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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, today led by the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

TREBLE VICTOR

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the military theorist Clausewitz once said, “If the...leader is filled with high ambition and if he pursues his aims with audacity and strength of will, he will reach them in spite of all obstacles”.

On April 11, I had the honour of attending a dinner with such leaders. I joined Treble Victor at its Highland Mess Dinner, which was graciously hosted by our friends at the 48th Highlanders of Canada. Treble Victor is a volunteer network of Canadian and Allied veterans who have served their country with distinction and transitioned into successful careers in the private sector. The men and women of Treble Victor continue to serve our country and their comrades-in-arms. They have raised funds for military families, wounded veterans and other charities.

Most importantly, Treble Victor members have helped Canadian Forces members transition out of uniform. They have also educated corporate Canada on the tremendous value of hiring veterans.

I salute the men and women of Treble Victor for their continued audacity and strength of will, as they help our Canadian Forces, support our veterans and build a strong Canada.

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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to learn that yesterday MHA Gerry

Rogers was expelled from the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador over things she did not do and words she did not say on social media.

The Speaker made this ruling despite the fact that this MHA was added to a social media group by another user and the associated conduct was that of other members of that group.

As a young politician, I find this very troubling. This is exactly the kind of situation that keeps young people away from politics. For my generation, cynicism is simply skyrocketing when it comes to politics.

How can people expect young people to engage when the very tools we are encouraged to use are misunderstood? This is simply unacceptable. This kind of conduct belongs to another time and another place.

[Translation]

That is why I am proud to be a member of the NDP, the only party that stands in solidarity with my generation, the only party that understands the importance of social media in democratic engagement, the only party that gives a voice to young Canadians and the only party that gives us a real place in Parliament.

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[English]

STUDENT UNIONS

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the University of Regina Students' Union for ending its involvement in the anti-Semitic boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against the State of Israel.

The U of R Students' Union is now out of the anti-Semitism business, and most promising, the movement to end anti-Semitism funding in Canadian universities is growing.

One day after the U of R decision, the University of Manitoba Students' Union also voted to prohibit Students Against Israeli Apartheid from receiving funds or using its facilities.

The State of Israel, like any western democracy, is not perfect, but to label it an apartheid state is just wrong.

I therefore congratulate both student unions for recognizing what the State of Israel is, a multi-party liberal democracy.

*Statements by Members***FRANK BORLAND**

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 18, the community of Bishop's Falls, our province and our country, lost a community leader, devout family man and a war hero.

Frank "Jiggs" Borland was born in Pennsylvania in 1925 and moved early to Toronto. He lied about his age to join the Canadian Army, and at age 16 he went overseas to fight in the war, mainly in France. Jiggs was involved with the liberation of many concentration camps, as well as the liberation of Dieppe.

In 2005, Jiggs received a letter from French President Jacques Chirac stating he had been chosen to receive the Legion of Honour medal, which is one of France's highest awards.

In his early fifties, Jiggs moved to Bishop's Falls, where he settled and operated a farm just outside the town. He was a member of the rural development association, the agriculture board, a long-time member of the Lions Club and deputy governor. He was instrumental in the construction of the Lion Max Simms Memorial Camp.

Recently, I had the honour of presenting Jiggs with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal. He passed away shortly after that.

Jiggs Borland: a great hero and a true friend to us all.

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BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF CANADA

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of all members of this House, and all Canadians, the great work being done by Big Brothers and Big Sisters Canada in their centennial year.

This organization's mission statement is that they commit to Canada's young people that they will be leaders in providing them with the highest quality volunteer-based mentoring programs. Currently it is providing mentorship to over 36,000 young Canadians, some of whom live in my riding of Don Valley East.

This organization helps many young people live up to their full potential. It tries to make a difference for youth of Canada as it provides programs in and out of school and helps our young and vulnerable stay in school and get an education. I am happy to say that this year is its centenary.

I have personally been fortunate to have been a Big Brother myself, to Gordon Douglas Fraser, and have been delighted to see him grow up into a successful member of our society. His experience has opened my eyes to the need for enhanced support for our young people in Canada, and I can say this has enriched my life.

I urge all members of this House to learn more about Big Brothers and Big Sisters Canada, and to take time out of their busy lives to meet with them.

• (1410)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the past couple of weeks in my riding have been very busy, as my schedule has been filled with meetings, town halls and marches.

