was going to break for the summer. Now we are ready to vote at third reading this evening, and both of them claim they did not have enough time, that we did not provide the number of hours necessary to understand the bill or do enough detailed research. The reason the legislation was introduced prior to the summer was to give them the opportunity to read the legislation. We offered briefings from ministry officials and a detailed analysis of what the bill would mean. We were more than prepared to give them time to sit down with the ministry and have a better opportunity to understand the bill.

The NDP supported the bill at second reading. We brought it to committee, where members had the opportunity to study it. Instead of saying we have two hours on Tuesday or two hours on Thursday, or maybe we will spend 8 hours studying the bill, we asked the opposition how much time it would like and how many witnesses it would like to bring forward.

● (1700)

We asked the opposition what we could do to ensure they had every bit of knowledge they thought they would need to move the legislation forward, and as I heard my colleague from the NDP mention this afternoon, to try to work together, not sitting on the other side of the House voting against this piece of legislation. All of that effort, the work, the information that was provided, and all of the analysis and detail the minister brought forward to the committee at any time he was asked to come, seems to not have been necessary for the opposition, because they have stood here today and said they are going to vote against it.

I am glad the member for Winnipeg North instructed us to listen to what the individuals said who came as witnesses to committee. I mentioned Sharon Rosenfeldt, who is the chair of Victims of Violence, and the comments she made about the bill. She also said:

Cutting short foreign criminals' opportunity for lengthy appeals will go a long way in minimizing and preventing the re-victimization of those innocent Canadians who are the victims of foreign offenders.

We are not the only ones saying this. When Ms. Rosenfeldt said this, it led me to think, and we brought together the information regarding all of the appeals that have been filed. I mentioned it when

we were speaking at report stage, but it bears repeating. In 2007, at the Immigration Appeal Division, we had 830 appeals. In 2008, we had 954 appeals; in 2009, 1,086 appeals; in 2010, 849; and in 2011, there were 564 appeals. On average, since 2007, there have been over 850 appeals annually to the Immigration Appeal Division from serious criminals trying to delay their deportation.

When we look at the numbers and see the abuse that has taken place, we see a number of individuals and the cases, which have been cited time and time again by members of the government when speaking to the bill, of those who have taken advantage of that appeal process. They actually have a system here in Canada that they can take advantage of.

Tonight the NDP and the Liberal Party have the opportunity to play a role in getting rid of a system that is fraught with abuse, that is being taken advantage of. It has seen countless individuals not only stop their deportation from happening because of the appeal system that is in place but actually become repeat offenders.

When Ms. Rosenfeldt speaks of Canadians becoming further victimized, it is up to us, as a government, to ensure we take action. We have invested hours on the bill in the House of Commons, and at committee with our witnesses and all of the detailed discussion we had during clause-by-clause, and we have spent a lot of time going over each and every amendment. The government did not support amendments brought forward that were going to weaken the bill, but we certainly allowed for the discussion to happen so we could listen to what was being presented. We did in fact accept one amendment, and I appreciate the member for Winnipeg North acknowledging that there was a strengthening of the bill.

At the end of the day, it is our responsibility to act on behalf of victims. It is our responsibility to act. Other countries have surpassed us in terms of timing with regard to this legislation and have moved much further down the road.

We have a partnership with, and we belong, to the Five Country Conference: the U.K., the United States, Australia and New Zealand. They have all acted on these issues. Misrepresentation was one issue. We are the only country that has not acted in a measurable way on these issues.

● (1705)

We stand here today at third reading to say not only are the government and those who sit on this side of the House going to support the legislation, we can actually see if members of the opposition are going to support it this evening. There are a number of other countries that have moved much quicker than this country has and in a much more aggressive way than we have.

The bill, when members look at the detail and where it stands, has three principle parts. The first makes it easier for the government to remove dangerous foreign criminals from our country. The second makes it harder for those who may pose a risk to Canada to enter the country in the first place, and the third removes barriers for genuine visitors who want to come to Canada. We have done a lot of speaking, defending and promoting of the first two parts, which make it easier for government to remove dangerous foreign criminals from our country and make it harder for those who pose a risk to Canada to enter the country in the first place.

Government Orders

One point that I want to highlight is the removing of barriers for genuine visitors who want to come to Canada. The Minister of Public Safety and his ministry plays a role in the legislation as well. We do not need to look much further than section 42, which will actually make it easier for low-risk foreign nationals travelling with their families, who would like to come to Canada on a temporary basis, to become admissible here.

For example, a parent who is inadmissible on health grounds would remain inadmissible and require a temporary resident permit to visit Canada, but the remaining family members would now be admissible. Therefore, we are opening the door to say that, on a temporary basis, they can visit the country. They have a family member who is inadmissible and that family member would have to remain inadmissible, but for the relatives of that family member, there is an opportunity. Currently, they are inadmissible. Under Bill C-43, they would be admissible to Canada.

Further, inadmissible persons seeking ministerial relief would have to submit a formal application. The minister's authority to grant relief on his or her own initiative without a formal application will be explicitly spelled out. For example, the minister could use this explicit authority to facilitate the entry of a head of state who would otherwise be found inadmissible, if the minister was satisfied that the decision was not contrary to national interests.

While I have heard the speakers today and I have heard the members of the committee from the NDP and Liberal Party proclaim that the legislation focuses on those who are criminals who will be removed from our country, who are not citizens, who are permanent residents who have come here. The opposition members have not once stood up to talk about the fact that the legislation actually does allow for the easier transfer of family members who may have a relative who is inadmissible. It would allow them to actually come here to Canada.

A number of people, including the member for Winnipeg North, mentioned the fact that we had witnesses, and that we should have heard and listened to them. Ravi Jain, who is an immigration lawyer, was quoted. When he was asked about this issue, he said:

If you're coming to Canada and you happen to have relatives with you, dependents with you, and if you're inadmissible, but for minor reasons, like you know, maybe some criminality, but not really overly serious, but not organized criminality, or if it's health grounds or some other, you know, misrepresentation or other kinds of grounds, and you're coming, you have special permit to overcome that inadmissibility, then you're no longer going to render your dependents inadmissible at the same time, because right now if you're coming with someone who's inadmissible, if you're the wife or kids or whatever, then you're automatically inadmissible.

Those in opposition to the bill have stated that they have immigration lawyers who have said to them that the bill goes too far. It is great to hear from immigration lawyers who have done their homework and understand the legislation.

• (1710)

The third most important part of the bill, which is recognized by Mr. Jain, is that when an individual is not allowed to come into the country, his or her family at least will be in the position come into the country, when it is a minor offence or an issue of health. Both the Minister Citizenship and Immigration and the Minister of Public Safety will have some latitude in terms of their ability to allow those

family members into the country. It did not happen before, but it will happen now.

I want to conclude by thanking all of those from the government side who sit on the immigration committee. We have worked on two very significant pieces of legislation, Bill C-31 and now Bill C-43. One of the most difficult things to do is to ensure one does justice to the legislation as it moves forward.

I can say, and I have not heard in respect to my colleagues on the other side of the House, this about their complaint about this government or committee's ability to give enough time to research, work and move forward on legislation. I thank all the members of the committee who did a tremendous job, including the chairman, who every once in a while even has to call me to order. I know that is hard to believe. We do on occasion certainly enjoy the hard work for us to move forward. It is important to recognize that both members of our committee and those who sit on the opposition benches, regardless of position, have put countless and tireless hours in moving this legislation forward.

This legislation is good for Canada. It will improve the view people from around the world have about how Canada treats those who come here for the purposes of permanent residency and who are in fact criminals.

We are now in a position where the legislation would allow us to do what so many other countries are doing, and that is to ensure we have a fast, strong process that removes foreign criminals from our country.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made Wednesday, January 30, 2013, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

• (1715)

[*English*]

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. Barry Devolin): All those in favour will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Call in the members.

● (1755)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 612)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooqe
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poilievre
Preston	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace

Warawa
Watson
Sky Country
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)— 149

Government Orders

Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brisson
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Coderre
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Fortin	Freeman
Fry	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassaniya
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valériote— 130

PAIRED

Nil

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

Business of Supply

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The House resumed from February 5 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion related to the business of supply.

● (1800)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 613)***YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brison
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Coderre
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseauult	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Fortin	Freeman
Fry	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Kellway
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclét	Perreault
Pilon	Plamondon

Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Turnel	Valeriote — 130

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Dreeschen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Flaherty	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenny (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poilievre
Preston	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost

Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)— 148

PAIRED

Nil

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1805)

[English]

POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC) moved that Bill C-266, An Act to establish Pope John Paul II Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the bill for which I have just moved second reading would designate April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day in Canada, allowing all Canadians the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the man who took a strong stand on human rights and opened the dialogue between other faiths to promote freedom of religion and speech across the globe. These are values that we as Canadians share.

I bring this before you today not only as an opportunity to celebrate a man who did so much for millions of Christian followers around the world but to celebrate a man who did much more to uphold the values that we as Canadians cherish so deeply, values of justice, liberty and democracy.

Pope John Paul II was the third longest reigning pope in history and he took a strong stance for human rights, democracy and religious freedom, visiting over 129 countries to carry this message around the world. John Paul II truly humanized the papacy. He was hailed as the people's pope and changed our expectations of the role. He became more accessible to the people and spoke regularly every Wednesday to the faithful.

The riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville that I represent is diverse in culture and religion. What impresses upon me the most about Pope John Paul II is that in the course of his papacy he transcended the boundaries of the Catholic faith and promoted peace and freedom of religion. He chose to see commonalities in our world religions rather than differences and the characteristics of each that bond and unite us.

He once said, “[I]nstead of marveling at the fact that Providence allows such a great variety of religions, we should be amazed at the number of common elements found within them”. As well, on a visit to Jordan, he pointed out, “The three historical monotheistic religions count peace, goodness and respect for the human person among their highest values”.

Private Members' Business

Pope John Paul did not believe that religious differences should instigate conflict but rather they should unite all people in the face of differences that may otherwise divide us. As Canadians, we are proud of our government's efforts on this front. We have established the office of religious freedom, adding credence to the fact that Canada is a country where people of all faiths and religions can be free to worship as they choose. Furthermore, our multicultural values encourage Canadians to find our commonalities instead of differences, and to learn and benefit from our varied histories and backgrounds.

One of Pope John Paul's papal titles was Pontifex Maximus, or supreme pontiff, which when literally translated from the Latin language means “master bridge-builder”, a fitting title as he has done much to reach out to religious leaders around the world and promote dialogue. He stressed the need for peace and justice in the Middle East, stating:

I pray that my visit will serve to encourage an increase of interreligious dialogue that will lead Jews, Christians and Muslims to seek in their respective beliefs, and in the universal brotherhood that unites all the members of the human family, the motivation and the perseverance to work for the peace and justice...for which they yearn so deeply.

In addition to the respect and admiration he showed to other faiths, he also sought to heal deep historical wounds, making strong statements against anti-Semitism and asking forgiveness from the Jews for the sins committed by the church. In 2000, he offered a prayer at the Western Wall, stating:

—we are deeply saddened by the behaviour of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant.

In a 1986 visit to the great synagogue in Rome, the first visit to a synagogue by any pope, John Paul II declared that each of our religions wishes to be recognized and respected in its own identity, beyond any ambiguous appropriation. The respect and admiration he showed to other great religions should be an example to others who have forgotten the messages of peace and love that unite rather than divide our religions and cultures.

• (1810)

Pope John Paul II respected and admired various aspects of all religions, remarking on the Islamic faith that, “the religiosity of Muslims deserves respect. It is impossible not to admire, for example, their fidelity to prayer”.

As Canadians, we are proud of the fact that so many immigrate here to find a better life for their families, where they are free to worship as they choose. The respect, admiration and acknowledgement for the ways that all religions have shaped our world and even given back to Canadian society are characteristics that Pope John Paul II shared with all Canadians and with this government.

Human rights are an important and defining characteristic of Canada's foreign policy and our country's identity. Our country and this government have been a strong voice for the protection of human rights and the promotion of democratic values on the world stage. We are currently a party to seven major international human rights conventions. Canadians are proud of the work we do to promote these values around the world.

Private Members' Business

I attend many citizenship ceremonies in Mississauga and with each visit I hear another story of a family that has fled situations in countries where its rights and freedoms were not protected, where democracy seemed unattainable, similar to those I left behind myself in coming to Canada.

We often imagine the fight for democracy as one that is beyond our reach, but in fact Pope John Paul II proved that there was no insurmountable problem facing our world. He, himself, endured the tyrannies of Nazism and Communism and spent much of his papacy speaking out against such oppression and human rights violations.

Pope John Paul II stood for international understanding, peace and defending and promoting equality. His messages were in keeping with our government's foreign policy and gave hope for a better world.

His efforts impacted global politics and inspired peaceful opposition to authoritative regimes. For example, the Pope played a role in 1990 peace negotiations in the hopes of finding a diplomatic solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

On a visit to Zimbabwe in 1988, he spoke out against apartheid in South Africa, saying:

I appeal to all those who bear responsibility for the destiny of the peoples of this region, of whatever racial extraction or ideological inspiration, to renounce the use of violence as a method for achieving their ends. They have a duty before history to resolve their differences by peaceful means...

It is also said that Pope John Paul II played a large role in the collapse of several stifling dictatorships that we have seen in our time. In his meeting with Augusto Pinochet in Chile in 1987, he pushed the dictator to accept a return to democracy. He openly stood behind the Vicariate of Solidarity, the church-led pro-democracy, anti-Pinochet organization. He met with leaders of opposition groups and encouraged their cause. The opposition praised John Paul II for denouncing Pinochet as a dictator, as many members of Chile's opposition were persecuted for much less.

Following his visit, Bishop Camus, a strong opponent of Pinochet, said it was already clear that "Chile will not be the same....No country the Pope has visited has remained the same after his departure".

Twenty-five years after the Pope's visit, democratically elected President Sebastian Pinera celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Pope's visit to Chile, hailing it as an event that changed the country and the lives of its citizens forever.

In Haiti Pope John Paul II criticized the leadership of the dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier, highlighting how deplorable the inequality and poverty he saw before him was. His visit led to protests against the dictatorship and in 1986, just three short years after his visit, Duvalier was removed from power.

Again, in Paraguay the collapse of the dictatorship of General Alfredo Stroessner was also said to be precipitated by Pope John Paul II's visit in 1988, where he said:

Politics...has a fundamental ethical dimension because it is first and foremost a service to man. The church can and must remind men—and in particular those who govern—of their ethical duties for the good of the whole of society.

●(1815)

This is how I see my service and the service of my colleagues to this great country. We treat our duty in Parliament with great respect and insist that we stay true to the will of those who elected us.

Canada is recognized as a world leader in the promotion of international human rights. These Canadian values are part of what makes our country such an attractive place for people to immigrate. We are seen as a place where families much like my own have come to find a better life for themselves and for their children. These immigrants have shaped our multicultural landscape and have done so much to build our economy. Without holding true to these values, we would not be the vision of safety and prosperity immigrants see in Canada today. As such, we would not have benefited so greatly from what new Canadians have brought to us in helping to build our great country.

Pope John Paul II shared this message of love, peace, tolerance and equality. He was an excellent reminder to all Canadians of our responsibility internationally and here at home to incorporate these values in our daily lives and to respect, appreciate and protect them every chance we get.

One of Pope John Paul II's greatest legacies is the way he contributed to the fall of communism. He was a man of courage and compassion. He was only 19 years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and he was forced into manual labour. With the so-called Soviet liberation, any opposition to atheistic totalitarian rule would not be tolerated, but this did not stop John Paul II from carrying out the word of God and spreading the values of humanism when he joined the priesthood.

His tour of Poland in 1979 inspired the people and united them in their quest for freedom, which eventually led to the Solidarity movement. As one man, without an army at his back, and equipped only with his words, he inspired the non-violent opposition to communist oppression and tyranny in Poland, leading to its eventual collapse.

His words, "be not afraid", simple as they may seem, undermined the strongest weapon in an oppressive regime's arsenal: fear. He made certain that the church would stand behind its members and would be a place of freedom, a sanctuary and a beacon of hope.

Speaking on the victory of the movement, it has been said, "May the word solidarity flow from our Polish soil—with all those people who still suffer racism, neo-colonialism, exploitation, unemployment, persecution and intolerance".

His words in Poland were echoed in other Soviet countries, such as Hungary, East Germany, Romania, Czechoslovakia and others, a region that is now considered democratic.