In Laurentides—Labelle, workers and employers have joined forces to challenge the employment insurance reform. The reform affects not only the unemployed. Employers are worried about losing valuable human resources that are essential to their businesses.

For instance, some entrepreneurs have equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. They rely on skilled operators who return year after year to fill positions that require a lot of experience.

The Conservatives keep going on and on about job creation, but their policies are counterproductive and fly in the face of regional development initiatives.

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[English]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next week is National Volunteer Week and I would like to highlight that importance by honouring the 13 million volunteers of this country who have donated the valuable gifts of time and energy to improving their communities.

In my riding of Perth—Wellington, volunteers understand the importance of helping every generation. Volunteers from many non-profit organizations and retirement homes, such as One Care and Royal Palisade, deliver peace of mind and well-being to these families, caregivers and clients. Perth—Wellington volunteers from organizations like Big Brothers and Big Sisters devote hours to assist our youth with the proper mentorship and guidance so they may become the future leaders and contributors of our country.

I wish to extend my thanks and appreciation to all our volunteers for their dedication to improving our communities.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to lay out some facts about Keystone. It is a fact that the Keystone pipeline will create thousands of badly needed jobs for Canada and America, especially while sequestration brings thousands of American vets home.

It is a fact that the U.S. state department has declared the new route of the pipeline to be environmentally sound. It is a fact that the Nebraska governor supports the pipeline. It is a fact that two-thirds of all Americans support it as well. It is a fact that the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate have voted to approve Keystone.

Statements by Members

There are over 80 pipelines that currently cross the 49th parallel. The only thing that makes Keystone special is that radical environmentalists and Hollywood have chosen to make it their cause of the day. In light of all the facts, we are encouraged and we are hopeful that the President will do the right thing and approve Keystone.

While we are talking about facts, it is a fact that when my colleagues and I go to Washington, we go to create jobs for Canadians. The scariest fact is that when the Leader of the Opposition goes to Washington, he goes to kill Canadian jobs.

* * *

RITA MACNEIL

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I join today with Cape Bretoners, Nova Scotians and Canadians in honouring and celebrating the life of Rita MacNeil, a treasured artist and performer who passed away last night. Our thoughts are with her loved ones.

Rita will be remembered for her iconic ability to mix storytelling with music, bringing audiences with her on a journey of triumphs, heartbreaks and the struggle for justice. Her decades of music making earned her accolades. Her passion, strength and kindness won her hearts.

Rita's progressive work with women and workers was well known and appreciated. She aptly demonstrated her quick wit and political sense, remarking in 2008, "What's radical about equal pay for equal work?" She was a passionate and beautiful voice for us.

Rita spoke often of family and community and of breaking down barriers between people. Her lyrics from *Sweet Wisdom* remain powerful:

And if we could see inside each other's hearts
Would it make a difference, would we understand
Find no resistance, just love, joy and peace

I thank Rita for her wisdom and her passion. We will miss her.

* * *

● (1415)

RITA MACNEIL

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

It's a working man I am
And I've been down under ground.
And I swear to God if I ever see the sun
Or for any length of time
I can hold it in my mind
I never again will go down under ground.

Yesterday, Canada lost of its finest musical voices, country and folk singer-songwriter Rita MacNeil.

After much hardship in her early years, her breakthrough came in 1987's crossover hit, *Flying on Your Own*. By 1990, she was a bestselling country artist in Canada. Through it all, Cape Breton's first lady of song remained down to earth and served as a patron for

many emerging and struggling artists. A proud native of Big Pond, Cape Breton, she paid eloquent tribute to her home's cultural and industrial roots through songs like *Working Man*.

We all express our sincere condolences to Rita MacNeil's family, her friends and her colleagues.

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CHILD POVERTY

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at a time when my home town is struggling to make Hamilton the best place to raise a child, our community's efforts are being undermined by the federal government.

A devastating report by UNICEF ranks the well-being of children in Canada at a deplorable 17th out of 29 rich countries, a score that has not budged in almost a decade. Canada scored below average on a number of criteria, including obesity and child poverty.

We know that children are not poor; it is their parents who are poor. The Conservative government is making things worse, instead of better. The Conservatives are attacking collective bargaining rights, abandoning pay equity and kicking workers off of EI unless they take a 30% pay cut. They are also taking jobs away from Canadian workers and legislating lower pay for the foreign workers who replace them.