Former Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev said that the collapse of the Iron Curtain would have been impossible without John Paul II, and on this point I agree. In the words of Lech Walesa, the founder of the Solidarity movement, "Before his pontificate, the world was divided into blocs. Nobody knew how to get rid of communism. [Pope John Paul II] simply said: 'Don't be afraid, change the image of this land'".

Private Members' Business

I am of Polish descent. I am a Catholic, but that is not why I stand before the House today to ask that members support this legislation. I stand before the House in an attempt to recognize a great man, one who embodied the values of our multi-faith, multicultural society, a man who stood up against tyranny, whose messages of peace and tolerance transformed and greatly impacted global politics.

John Paul II stood up against tyranny and supported democratic values, something Canadians young and old should never forget to be grateful for and something I remember each and every day I sit in the House to be the voice of my constituents.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

One of the principles that is important to our democracy is the separation of church and state. People who enter the religious life do so selflessly because they believe in what they are doing. They do not seek out honours or recognition. They want their message to be heard and to reach future generations.

In order to reconcile these two principles, would my colleague find it acceptable if the day were dedicated not to Pope John Paul II, but to one of the Pope's favourite causes? In that way we could remember not just the person but also a cause that was dear to him. In that way we could maintain the separation of church and state, while honouring the causes the loved and the message that he sought to deliver.

[*English*]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that this is not a religious bill. John Paul II was the head of the Catholic Church, but he was a man who reached out to everybody. He was the man who made some of the biggest changes in this world in recent history.

Therefore, it was not only the values he represented, but his courage as a person, his outreach to everybody regardless of cultural or religious background. It was outstanding. He embraced everybody.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I personally hope that the bill does go to committee.

I recognize Pope John Paul II, with the length of term he stayed as the head of the Catholic Church, from 1978 to 2005, was the longest-serving pope. He actually visited 129 countries. When we think of Canada alone, he had been to Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg.

There are world leaders of an iconic nature, and I could make reference to Sikhism's Guru Gobind Singh, and to other world leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, or Dr. José Rizal from the Philippines.

My question for the member is, does he see the value in terms of Canada recognizing these world iconic leaders and in essence somehow expressing that acknowledgement through recognition? He has pointed out one of the ways in which that may be done. This is one of the reasons I personally do not have any objection to it going to committee.

● (1825)

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, there are many important and significant people in the world. If we looked at John Paul II as a person and not as the head of the church, we would have to recognize the huge impact he made on this world, especially Europe, which was under strict communist regime that many people thought would never end in our time. I can speak to that because I personally experienced it.

I was present at the first visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland, in 1978. I do not think I fully understood the meaning of his simple words "be not afraid". I do not know how it happened, but people truly lost fear, which was the main tool in the state to control people. This happened, thanks to him. Now we have a free and democratic Europe. We have ended a cold war that lasted for so long.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise to speak about Bill C-266, an act to establish Pope John Paul II Day. I want to thank my colleague, the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville for introducing it to the House.

As the first Polish Pope and a global force for peace and inter-faith dialogue, John Paul II remains today an important figure in the hearts of people around the world. I am happy to stand today to support the motion.

As the member of Parliament for the electoral district of Parkdale—High Park, I am honoured to represent so many members of the Polish community in Toronto. They are a people that through generations of hard work have built one of the most vibrant and community oriented neighbourhoods in our city. From the Canadian Polish Congress national office to the St. Stanislaus-St. Casimir's Credit Union, the Copernicus Lodge, St. Casimir's Church and St. Vincent de Paul, our neighbourhood is home to many landmarks in Toronto, built by generations of Poles in the west end of our city.

Every year, families from Parkdale—High Park mark proud moments such as Polish Constitution Day and Polish Independence Day. We commemorate the terrible tragedy of the Katyn massacre by laying a wreath at the Katyn monument at the foot of Roncesvalles. We come together in joyous celebration at the Polish annual street festival on Roncesvalles. Over the years, these meaningful community events have helped me understand the lasting importance and influence of Pope John Paul II in the lives of the Polish community, but also to respect his global achievements.

The Polish community knows intimately the role that Pope John Paul II played in bringing hope and democratic reform to Eastern Europe. Canada's recognition of Pope John Paul II would send a profound signal that Canada stands with global leaders who speak out against oppression. Most importantly, it would signal that as Canadians we support leaders who use compassion, diplomacy and goodwill to advance the principles of democracy.

Karol Wojtyla, who would come to be known as Pope John Paul II, was born in Poland in 1920. The course of Pope John Paul II's life was deeply intertwined with major historical shifts in his country.

Private Members' Business

As the Polish community in my riding, and all those who have migrated from another country know well, the welfare of the people at one's birthplace or those who share one's language and culture is never forgotten, even after many years. Though Pope John Paul II was seated at the Vatican in Rome, his early experiences with Nazi and then Communist violence in Poland motivated him to take an active role in pressing for religious freedom and democratic reform in Eastern Europe and around the world.

Karol Wojtyla was raised in an era marked by tremendous political turmoil and suffering. During his first year of university the Nazis invaded Poland, jailed Jewish professors and closed classroom doors. Desperate to support himself and his father, he found work in a quarry. In the following years, his father and last living parent passed away and he devoted himself to religious study.

Under the Polish Communist Party he saw first hand the aggressive way in which religious freedom was extinguished. The Polish Communist Party tried to neutralize the influence of the Catholic Church. Church schools were nationalized, monasteries and seminaries were shut down, Catholic hospitals and nursing homes and charities were closed; church leaders were blackmailed, persecuted and harassed; and priests were recruited as informants on other priests. By 1953, a thousand Polish priests were in jail.

●(1830)

His experience, first of Nazi violence, and later the total control of the Polish Communist Party, left him with a deep understanding of the ways in which violent dictatorships affect the lives of ordinary people. He saw that first hand.

Later, when Pope John Paul II, he went on to speak about his experiences at the United Nations. He reached out to the diplomats there to end political abuses and to view any threat to human dignity as "a form of warfare against humanity". He went on to say that he had come from the country on whose living body Auschwitz been constructed.

From Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines to Jean Claude Duvalier in Haiti to Sese Seko Mobutu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pope John Paul II was vocal in his recriminations of dictators around the world. He was also an outspoken critic of the South African apartheid regime and the Iraq war.

In addition to speaking out against oppression, he also took the initiative in building positive forums of international and interfaith co-operation. In 1985, Pope John Paul II founded World Youth Day, seeking to inspire and engage youth in community development on a global level.

Canadians have long been committed to the same values that Pope John Paul II so strongly advanced on the world stage: democracy, diplomacy and dialogue. Historically, Canada has often played the role of mediator and peace broker on the world stage. Pope John Paul II served as an excellent example of what can be accomplished when global leaders commit to pursuing these principles and putting them to action.

I understand that some people may say they do not agree with every opinion that was expressed by Pope John Paul II. Some people will say that we should perhaps not be dedicating a day to a religious figure. I would argue that when we consider the global narrative of

the life of John Paul II as an international force of hope, of justice and dialogue, it seems fitting for Parliament to celebrate his legacy. Above all, I am in the House to represent my constituents, and I know what Pope John Paul II means to so many of them.

Parkdale—High Park is the heart of the Polish community in Toronto, home to community organizations, newspapers, and a strong community fabric that has made it one of the most vibrant community oriented neighbourhoods in Toronto.

In our community, Pope John Paul II represents not only an important figure in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, but also a remarkable geo-political leader who spoke up for freedom and democratic change in eastern Europe and around the world. It is for that reason I will be supporting the bill.

●(1835)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour again to stand here. I say again because the last time the bill came in the House I spoke on it briefly as well. I want to thank the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville for bringing this to the floor of the House of Commons. In the last session it was brought in by the member for Brampton West, Andrew Kania. I want to quote from his speech, but I will get to that in a few moments.

I want to reiterate what was said earlier about the true inspiration of a man who travelled this world seeking out peace, seeking out ways to bridge the gap between the human dynamic, between us and those people we may not agree with or those people we find ourselves in constant conflict with. He was a man who was situated in a position that was clear to the world where he was, which was the head of the Catholic Church, situated in Vatican City, yet he managed to bridge the gap between so many different factions of people, their religion as well as nations around the world. As someone said earlier, the man visited 129 countries in the existence of his 27 year rule as the leader of the Catholic Church. It is absolutely incredible.