It was in 1989 that the House unanimously adopted the NDP motion to end child poverty by the year 2000. Clearly, we still have a long way to go. Canada can and must do better.

In honour of this year's Mother's Day, let us finally make the well-being of our children a national priority.

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LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Ted Opatz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and veterans were shocked when the leader of the NDP failed to retract insulting and extreme comments made by his party on the accomplishments of Canadian veterans during the First World War, which includes the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In addition to these insults, the NDP then removed all references in its party platform to celebrating the centennial of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II.

The NDP leader said that his senior MP wrote those comments years ago, yet we know the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie said in 2011 that he still agreed with those comments.

Like socialism, this is yet another example of the leader of the NDP trying to hide his party's extreme policies from Canadians.

The NDP leader must retract these outrageous and factually inaccurate comments that also injure the hundreds of millions who suffered under the totalitarian yoke of communism.

Canadians and veterans are watching and listening and waiting for an apology.

*Oral Questions***RITA MACNEIL**

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with sadness and pride today to pay tribute to a gentle soul, a great person and a much-loved Canadian.

Rita MacNeil passed away last night. During her stellar career, Rita recorded 24 albums, selling millions and earning countless ECMAs, CCMAs, Junos, a Gemini and, of course, the Order of Canada.

Rita's personal story is almost as well known as her music. She overcame many challenges to achieve her dreams and many of her songs speak of having the courage to rise above life's difficulties.

I am reminded today of a line from one of Rita's most famous songs, *Flying on Your Own*: "When you know the wings you ride can keep you in the sky...there isn't anyone holding back you".

Rita rode the wings of her Cape Breton home on her journey to stardom, and we will continue to hold her up through her music even though she is gone.

On behalf of my colleague for Sydney—Victoria and the entire House, I offer my deepest condolences to Rita's children, Wade and Laura and her entire family.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in an interview with Peter Mansbridge, the Liberal leader said that we must seek to understand the root cause behind the bombing attack on innocent civilians in Boston that killed three people and injured over 170 others. He said, "This happened because there is someone who feels completely excluded, completely at war with innocents, at war with a society. And our approach has to be, okay, where do those tensions come from?"

There is no "root cause" and no "tensions" that justify the killing and maiming of innocent civilians. This behaviour must be condemned unequivocally wherever it occurs. There can be no justification.

The Liberal leader must immediately clarify his comments about the brutal attack that took place on innocent civilians in Boston this week.

* * *

● (1420)

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the Canadian economy is becoming increasingly unstable, while over one million Canadians are looking for work and while climate change threatens the communities of millions of people, the Conservatives are wasting their time making attacks and inventing policies that an NDP government would supposedly put in place in 2015.

The sole purpose of those attacks is to divert attention away from their broken promises, like the promise not to raise taxes on everyday items.

The most vulnerable members of society are the ones who will pay for the Conservatives' tax hikes. This will affect seniors, who will see their grocery and pharmacy bills go up, and people who do not have access to the Conservatives' vote-buying tax credits, simply because their income is too low.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve a government that will put forward progressive policies and keep its promises. They deserve a government that will build bridges—an NDP government.

Together, we can make this happen.

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NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of NDP and his party are not fooling anyone when they try to deny the fact that they are a socialist party, or better yet when they try to muzzle their socialist MPs in the House of Commons.

The NDP philosophy of raising taxes on everything is a blatant sign that socialism is alive and thriving in their party ideology.

I would like to remind the NDP of the list of tax hikes that they would like to impose on the backs of hard-working Canadians: increased tax on job creators, financial transactions tax, and municipal sales tax. However, the icing on the cake is their \$20 billion carbon tax that would raise the price of nearly everything.

On this side of the House we will continue to stand tall for Canadians and oppose these reckless taxes from the party across the floor.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new Statistics Canada report shows that there has been another drop in the number of jobs available in Canada. Last month, only 200,000 jobs were available across the country. Meanwhile, 1.4 million Canadians are looking for work.

How is it possible that the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism is still allowing Canadian workers to be fired and replaced by temporary foreign workers when there are so few jobs available here in Canada?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we want to create jobs here in Canada. That is why, on May 2, 2011, Canadians elected a Conservative government whose priorities are jobs, job creation and the economy. Budget 2013 focuses on creating jobs for Canadians.

Oral Questions

That is why Canada has the best job creation record among all G7 countries, and we are going to continue down that path.

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 55,000 jobs were lost last month alone, and they are bragging about it and clapping.

In March, for every job available in Canada, there were seven Canadians looking for work. Meanwhile, the Minister of Immigration is allowing Canadian workers to be laid off and replaced, and the Minister of Human Resources is allowing the temporary foreign workers who replaced them to be paid 15% less. That is an incentive to fire Canadians.

Would either of these two ministers give Canadians some good news, like perhaps there will be a couple of jobs available in the Conservative cabinet in the next little while?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is some good news in response to our budget. John Chambers, the CEO of Cisco Systems, Inc. said:

The easiest place in the world to do business is Canada. Their prime minister gets it.

We are creating jobs in this country. However, it is interesting. The NDP, on the one hand, condemns the temporary foreign worker program, but on the other hand, we have letters from eight NDP members of Parliament begging the government to bring more temporary foreign workers into their ridings and to bend the rules to make it happen. Either they are in favour of the temporary foreign worker program or they are against it, but they are talking out of both sides of their mouths.

Would the leader of the NDP finally bring some certainty to that position?

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the IMF downgraded Canada's economic outlook for 2013, and today the Bank of Canada has done the same. Nevertheless, the Conservatives have decided to cut \$6 billion from investments in infrastructure, killing tens of thousands of good jobs.

Canadians are concerned because the economic instability that the Conservatives are causing seems to be getting worse, and the only plan the Conservatives have to create jobs in Canada is to hire temporary foreign workers.

Why are the Conservatives doing everything possible to kill jobs in Canada?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, quite the opposite is true. We are creating jobs for Canadians. That is why we are investing more money than ever before in infrastructure. We are making the biggest investment in infrastructure that this country has ever seen.

[*English*]

Again, on this question of temporary foreign workers, the leader of the NDP criticizes the temporary foreign worker program, while

his members of Parliament ask the government to bring in more temporary foreign workers for businesses in their ridings.

Would the leader of the NDP, for once, make it clear what his position is? He says he is against the program, but his members of Parliament are begging for the program to be expanded. Will you please stop the hypocrisy and—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The minister knows that he needs to address comments through the Chair, not at colleagues directly.

The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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HEALTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it seems that cutting \$36 billion in health care funding just is not enough for the Conservatives. Now they are dismantling the Health Council of Canada, the organization that monitors whether commitments set out in the health accords are actually being met. This latest move is nothing less than abdicating all accountability to Canadians on our health care system.

Why are the Conservatives attacking our public health care system?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a truly ridiculous attack. In fact, our government, again in budget 2013, is increasing funding for health care. At a 6% escalator, we have been increasing health care funding in every single year we have been in government, and we are increasing funding every year going forward, through until 2016. In fact, the federal government's rate of increase in health care spending is larger than that of any province in the country, including the NDP provincial governments. We take no lessons from the NDP on defending the principles of Canada's health care system.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Health Council of Canada and the health accords are examples of federalism at its best, but with one year left in the current accords, no sign of negotiations on the horizon and \$36 billion less in transfers, the future is very bleak indeed.

Will the Conservative government rescind the unilateral imposition on the provinces and commit to continuing to fund the important work of the Health Council of Canada?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will continue with our record funding just as I described, but when it comes to the "do as I say and not as I do" position of the NDP, it is not just the NDP that is guilty of this, it is also the Liberal Party. The NDP criticizes the temporary foreign worker program. The Liberals had a motion before Parliament yesterday condemning the temporary foreign worker program.

I have a letter here from the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Canadian Heritage has the floor.

Oral Questions

Hon. James Moore: Mr. Speaker, as I said, on the subject of credibility, which was raised by the NDP, my point is this: The new leader of the Liberal Party criticized yesterday the temporary foreign worker program, but I have a letter here from the new leader of the Liberal Party asking us to rush new temporary foreign workers from China to work in restaurants in his riding.

* * *

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 31 years ago, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into being. The charter is more than part of our history; it is part of our life. It guarantees that no matter where one is from, no matter what one believes, no matter what one looks like or who one loves, Canada is a place where we can be who we are freely.

Could the Minister of Canadian Heritage please inform the House of the government's plan to celebrate the anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms today?