I am not Catholic, but I sure am inspired by the actions of this individual as a world leader at a time when the world needed it, from the late 1970s until his passing in 2005. It is an honour to be here tonight and talk about this. I will be supporting the bill.

I remember his first words from October 16, 1978, when he said, "Dearest brothers and sisters, we are still all grieved after the death of the most beloved Pope John Paul I. And now the imminent cardinals have called a new bishop of Rome. They have called him from a far country, but always near to through the communion of faith and in the Christian tradition".

Those were the first words of the new pope, Pope John Paul II, formerly Karol Józef Wojtyla, the first Slavic pope in the history of the Roman Catholic Church and a pope who reigned 27 years.

Private Members' Business

I am very honoured to speak to designating this day. We have honoured other world leaders, including those religious leaders such as the Dalai Lama and others. We have also honoured great leaders of certain nations. Let us put John Paul II in the category of each and every one of those as a world leader, a religious leader, a leader of faith, a leader of nations and a leader in the world of diplomacy, which is a huge thing to do over his 27 years. Some credit him with the fall of communism, but his roots were within the community in Poland. That made him put in the very distinct position of understanding through the years of growing up in Poland.

These are a couple of things Canadian journalists had to say after the passing of Pope John Paul II. Eric Margolis described going into the central committee headquarters in Moscow after the election of John Paul II and this is what he described. He said, "I was the first Western journalist inside the KGB headquarters in 1990. The generals told me that the Vatican and the Pope above all was regarded as their number one, most dangerous enemy in the world". He is one of the architects of the defeat of communism, there is no doubt it. He must be remembered not only for his religious ties and role, but for his worldwide historical influence.

In terms of his role in the fall of communism, this is another comment from James Carroll who is not only a writer but a former priest. He says, "What is the greatest most unexpected event of the 20th century? Isn't it that the Soviet Empire was brought down non-violently". One the largest empires this world has ever seen was brought down non-violently. He went on to say, "Isn't John Paul II's story part of that"? It is a big part of that. What came from that was his desire to see impoverished people were able to fulfill dreams, the dream of feeding their own families, of worshipping as they so choose to do.

●(1840)

He became such a large part of the world dialogue on peace that everywhere he went world attention followed him. People knew he was the type of individual to bridge the gulf between warring factions and those who conflicted with each other. That is the big reason we are here today; it is to honour a man. However, it is not just a national honour, but an international honour in this national forum. As I said earlier, the Soviet Union fell without one bullet being fired.

Pope John Paul's trip to Poland, in 1979, is described by Timothy Ash as the "fulcrum of revolution which led to the collapse of communism". He said:

Without the Pope, no Solidarity. Without Solidarity, no Gorbachev. Without Gorbachev, no fall of communism.

In fact, Mikhail Gorbachev himself said, "It would have been impossible without the Pope". He credits Pope John Paul II for being the key factor in the fall of the Soviet Union.

There is another major accomplishment by John Paul II. Nobody will agree with everything that any leader ever does, which is to be expected, but he did bridge the divide between the Roman Catholic church and other religions, as I mentioned earlier.

In October 2003, the Anti-Defamation League issued a statement congratulating Pope John Paul II on entering his 25th year of the

papacy and essentially complimented him for his role in bridging the divide between the Jewish faith and the Roman Catholic church.

Immediately after the death of John Paul II, the same Anti-Defamation League issued a statement that Pope John Paul II had revolutionized Catholic-Jewish relations, saying, "...more change for the better took place in his 27-year papacy than in the nearly 2,000 years before". What a statement from the Anti-Defamation League, that he accomplished in 27 years what could not be accomplished to that extent in the 2,000 years prior.

There are other examples of his attempts to bridge with other faith communities. In terms of the Muslim community, Pope John Paul II, when in Casablanca on August 19, 1985 during his journey to Morocco, said:

Christians and Muslims, we have many things in common, as believers and as human beings. We live in the same world, marked by many signs of hope, but also by multiple signs of anguish. For us, Abraham is a very model of faith in God, of submission to his will and of confidence in his goodness. We believe in the same God, the one God, the living God, the God who created the world and brings his creatures to their perfection.

He reached out to the Muslim community, once again, in 1986. He said:

The Jewish religion is not "extrinsic" to us, but in a certain way is "intrinsic" to our own religion. With Judaism therefore we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers.

This was an amazing compliment from that man. Let us face it, he was extremely brave to be saying these things. No other Pope had said this prior to him. This was a man who was obviously sincere in his belief in the church and the Roman Catholic faith, but he was so sincere in his attempts to bridge the gulf between what conflicts us that he was willing to put himself on the line to say these things. It was controversial at the time, and I remember when it happened, in the mid eighties.

On a personal note, I come from Newfoundland and Labrador. The Pope visited the little island of Newfoundland, and with him came an incredible sense of patriotism in our own province. Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Jews who lived in Newfoundland all said the same thing. We could not believe the Pope was actually coming to our little piece of the earth. In this little corner of the earth that we call our own in the north Atlantic, the weather is not great, and the Pope did experience that. We were so proud that this man of great international and historical significance was there. Why? He wanted to be there because he wanted to spread the word. He wanted to take the word of God and bring it around the world. It was the word of God, yes, but also peace, love and happiness. It was an incredible honour.

It is a mild gesture that we could make in this House to pass this bill.

●(1845)

I would like to quote from my former colleague Andrew Kania, who spoke eloquently when he brought the bill to the House. He said many things about how the pope would travel the world, as I mentioned earlier, and how he tried to bridge the gap between other religions. He said:

Private Members' Business

This was a pope who will go down in history as not only one of the greatest popes, but one of the greatest world leaders, somebody who did try to reach out to different communities and different religions and show respect. He did not go around saying that the Roman Catholic Church was right and other religions were wrong. He went around saying let us work together and try to be good, help and respect one another and show love and compassion.

A love and compassion that we still feel to this day as if he were still with us. In many respects he is still with us, and that is one of the chief reasons why we should pass the legislation.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville for bringing this important legislation before us today.

As the member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor said, this is an international type of bill. It is not just a Canadian or a Polish or a Catholic bill. I would like to thank him for his comments because I really enjoyed what he had to say on communism.

I would also like to thank Mr. Chris Korwin-Kuczynski, a long-time former deputy city councillor, former deputy mayor and retired honorary navy captain, for his dedicated campaign to see the bill brought before Parliament. I would also like to thank Fathers Gil, Blazejak and Filas for their generous support and faith, and Ms. Danuta Gumienik and Mietek Lotakow for their dedication and assistance in making sure that the bill reached us here on the floor today.

The member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor also talked about the fall of communism and the ideas, and why John Paul II was such a threat to totalitarianism. It was because ideas are the enemy of tyrants. Mikhail Gorbachev went on to say one other thing, which is remarkable given that he was one of the main adversaries of John Paul and his mission to bring freedom and democracy to the earth. He said that Pope John Paul II's "devotion to his followers is a remarkable example to all of us".

I fully support the bill and everything that it represents. In fact, I am the seconder of the bill and proud to be so. The bill is not just about Blessed John Paul II being Polish or Catholic, though there is no doubt special meaning for the Polish community, especially Canadians of Polish heritage and Catholics generally. It is truly about the inspiration that he left as his legacy to all peoples of all faiths in all lands in the world and in Canada.

Blessed John Paul stood for values that are shared by diverse peoples across this planet: justice, democracy and forgiveness. John Paul II held the value that all people are equal and should be free to practice whatever religion they choose, no matter where they are in this world. These values are not only Christian values, but they are shared by many religions around the world. For Canadians, he practised the values of freedom, democracy and human rights the world over and promoted that everywhere he went. He was not just solely focused on the Catholic church but was also influential, as we have already discussed, on the world stage building bridges between all faiths.

It was already remarked that when he visited Israel he addressed them as "my older brothers". That was absolutely significant and historic.

He reached out to the Eastern Orthodox church and the Muslim faith. A goal he had was to form a coalition of faith. When he visited the Umayyad mosque, which was a former Christian church where John Paul the Baptist is believed to be interred, he made a speech calling for Muslims, Christians and Jews to live together. As he continued to visit mosques and places of worship of many faiths around the world, he did so in order to reach out for understanding and to build those bridges between those faiths.