• (1430)

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we believe in respecting Canada's history. That is why we are creating the Canadian museum of history, which I hope the Liberal Party will support. Of course, we do believe in the central principles of the charter, not least of which is section 15, the equality clause of the charter that says that all Canadians should be treated equally.

The question again to the leader of the Liberal Party is why he will not defend his constituents in creating jobs for his constituents instead of writing letters to bring in Chinese workers for businesses in his riding.

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TAXATION

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): For now I ask the questions, Mr. Speaker.

Today, the Bank of Canada has downgraded its forecast for economic—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Papineau now has the floor. This is taking an awful lot of time.

The hon. member for Papineau has the floor.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, today the Bank of Canada has downgraded its forecast for economic growth yet again. Growth is generated first and foremost by a thriving middle class, which makes the decision to hit them with an additional \$300 million tax on items ranging from baby carriages to vacuum cleaners all the more damaging.

For two days the government has refused to answer my question, so I will ask it again on behalf of middle-class Canadians. Will you cancel this new tax?

The Speaker: I will take this opportunity to remind the member for Papineau that questions are supposed to be put through the Chair, not directly to his colleagues.

The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Maybe he is in over his head, Mr. Speaker.

On these two questions, they actually work in concert. It is pretty clear in this year's budget that we are the party of low taxes. The Liberal Party is the party of high taxes. When it comes to employment, it is this government that believes in standing up for creating Canadian jobs for Canadians. It is a pretty simple principle.

Again, the question is to the leader of the Liberal Party. If there is sincerity behind his question on creating jobs for Canadians, why is he writing letters to bring in Chinese workers in the food industry in Montreal rather than helping us create jobs for Canadians in Montreal?

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): There are still two years left, Mr. Speaker.

With their new tax, water heaters will be more expensive, ovens will be more expensive, sheets will be more expensive, saris will be more expensive and bicycles will be more expensive.

Even the owner of the bicycle shop where the Minister of Finance held his news conference is complaining that taxes are going up for his clients.

Will the minister cancel this new tax on the middle class?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since our government was elected in 2006, it has reduced Canadians' taxes by more than \$200 billion. We have even reduced the GST from 7% to 5%.

Houses cost less, cars cost less, books cost less, family items cost less and everything that Canadians need costs less.

That is what the Conservative government has accomplished.

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a little reality: Conservatives are breaking their promise. They are raising taxes and making life more expensive. Conservatives have really pulled a bait and switch. They pretended that prices were going down, and then they raised taxes on thousands of everyday items.

The price of everything, from ballpoint pens to one's daily shampoo, is going up because of the Conservatives. When will they abandon this plan to make it harder for Canadians to make ends meet? When will they finally come clean and admit that they misled Canadians?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, for seven years now, we have been reducing taxes for Canadians. The NDP has voted against that tooth and nail every time.

We continue to reduce taxes for Canadians, but at the same time, unbelievably, the NDP is promoting cheap products coming in from other countries. Competition for Canadian companies from companies in China is getting the support of the NDP.

Oral Questions

• (1435)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and New Democrats will never vote in favour of a Conservative budget that misleads Canadians and that raises taxes on family essentials.

[*Translation*]

While the Conservatives are wearing their rose-coloured glasses, Canadians are paying for their bad choices. They are going to take money directly out of Canadians' pockets. The prices of all consumer products will go up, from school supplies to dish soap.

Will the minister keep his election promise or will he maintain the tax hikes?

[*English*]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have the lowest tax rate in 50 years because our government continues on a low-tax plan.

Incredibly, the NDP is fighting for a tax break for companies that are operating in China and India. We will stand up for Canadians. We will fight for Canadians. We will fight against the NDP, who want to raise taxes on Canadians through their carbon tax or whatever tax they may come up with.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with that answer.

Yesterday, the Minister of National Revenue claimed that cuts to her department will only affect internal operations. However, *Le Devoir* reported that 221 audit positions have been eliminated since the Conservatives came to power.

The Conservatives have also cut \$68 million from the CRA returns compliance program.

Why are the Conservatives not making combatting tax evasion a priority?

[*English*]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of that question.

There are nearly 400 more tax auditors today in CRA than there were in 2006. Our economic action plan 2013 commits to cracking down on those who avoid paying their taxes, to ensure tax fairness for all Canadians. We have increased the size of our international audit division by over 40% since forming government, and we have identified nearly \$4.6 billion in unpaid taxes.

Every time we bring forward a tax loophole to close, the NDP and the Liberals oppose it.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we reject the premise of that answer.

The minister needs to check with her department before repeating herself. Her own report on plans and priorities, the one with her

portrait on the front, says that \$120 million and over 250 staff are going to be cut from the reporting compliance section, the ones whose job it is to detect non-compliance through "risk assessment, audit, investigation".

How can the minister not agree that she is cutting back on investigation? How can she say that these are only internal matters?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is because they are internal matters. We have added over 400 more tax auditors than we had in 2006. We have introduced over 75 measures to improve the integrity of the tax system. If the New Democrats really are serious about fighting tax evasion, they will vote for the 2013 economic action plan.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Natural Resources, who is known for his intellectual laziness, avoided answering questions. We will try again.

The application to participate in the Enbridge public hearings contains the following phrase: ...refer to the Board's Guidance Document on Section 55.2 and Participation in a Facilities Hearing attached to the Hearing Order OH-002-2013 as Appendix VI, and again as Appendix III of Procedural Update No. 1 for OH-002...

What is that all about?

[*English*]

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am really surprised that this member would repeat the ridiculous question that was asked during the hearing yesterday and take up the time of the hon. members attending the session.

We are committed to a robust National Energy Board review. Every person with a direct interest must be heard by the NEB, and everyone with relevant expertise may be heard. This is consistent with the public policy objectives. Any other individuals who want to be heard can of course make their views known to their member of Parliament.

• (1440)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is no such thing as a ridiculous question, but there certainly are some ridiculous answers and they are coming from that minister over there.

Let us try again. Can he explain his advice to Canadians?

...refer to the Board's Guidance Document on Section 55.2 and Participation in a Facilities Hearing attached to the Hearing Order OH-002-2013 as Appendix VI, and again as Appendix III of Procedural Update No. 1 for OH-002...

Now is that clear? Well—

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

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Oral Questions

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, anyone with a direct interest in a hearing can, by looking at three pages, fill out that form in five to ten minutes without getting mired in the detail that the member opposite would like to perpetrate.

However, let me just say that there is an implication of muzzling, and all this talk of muzzling reminds me of the NDP leader's muzzling of the embattled socialist majority of his party. Why not "let a thousand flowers bloom"?

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the minister is mired and he expects Canadians to figure it out on their own, when he could not understand the forms even with an entire department helping him. On top of that, the minister has not retracted his comments denying climate change. He said, "I think that people aren't as worried as they were before about global warming of two degrees...scientists have recently told us that our fears (on climate change) are exaggerated." Unbelievable.

Is it appropriate for the Minister of Natural Resources of a G8 country to be a climate-change denier?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government takes very seriously the reality and the science of climate change. That is why we are taking urgent sector-by-sector regulatory action to reduce GHGs.

This House will recall that under the previous Liberal government GHG emissions grew by over 30%. By their incoherent and costly proposed policies, there is no reason to expect that the New Democrats would do any better. I remind this House again, this is the first Canadian government to actually reduce GHGs.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister is doing a fine job of re-clarifying the denial of his colleague's retraction.

[*Translation*]

The Minister of Natural Resources said that he and Canadians are not worried about global warming of two degrees. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper that reported these comments responded that the minister's ignorance was astounding. Global warming of two degrees marks the point of no return.

Why is the minister claiming that the threat of climate change is exaggerated?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that answer has been offered to the previous member, but I would remind the opposition of budget 2013 and all of the good environmental news that is contained therein: strengthening the Meteorological Service of Canada by fully one-quarter of a billion dollars, supporting clean technologies, supporting the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and new tax support for clean energy generation.

I would urge my colleagues on the other side of the House to support this budget.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is very simple. The minister told a newspaper that he is not concerned about a 2° Celsius increase in global temperatures and to back that up he attributed comments to scientists who do not exist. Since then he has proudly stood by his comments and his imaginary science.

This is about the future of our planet. Will the Minister of Natural Resources acknowledge that a 2° increase in global temperatures will cause feedback effects that cannot be reversed, yes or no?