One of his major accomplishments was inspiring a peaceful revolution in Europe that resulted in the downfall of communism on that continent, which began in his native Poland with the rise of the solidarity trade movement, and it was through those words "be not afraid". Those were meaningful and impactful words. Those uplifting words resulted in human rights and freedom being brought to Poland and subsequently to now all former Iron Curtain countries that made up the Soviet bloc. He did this not with a sword or rifle but by using words and by using ideas, which, again, were the enemy of tyrants.

He did this simply because those who suffered through communism imagined the changes that they wished to see, which he promoted, and they did it by being not afraid. They dared to imagine and they dared to aspire. It inspired those who had lost hope that they would ever see political freedom in their lands, and they found hope through solidarity. History tells us what happened later on: communism fell.

John Paul II had close ties to Canada. He made separate visits here. He went to the Arctic in 1987, just that visit, because he had promised to go there and was not able to do it on a previous visit. He made a special attempt to do that and he succeeded. There is also a special meaning to the pope for me. There is actually only 20 days difference in age between my dad and the pope. In fact, my dad will be 93 on April 2.

● (1850)

The two of them had very similar histories in Poland. Both of them were 19 when the war began. My father, obviously, subsequently became a soldier, and John Paul followed his faith. That was important.

In 2002, the military did a very special thing for me. They allowed me, as part of a four-person military team, to assist with World Youth Day for almost an entire year, to help plan World Youth Day and bring 800,000 people to Canada.

This was a post 9/11 world. All the youth of the world came, and they were not just Catholic. They were of all different faiths. It was important to see the numbers of different faiths that came here.

As a Canadian soldier at the time, with Polish immigrant parents, from the Parkdale area of Toronto and St. Casimir's Polish Catholic parish, this was a massive honour for me personally. It was a huge responsibility to get it right and ensure that the close to a million people from around the world who arrived here to celebrate with Pope John Paul II were able to do so safely and were able to celebrate with all the other youth of the world.

Private Members' Business

The atmosphere was absolutely electric. To have the honour of being so close to the Pope, as close, in fact, as I am to the member for Brampton West right now, was something that was inspiring. To be able to talk to him, to be able to hold his hand, to be able to have a conversation with him in Polish was something that was inspiring to me and to the kids he was able to inspire.

What the Pope often said was, “You are the salt”, and “You are the light”. He referred to the youth as being those. They reacted to that. “[D]o not be afraid” was something he repeated quite frequently on the stage.

What he said to them was:

You are young, and the Pope is old, 82 or 83 years of life is not the same as 22 or 23. But the Pope still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations.... I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young. You are our hope, the young are our hope.

It should be noted that the Canadian World Youth Day was the last one he attended. He was the originator of World Youth Day, which happens every year in Rome and about every four years in a different country around the world.

Having stood mere feet from His Holiness at that time, I could see his courage. I could see the incredible suffering in his eyes, because he was so pushed down by the serious illness he had.

It is important that all of the members know that he lived his life as he spoke it. He showed nothing but courage by sitting there, by suffering as he did, to make sure that he came to Toronto. To make sure that he came here and to make sure that he inspired those young people was absolutely monumental. I came away absolutely inspired, having met Papa.

The Pope was a brilliant man who reached out to millions of people beyond the borders of the church. By supporting this bill, we show all Canadians that we have not forgotten this great man and we honour those values he inspired in us all. He was a man who travelled with a staff in his hand and wore the shoes of a fisherman. He was a man who brought hope, peace and comfort to so many all around the world. He was a man who, with his words, through his deeds and with his faith, brought us all together with his message of hope.

He was a man who will be remembered long after the rest of us have been forgotten. He was a man who made this earth a more human place for us all.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will not hide the fact that I am speaking today with a somewhat troubled heart. I want to speak to the proposal from the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

I have long admired His Holiness Pope John Paul II. However, as the member for Beauport—Limoilou, I will not be supporting the idea of establishing a day in his honour.

As a devout Roman Catholic, I strive to follow Christ's example in my everyday life. But following that example is sometimes difficult, as evidenced by many events in His Holiness's life. Before I go any

further, I would like to remind the House that Christ said that he did not come to bring peace to the world, but a sword.

I feel I can take the liberty of quoting Christ in the House because His Holiness Pope John Paul II came to Canada in 1984, when I was 17. It is no secret that it was an absolutely extraordinary moment. It moved people. Pope John Paul II had a strong personality; he had a real charisma, almost a magnetism, and he thrilled the crowds. It was incredible to see him in action.

However, I was elected to represent my constituents, just as my 307 colleagues represent Canadians across this country. Canada is vast and beautiful. It is multifaceted and its people have various faiths. I think we need to convey the message that we will maintain freedom of conscience for everyone in our country, no matter what they believe, and that includes those of different faiths, agnostics and non-believers.

I believe that establishing a day in Pope John Paul II's honour would send the wrong message. However, I understand why my colleague, who is of Polish descent, would introduce this bill in the House. Pope John Paul II was a hero who lifted the hearts of the Polish people; he was an inspiration. He also freed a people from unbearable oppression.

I think that the Catholic Church certainly has the ability to maintain and promote the work of John Paul II. I do not think it is the role of the Canadian government to do so. I do not want to get into a comparison of every pope in the succession of popes since Saint Peter, but I must admit that I am partial to recent popes. Take the example of John XXIII, who created the Second Vatican Council, and Leo XIII, whose letter, the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, was the cornerstone of the Church's social doctrine, which flourished over a good part of the 20th century.

As I said, with a somewhat troubled heart, I had the pleasure of reading a number of encyclicals by His Holiness John Paul II. At the time, I even defended some of the pope's positions to my friends and acquaintances because the pope was very controversial in Quebec at that time. I remember how very divided people were. I remember theologians from Laval University spoke out against positions taken by His Holiness, particularly with respect to contraception.

● (1900)

This obviously had some unfortunate consequences. Regardless, I do not want to dwell on that. Those debates are over. I also do not want to bring up painful memories about His Holiness, because he did some very good work.

As I said, I do not believe it is the role of the government to recognize a specific pope among all of the popes in the 2,000-year history of the Catholic Church.

Adjournment Proceedings

To support my position, I want to quickly talk about 12 other popes I greatly admire. There is obviously John XXIII, who created the Second Vatican Council, at the very beginning of his pontificate at the end of the 1950s, to the surprise of everyone, including the bishops and the Roman Curia. This council was truly a defining moment for the Catholic Church in the 20th century. It enabled His Holiness John Paul II and Benedict XVI, who was on the council at the time, to shape their ideas, make a name for themselves and make a contribution.

I will go further by saying that the pope that I admire the most is Leo XIII, who wrote and advocated the *Rerum Novarum* over 120 years ago. The *Rerum Novarum* was also a turning point for the Catholic Church at the time. This work is so significant that, on its 100th anniversary in 1991, His Holiness John Paul II recognized it in his encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*. His Holiness John Paul II recognized and supported social and economic justice, values that I share as a politician and a human being.

I will continue to speak about this well-known social doctrine of the Catholic Church, which His Holiness John Paul II also lived by, and to cite its noble tenets.

First, there is human dignity, which the Catholic Church did not necessarily recognize before this encyclical and before the church's social doctrine movement, which took off in the early 20th century.

Second, there is the common good. We are all part of the greater human community. We therefore have to think about all of our brothers. This was one of Christ's teachings. We are all responsible for our brothers and sisters in our society.

Third, is the principle of subsidiarity, according to which we must recognize that every human being on this earth and in our society makes an inalienable contribution that cannot be disputed.

Finally, there is also solidarity.

The fact that His Holiness John Paul II was a strong supporter and defender of these great values is a source of pride for the hon. member.

However, the fact remains that, as elected officials, we must make difficult choices. That is what I am doing. Although it breaks my heart a little, I think I am doing the right thing and I am calling on my colleagues to do the same. We need to think long and hard before moving forward with this.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1905)

[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I raised a question a while back with regard to the cutting of postal services with respect to a part of my riding called Honeymoon Bay.

In Honeymoon Bay, what has been a traditional service is that on Saturday mornings the post office is open so that residents, who mostly work outside of the community, have an opportunity to visit their local post office.

When I raised the question, the parliamentary secretary to the minister of transport responded by saying that it was up to the Crown corporation that makes the operational decisions. However, the minister of transport does have some overall responsibility for the principles with respect to the kind of service Canadians can expect.