● (1445)

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, I would reiterate that our government clearly and tangibly takes very seriously both the reality and the science of climate change and that is why we are achieving through our sector-by-sector regulatory approach, by investing in adaptation as well as mitigation. We are taking very seriously climate change where past Liberal governments have not and there is no indication that the NDP through its proposed \$21 billion carbon tax, which would go into general revenues, would reduce a single megaton of GHGs.

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[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is inconsistent. It is bragging about lowering certain tariffs, but at the same time it refuses to acknowledge that the increased tariffs on hundreds of products will mean more than \$300 million in additional taxes per year.

Unlike what this government would have us believe, foreign companies are not the ones who will have to pay these additional taxes. Canadian consumers will.

Why not simply cancel this tax on the middle class?

[*English*]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously the Liberals do not understand and do not support tax reductions that we have put in every successive budget since we formed government. We continue to reduce taxes while the Liberals and the NDP want to create special breaks for companies that are operating in China and India. We will continue to stand up for Canadians. We will continue to reduce their taxes and pay no attention to what the Liberals and the NDP want to do.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is conveniently in denial about its hidden tax hike on thousands of everyday items. It is middle-class Canadians who are being hit hardest by these price increases and parents are paying more now for school supplies, for playpens, and even bicycles.

Oral Questions

Could the Minister of Finance explain why, and could he explain why he is hitting small businesses and our border towns by sending their customers across the border to shop in the U.S.? The government should admit these are tax hikes, apologize, and cancel them.

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the Liberal Party members oppose every tax reduction that we have put in place, from reducing the GST from 7%, to 6%, to 5% and they stand in the House and want special services to be brought in from these different countries. These are competitive countries. We would rather that Canadian companies be able to compete internationally. We would hope that the opposition would kindly understand that.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these taxes are not hurting China, they are hurting middle-class Canadian families. Yesterday, the Bank of Canada joined with the IMF in downgrading the Canadian economy. This is after Canada lost 55,000 jobs just last month. Yet the Conservatives are hiking taxes on everything from toothbrushes to kids' bikes. With the economy getting weaker and with it becoming even more difficult for Canadians to make ends meet, why are the Conservatives attacking middle-class Canadian families with higher taxes?

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question should be: Why do the Liberals want to give a special break to companies that are operating in China and India?

We need to remember what the IMF said just yesterday and that is, "...Canada is in an enviable position....The policies that are being deployed are, in our minds, broadly appropriate..." In fact, the Bank of Canada, if the hon. member had read the budget, knows those GDP growth numbers are in line with what is in the budget.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Europeans have asked that any new trade agreement signed with Canada include major changes to our system for the protection of intellectual property, which would raise the cost of medications by about \$2.8 billion.

However, last week, the Europeans announced that they had dropped this demand in their trade negotiations with India.

Can the Minister of International Trade confirm that Canada will receive the same treatment?

• (1450)

[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, I may not have heard all of the question. The member started out on the CETA with the European Union and then started talking about a free trade agreement with India. I am not quite certain which answer she would like. We will negotiate both agreements in the best interests of Canadians.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2015 Canadians look forward to rejecting the premise of the government.

Let me clarify this for the hon. member. The fact is, Canada already has one of the strongest patent protection regimes in the world. There is no justification for acceding to European demands. In tough economic times the last thing we need is Conservatives negotiating a trade deal that would benefit large European pharmaceutical companies at the expense of Canadian seniors. India stood up to the pressure and Europe dropped its demands.

Will the minister commit to doing the same for Canadian seniors?

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, you have to ask yourself a question. Why would the NDP—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Because we speak through you, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, I ask myself the question, and I am sure every member in the House does, why does the NDP consistently—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Whoever asked the question, the parliamentary secretary is answering the question and he has the right to do so and he has the floor. The hon. parliamentary secretary can continue.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Mr. Speaker, we all ask ourselves the question: Why does the NDP consistently oppose every trade agreement that this government negotiates? Members can check the record. They can check individual members' statements. That party is anti-trade and anti—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Welland.

* * *

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill S-11, the safe food for Canadians act, brought in major changes to food inspection. Thousands of new import licences will be required and that is going to require more resources, not less. The minister promised that Bill S-11 would give the CFIA more tools and more resources. The minister oversaw two of the largest recalls in Canadian history and now he is planning to cut CFIA's budget and fire hundreds of employees.

Why is the minister telling Canadians one thing and doing the exact opposite?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in the consultation phase on Bill S-11. We are working with a number of groups both domestically and abroad that would import food into this country. We have to have an idea of what is coming so that we know what is there when a traceability situation is asked for.