I want to give members an example of some of the correspondence I have received. I received many letters and emails on this particular matter.

With regard to the closure of the post office on Saturday mornings, one resident wrote:

This idea is stupid. Period.

One cannot say it any more clearly than that. She continues:

Saturdays is the only day for most business folks to pick up the mail here in rural B.C. Most of the time that is the case for me. What is next? Close Mondays, Saturdays, and Tuesdays? Need the example go on?

She went on to write about a number of other issues in the email.

The point is that Honeymoon Bay is a really good example of a community where the forestry sector has been really hard hit. In fact, one of the mills closed down a number of years ago, taking a significant number of good jobs out of a place called Youbou. Many of the residents of Honeymoon Bay worked in Youbou. People are now having to drive 40 to 50 kilometres out of their community to work. Often they are leaving early in the morning and are coming home late at night, so Saturday morning was an opportunity for them to actually go to the post office and do whatever they needed to do.

We wrote a letter to the minister, and in that letter we indicated:

A number of our constituents have voiced opposition to the plan to remove the customer service hours on Saturday and consequently reduce the postal service to the community. For some people Saturday is the only day they have available to do postal business. This is especially true for the Honeymoon Bay Post office that is open until 3:00 p.m. only on weekdays. Cuts to Canada Post weaken the ability of Canadians to receive quality public service.

When the government cuts the working hours of the country's rural posts offices it harms the people and the local businesses that deal with Canada Post, thus hurting the regional economy. As my colleague [the member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges] mentioned "The post office in rural communities is an institution. It is something that links the community together. We can talk about modernization schemes, but the fact remains that people in rural communities love their post offices."

Canada Post has a charter. One of the elements in the charter has to do specifically with closures. When there is a serious change in services, one would think Canada Post would actually go out and consult with the community.

Therefore, my question to the parliamentary secretary is whether, in this case, Canada Post consulted with the community members and businesses in Honeymoon Bay.

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question of Canada Post is of great importance to me. I have a mixed constituency of suburban and rural residents who value the mail service, though they are increasingly part of the worldwide trend toward electronic forms of communication.

I find it interesting that the NDP has taken a sudden interest in the well-being of Canada Post customers, because it was the NDP that supported the union drive that ultimately led to a work stoppage and declining use of Canada Post by Canadians.

Within that corporation we have one of the most radical unions in the entire country, a union that, at a time the corporation is losing money and is forced to make difficult decisions, demands that it receive funds from the corporation, owned by the Canadian people, to travel down to a Brazilian beach town to attend a conference that, among other things, promoted the release of a convicted and confessed murderer from the Middle East. I do not know what the link is between a conference in Brazil on liberating a confessed murderer from the Middle East and the services the Canadian people receive in their mailboxes.

I also realize that in this increasingly competitive world of communications, Canada Post must run a focused operation or face a whole series of very unpleasant decisions. That is exactly what we have to demand of that corporation if we want it to be viable and avoid it having to impose major costs on Canadian taxpayers, who are its owners.

Unfortunately, this union has made it next to impossible for the company to operate in a competitive fashion. It has imposed stifling demands and made it difficult for workers to perform to their highest potential. Moreover, the costs that this union imposes on Canada Post are passed on either to its customers or the taxpayers who, it turns out, are the very same people.

If it is to continue to favour the costly and unaffordable demands of union bosses, the NDP must decide where it will get the money from, because Canada Post does not have billions of extra dollars sitting around waiting to be spent. In particular, if the member across wants to make new demands for service, which will inevitably come with new expenses, she will have to indicate from whence that money will come. Will taxpayers need to pay a bigger subsidy through higher taxes? Will customers be forced to pay higher fees for stamps? Will Canadians who use the postal service have to make some other sacrifice? I do not know because I am not the one making the proposals that the NDP and the union bosses consistently put forward.

My view is that we need a competitive postal system that operates within its means and respects the workers who do the job, the taxpayers who own the company, and the customers for whom the service has always been intended.

● (1910)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, to be absolutely clear, this is not a new demand for a new service. This is an existing service that the government is cutting from the residents of Honeymoon Bay.

I am sure that the many unionized workers in my riding would be very interested in the member's perspective on unions. It is so typical of that member particularly and the government that they actually refuse to deal with the issues.

What I asked the member about was the service cuts in the Honeymoon Bay Post Office, the services that have been in place for a number of years. Under the Canada Post charter, the corporation made a commitment to Canadians from coast to coast to coast that it would consult with community members and businesses before altering or cutting services.

It is a very simple question: Did Canada Post consult with Honeymoon Bay residents and businesses before cutting the services, yes or no?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we always consult as a government, but what I do not understand is why the member had to make it all about unions. It shows, once again, the obsession the NDP has with the narrow agenda of union bosses.

She talks about union workers. Unionized workers in the country expect their union bosses to be transparent. Those workers are increasingly calling for the right to make their own decisions, rather than be susceptible to forced unionization. The costs of union boss demands are becoming increasingly clear. We have to face that fact.

It is time for the NDP to join with us in standing up for taxpayers, workers and Canada Post customers because those are the people we are supposed to be serving here.

● (1915)

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise again tonight to address the foreign investment protection and promotion agreement, or FIPA, that the government recently concluded with China but has not yet put into place.

I will start by reiterating the New Democrats' commitment to working with Canadian businesses, labour and our international trade partners to expand trade and investment opportunities around the world. The Canadian economy and Canadian jobs rely on trade and our businesses benefit from foreign investment.

Of course, China is a big part of the trading dynamic. It is the second largest economy in the world. It is an ascending economy and there is a profound connection between our two countries. In my riding of Vancouver Kingsway, nearly half my constituents are either immigrants from China or have Chinese heritage. This connection is what brings both cultural and economic vibrancy to my community and to our country.

Adjournment Proceedings

FIPA took 18 years to negotiate between Canada and China. It has provisions that once in force will keep it in force for at least 31 years. Yet the government and the MPs on the government side of the House did not schedule any form of debate or study about the FIPA. The minister would not come before our committee to answer any questions about the FIPA. In fact, the government members would not allow any study of the FIPA at committee. A motion I put forward to study it at committee was turned down and they did not schedule the FIPA to be brought to a vote in the House.

If anything deserves careful study and scrutiny, it is this investment protection agreement. The general concept is sound. The protection of investors is especially needed in China. It is not disrespectful to China to point out the difficulties and challenges that Canadian investors, and in fact any kind of foreign investors, face in China. There is inconsistent application of the rule of law and difficulty in enforcing contracts. Those are well known issues.

The concept of a FIPA is sound between the two countries, but FIPAs, like the one we are discussing now, can prevent governments from enacting policies in the public interest. What we are talking about are provisions of this particular FIPA that are of concern to Canadians. This agreement that the Conservatives signed would allow foreign state-owned companies to buy up more and more interests in our natural resources and if the government tried to impose restrictions on them we, the Canadian taxpayers, could be sued.

For the first time in Canadian history, the Conservative government allowed for a dispute resolution process, a process that is already prone to corporate bias and antithetical to principles of the rule of law. It has allowed this process to happen behind closed doors. The government has signed a section that says that if one of the countries that is being sued wants to, it can have the hearing, the legal suit challenging breach of agreement, heard behind closed doors and all documents would be hidden from the public.

Canada is a democratic country where we follow the norms of the rule of law. The rule of law is we have open courts. We have an open justice system. We do not allow court tribunal systems to be heard in private, maybe in a private commercial setting, but not when taxpayer dollars are on the hook. The government signed a provision like that, for the first time in history.

Second, this FIPA contains a provision that allows China and Canada to keep all non-conforming measures, which are measures that are currently restraints on trade. The problem is that China has been a closed economy for a long time and has many non-conforming measures, whereas Canada is a liberal market model.

My question for the government is this. Why would it signed an imbalanced agreement that treats Canadian investors unfairly, gives them less rights than Chinese investors in Canada and has a dispute resolution mechanism that allows disputes to be heard behind closed doors in secret? Why is that?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the part of the speech that the member for Vancouver Kingsway got correct is the fact that China is the second largest economy in the world. It will more than likely be the largest economy in the world by 2030.

The most egregious and incorrect part, among many, in his speech is that this would sign Canada up for 31 years. It would be renewable up to a period of 31 years; it does not sign anyone up for a 31-year period. The other issue on which he is, quite frankly, incorrect is the idea that it would prevent Canada from enacting legislation or public policy to benefit Canadians. That is absolutely incorrect.

I am going to try to sum up the issues. I know we have limited time, but it is an important issue and I want to take some time to discuss it. However, before I start, another point is the fact that prior to our government coming to power in 2006, treaties were not tabled in the House of Commons for 31 days and there was no opportunity to discuss those treaties. Yes somehow we are hearing a lot of rhetoric about the government not discussing this treaty. We tabled the treaty in the House of Commons for 31 days. They were 31 sitting days and thus 31 opportunities for any opposition members to discuss this treaty if they wished. However, the reality is that they really do not want the bright light of the sun to shine on this treaty because it would refute the accusations they are making against it.

Trade is part of the powerful engine that drives the Canadian economy. We moved forward with a very ambitious pro-trade plan, opening new markets for Canadian exporters, including in the very fast-growing Asia-Pacific region. We moved aggressively, expanding commercial relations in the region to create jobs and economic benefits. The economic benefits and opportunities are tremendous there. Asia-Pacific countries represent huge markets, with economic growth rates two to three times the global average. By doing this, we are creating the right conditions here at home for Canadian businesses and exporters to compete and succeed internationally.

An important part of the equation is ensuring that two-way trade and investment between Canada and other countries, including China, takes place in a stable and secure manner. That is why we have signed over 24 foreign investment promotion and protection agreements with key trade and investment partners, including China, the world's second-largest economy.

Let us be clear. What would happen if we do not sign these agreements? We would be working in a system without clear rules, without parameters, and without clear guidelines. Thus, it is important to note that as a result of this agreement, Canadian investors in China would no longer have to rely upon the Chinese legal system to have investment disputes resolved. Let me be clear: This agreement would give Canadian investors in China the same types of protections that foreign investors have long had in Canada.

I have to ask the member opposite, why would he deny Canadian investors the same benefits abroad that foreign investors have in Canada?

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1920)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, here are some facts.

This agreement would be in force for 15 years and even if the government does not renew the agreement and cancels it, the provisions of the agreement mean that it would stay in force for a further 15 years after that. The member well knows that. In short, this agreement, even if cancelled, would be in force for a minimum of 30 years, plus the one year. That is a fact.

Second, I put a motion before the trade committee to study the FIPA. As the current Conservative government is fond of doing, it went behind closed doors, so I am not at liberty to tell members how anyone voted. However, what I can tell members is that when we came out of that meeting, my motion was denied.

When the government tries to tell the Canadian public that it wants to shine the light on this agreement, that is belied by the facts. The government refused to study this FIPA and to bring stakeholders, Canadians and investors to our committee where we could actually study the agreement to see if it were a good deal.

The reason the Conservatives were afraid to do that is that they know it is a bad deal. They know that Canadians would not accept a deal that would allow China to go behind closed doors to hear disputes in private and they would not sign a deal that would give Canadian investors less equal treatment than Chinese investors.

I ask the member, why will the government not agree to study this deal when it will have such important ramifications and be in force for a minimum of 31 years? Why will it not allow the trade committee to study this? For Canadians, answer that direct question.

• (1925)

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Again, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member wants to lead off in a misleading way on 31 years, so I will come back to my original statement about the 31 sitting days that this agreement was tabled in the House. Why did the NDP and the Liberals shy away from debate? They had ample opportunity to debate this. They wanted to draw this out and make something more of it than it actually was. That ruse simply did not work.

As I said before, our government signed this agreement to help protect the interests of Canadian investors, particularly Canadian investors in China. I would point out that our government has brought transparency to the treaty process by tabling it in the House of Commons. It should be very clear that it was not the Conservative Party that chose not to debate it. It was the Conservative Party that chose to table it. It was the NDP that chose not to debate it in the House of Commons for the country to hear.

This is very similar to the other 24 investment treaties we signed with key trade and investment partners. It establishes clear rules for Canadian businesses when they are investing abroad.

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like an update on the government's plans to replace our fighter jets.

Like me, Canadians would really like to hear some concrete details on what exactly is going on with the secretariat. Has there been any progress on this file? Canadians would really like to have some concrete details on this matter.

La Presse revealed recently that Public Works and Government Services Canada is considering a short-term alternative besides the F-35 to replace the CF-18s.

The government has finally recognized the delays and serious problems associated with the production of that aircraft. It realizes that perhaps we need to take action now to ensure that we do not end up with a fleet that is too old to fly in a few years' time, without any replacements waiting in the wings. The situation is becoming more and more critical.

For months, or even years now, we have been telling the government over and over that it needs to have a plan B, since plan A appears to have some serious holes in it.

Many participating countries have withdrawn from the program and others have put their military procurement strategies on hold. Still others have scaled back their order to adjust to the new production costs.

The government continued the charade, insisting that everything was fine, openly and without shame here in this House. Over the past several months, the program has become quite a joke.

When my colleagues and I said that this program was a fiasco, the minister said:

The member...is stuck in...misinformation and misrepresentation about the benefits to Canada of the F-35 program.

Misinformation and misrepresentation: all the minister's and the government's statements on this issue turned out to be misinformation. No government member ever apologized for misleading Canadians and this House.

For more than six years, the Conservatives have shown us, step by step and point by point, what not to do when it comes to military procurement. They did not have a bidding process for the F-35s. They did not provide any formal guarantee of the industrial spinoffs or any formal guarantee of jobs. They hid the \$10 billion overrun in total costs. And more importantly, no one has taken responsibility yet.

The KPMG report released in December highlighted the Conservatives' bad management, just as the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Auditor General and the NDP did previously. We have been talking about this issue for months.

Yet a short time ago, the Minister of National Defence said that the total cost to acquire the F-35s would be \$9 billion. Those who said otherwise were just making their numbers up.

He also said that there was no need for a bidding process because the F-35 was the only option that would provide our troops with the best possible equipment.

Adjournment Proceedings

We know that the cost of the F-35s has mushroomed, and the Conservatives have no plan B because they selected a sole supplier. We also know that everything the Conservatives said about the F-35s was misleading and false.

How much misinformation, how many false statements, how many internal accounting documents are still hidden away in the offices of the two ministers responsible for this file?

I would also like to know whether the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence can provide any useful details about the secretariat's progress.

Have they visited manufacturing facilities lately? Have there been discussions about alternatives?

I am sure that Canadians would be happy to know any meaningful details he can provide.

• (1930)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows full well that we would never mislead her. Everything I have to say tonight is the truth and shows what we are doing to replace the Royal Canadian Air Force's CF-18 fleet.

The new story of the replacement program, which is already well known throughout the country, begins in the spring of 2012 with the Auditor General's report.

[English]

He gave a detailed report. It has been discussed in this place. It made a particular point about full life-cycle costs for the F-35 and the need to calculate them properly to make sure they were full life-cycle costs, not a practice previously undertaken either for fighter jets or other acquisitions in National Defence. We accepted that recommendation immediately.

However, we went beyond it and put together a seven-point plan that included action on that recommendation but represented a restart of this program, a program that had not really begun because money had not been spent to buy a new aircraft to replace the CF-18. We were still some years away from an actual acquisition.

We froze funding on the acquisition. We established the seven-point plan.

[Translation]

We established a secretariat to complete the work that the government has to do as part of this new plan. This is not just any kind of secretariat with a few employees. It is led by a number of ministers and has a governance committee led by very reputable deputy ministers from the public service of Canada. To some extent, it resembles the secretariat that successfully ran the program to replace our naval ships.

[English]

Then surprise, surprise, the work done already by the secretariat has borne fruit. I am not going to give all the credit to public servants serving the Government of Canada now because there are independent experts who are taking part in the work of this governance committee: Denis Desautels, a former Auditor General

of Canada, very distinguished; and Dr. Kenneth Norrie, a former university president.

The House knows very well what their work has achieved so far. In December, two ministers presented some of that work: the DND annual report on costs; the KPMG independent review of those costs, including the forward-looking cost estimate framework; as well as an Industry Canada update on the industrial opportunities already accruing to Canada through the joint strike fighter program, of which we remain a member.

There has been a lot of rhetoric, and a lot of misinformation has been spread about the costs. They now cover a 42-year life-cycle. They still represent the 65 F-35s, which are candidate aircraft for the acquisition. However, the costs have in effect not changed. KPMG and DND confirm the acquisition would be about \$9 billion, and the running costs about \$1 billion a year.

What do we have to do next? Obviously, under the seven points, an options analysis still needs to be done. That is detailed work taking place in the secretariat. We are going to leave to them the task of carrying that work forward. It is going to relate to a full range of choices and outline the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. We set aside the statement of requirements for the fighter aircraft that had been previously used. We are going to assess—

• (1935)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I would like to quickly go back to one point.

He said that money had not been spent, but the government has already spent \$700 billion on the F-35 joint strike fighter jet development program. It is important to make that distinction, because many people who are having a hard time paying for their groceries could eat for a very long time with that kind of money. It is important to note that.

Now, I am a little confused about what the parliamentary secretary just said. He talked about a restart, while the Minister of Public Works said that the work had already been done and that the money had been used. Alternatives have already been examined, such as the Eurofighter, the Rafale and the Super Hornet.

Have there been any developments with respect to the specific alternatives?

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, my colleague can rest assured that the planes she mentioned, and perhaps others, have never before been subjected to such rigorous evaluation.

The evaluation is being carried out under the authority of a new secretariat that was given its mandate by the government itself and that reports to the House. This is unprecedented for the procurement of fighter jets for Canada.

Yes, we must make that distinction. There are two programs to develop a new aircraft with several partners.

Adjournment Proceedings

Several hundreds of millions of dollars has already been spent, but not one cent has been spent to date to replace our CF-18s, no contract has been signed, and no decision about or analysis of the options has been made.

[*English*]

We are taking the time necessary for due diligence, to ensure oversight and transparency and that we get the right aircraft and value for taxpayers' money. The current Auditor General has already said that our government is taking steps in the right direction and there have been other very positive comments on the success of these

seven points so far. We will wait for the options analysis, hopefully later this year, and for the completion of the seven points.

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 7:37 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS			
Tamil Heritage Month		Mrs. Glover	13782
Mr. Alexander	13777	Electoral Boundaries	
Chinese New Year		Mr. Rae	13782
Ms. Sitsabaesan	13777	Mr. Harper	13782
Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal		Mr. Rae	13782
Mrs. Ambler	13777	Mr. Harper	13782
Child Care		International Trade	
Ms. St-Denis	13778	Mr. Rae	13782
School Closures		Mr. Harper	13782
Mr. Armstrong	13778	The Environment	
Horseshoe Tavern		Ms. Leslie	13782
Mr. Cash	13778	Ms. Rempel	13783
Community Infrastructure		Ms. Leslie	13783
Ms. Bateman	13778	Ms. Rempel	13783
Hockey Day in Canada		Mr. Julian	13783
Mr. Del Mastro	13778	Ms. Rempel	13783
Rehabilitation Residence		Mr. Julian	13783
Ms. Michaud	13779	Mr. Anderson	13783
Canada-India Trade		Electoral Boundaries	
Mr. Shory	13779	Mr. Boulerville	13784
Child Care		Mr. Ritz	13784
Ms. Charlton	13779	Mr. Angus	13784
Iran		Mr. Poilievre	13784
Mr. Menegakis	13779	Ethics	
Child Care		Mr. Angus	13784
Ms. Sgro	13780	Mr. Angus	13784
The Economy		Mr. Van Loan	13784
Mr. Gourde	13780	Electoral Boundaries	
Employment Insurance		Mr. Scott	13784
Mr. Lapointe	13780	Mr. Ritz	13784
Conservative Party of Canada		Mr. Scott	13785
Mr. Brown (Barrie)	13780	Mr. Harper	13785
ORAL QUESTIONS		International Trade	
Electoral Boundaries		Mr. Easter	13785
Mr. Mulcair	13781	Mr. Keddy	13785
Mr. Harper	13781	Mr. Coderre	13785
Mr. Mulcair	13781	Mr. Harper	13785
Mr. Harper	13781	Aboriginal Affairs	
The Budget		Ms. Bennett	13785
Mr. Mulcair	13781	Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	13785
Mr. Harper	13781	Child Care	
Ms. Nash	13781	Ms. Charlton	13785
Mrs. Glover	13781	Ms. Finley	13786
Ms. Nash	13781	Ms. Charlton	13786
		Ms. Finley	13786
		Veterans	
		Mr. Chicoine	13786
		Mr. Blaney	13786
		Mr. Stoffer	13786

Mr. Blaney	13786
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Williamson.....	13786
Mr. Kenney.....	13787
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Toone	13787
Ms. Finley	13787
Mr. Chisholm.....	13787
Ms. Finley.....	13787
Canada Revenue Agency	
Mr. Rankin	13787
Mrs. Shea.....	13787
Mr. Rankin	13787
Mrs. Shea.....	13787
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Cuzner	13788
Ms. Finley	13788
Mr. Dion.....	13788
Ms. Finley.....	13788
Canadian Wheat Board	
Ms. Ashton.....	13788
Mr. Ritz.....	13788
Mr. Allen (Welland).....	13788
Mr. Ritz.....	13789
Veterans Affairs	
Mr. Hayes	13789
Mr. Blaney	13789
Health	
Ms. Fry.....	13789
Mrs. Aglukkaq	13789
International Co-operation	
Ms. Laverdière	13789
Mr. Fantino.....	13789
Aboriginal Affairs	
Mr. Clarke.....	13789
Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North).....	13790
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Dionne Labelle	13790
Ms. Finley.....	13790
International Trade	
Mr. Bellavance	13790
Mr. Keddy.....	13790
Points of Order	
Oral Questions	
Mr. Van Loan.....	13790
Mr. Harris (St. John's East).....	13790

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Interparliamentary Delegations	
Ms. Charlton	13791
Mr. Tilson	13791
Mr. Leef.....	13791

Petitions	
The Environment	
Mrs. Hughes.....	13791
Genetically Modified Alfalfa	
Mr. Reid.....	13791
Property Rights	
Mr. Reid.....	13791
Genetically Modified Organisms	
Mr. Valeriote.....	13791
Shark Finning	
Mr. Donnelly.....	13791
Experimental Lakes Area	
Mr. Donnelly.....	13792
Genetically Modified Alfalfa	
Mr. Cannan.....	13792
The Environment	
Mr. Thibeault.....	13792
Rights of the Unborn	
Mr. Tilson	13792
The Environment	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona).....	13792
Mrs. Mourani.....	13792
Ms. Chow	13792
Parks Canada	
Ms. Chow	13792
The Environment	
Ms. Chow	13792
Lyme Disease	
Ms. May.....	13792
The Environment	
Ms. May.....	13792
Animal Welfare	
Mr. Atamanenko.....	13792
The Environment	
Mr. Gravelle.....	13793
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	13793
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	13793
Committees of the House	
National Defence	
Mr. O'Connor.....	13793
Motion.....	13793
(Motion agreed to).....	13793
Mr. O'Connor.....	13793
Motion.....	13793
(Motion agreed to).....	13793

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act	
Mr. Kenney.....	13793
Bill C-43. Third reading	13793
Mr. Lamoureux.....	13796
Mrs. Groguhé.....	13796
Mr. Lizon.....	13796
Ms. Sitsabaiesan.....	13797

Ms. Sims	13797
Mr. Kenney.....	13799
Mr. Lamoureux.....	13799
Mrs. Groguhé.....	13799
Mr. Kenney.....	13800
Mr. Lamoureux.....	13801
Mr. Lamoureux.....	13801
Mr. Dykstra.....	13803
Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard).....	13804
Mr. Valeriote.....	13804
Mr. Dykstra.....	13804
(Bill read the third time and passed).....	13808
Motion agreed to.....	13808
Business of Supply	
Opposition Motion—Employment Insurance	
Motion.....	13808
Motion negatived.....	13809

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Pope John Paul II Day Act	
Mr. Lizon.....	13809

Bill C-266. Second reading.....	13809
Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue).....	13811
Mr. Lamoureux.....	13811
Ms. Nash.....	13811
Mr. Simms.....	13812
Mr. Opitz.....	13814
Mr. Côté.....	13815

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Canada Post Corporation

Ms. Crowder.....	13816
Mr. Poilievre.....	13817

Foreign Investment

Mr. Davies (Vancouver Kingsway).....	13817
Mr. Keddy.....	13818

National Defence

Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue).....	13819
Mr. Alexander.....	13820

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>