We will have these consultations and then we will plan our course of action and put monies to that course once that plan is in place.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister was unable to manage the two latest crises and his only solution is to make more cuts within his department.

Bill S-11 made a simple promise: more resources for food inspection. Unfortunately, the minister is doing the opposite: he is allocating fewer resources and asking the employees to do more. That is a recipe for disaster. Three hundred food safety employees will be let go.

My question is simple: why is the minister making cuts to food safety?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the NDP members continue to do faulty research. They have their numbers wrong. We as a government continue to build the capacity of CFIA. We have put some \$150 million into its budget over the last two budgets in this cycle. We have also added 20% to its capacity at the front line.

We continue to do that while we are looking for efficiencies in the agency, and in every other department across the government, to make sure we are spending money properly on behalf of Canadian taxpayers and making sure their food is safe at the same time.

We will continue to do that. NDP members will continue to vote against all that.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for decades, women on reserves have been without the legal protections that are available to all other Canadians. In situations of family violence women have been victimized and kicked out of their homes with nowhere to go.

Aboriginal women, international associations and the NDP government in Manitoba all agree that something must change now. Could the Minister for the Status of Women please update the House on what our government is doing to protect women in aboriginal communities?

● (1455)

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud that our government is committed to giving aboriginal women the same protection and rights as all Canadian women. For over a quarter of a century, aboriginal women living on reserve have been without access to the legal protection they need

when it comes to domestic violence. Our bill will protect thousands of aboriginal women and children. In situations of family violence, it will allow judges to enforce emergency protection orders and remove a violent partner from the home.

How the NDP and Liberals can continue to oppose this is incomprehensible to me. Our government will make sure aboriginal women have equal rights.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative mismanagement of EI just keeps getting worse. For years HRSDC was sensitive to regional economies by allowing companies like the fish processing plant in Matane, Quebec, to help workers become eligible for EI. Suddenly there is an about-face.

To add insult to injury, the Conservatives are forcing the workers to repay the government for benefits they collected under their old policy. If there really was a long-standing problem, why did it take so long for the Conservatives to act, and why are they making the workers pay for their incompetence?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing investigation involving potentially false declarations and misrepresentations, which could have cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Any individuals who have been deemed ineligible for claims have the right to appeal the decision, but it is unfair to those who pay into unemployment insurance if we do nothing to try to uncover those who would abuse the system.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is no truth to what the minister is saying. If the Conservatives truly wanted to improve the system, they would have consulted the provinces, seasonal industries and workers. They did not even conduct an impact study on the changes they are making. What a bunch of incompetent administrators.

At a time when they are protecting their friends in the Senate and cutting the number of inspectors who fight tax evasion, they are sending investigators into the homes of the unemployed, who can barely make ends meet.

Why are the Conservatives going after the unemployed instead of fraudsters?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are trying to help the unemployed find new work. That is why we have enhanced the job alert system. Unemployed Canadians are notified of positions available in their region more quickly and more frequently than before so that they can find a good job at home.

Oral Questions

However, if there are no jobs in their field in their region, employment insurance will be there for them, as always.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the quotas imposed by the Conservatives in their employment insurance reform continue to produce adverse effects.

Service Canada is forcing 80 workers at the Eastern Quebec Seafoods plant to repay the government for benefits they have received since 2011 under a Service Canada work-unemployment program. Plant employees might have to repay as much as \$14,000 in benefits that the plant, the employees, but most of all Service Canada deemed to be legitimate.

Will the minister step in and ensure that Service Canada honours its agreements with the plant and the workers in Matane?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very important to recognize that a very serious investigation is under way involving potentially false declarations and misrepresentations, which have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to Canadians who contribute to the employment insurance system.

Anyone whose claim for employment insurance has been deemed ineligible can always appeal the decision.

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding, the Conservatives are ordering a former machinist at Aveos, a father of six, to pay back \$9,000 in employment insurance benefits.

He and 1,500 other Aveos workers are in the government's crosshairs, all because Aveos shut down when the Conservative government refused to enforce the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

Why are the Conservatives so determined to make employment insurance claimants pay the price for the government's bad decisions? Will they get off the backs of Aveos workers?

• (1500)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the Aveos workers.

However, there are always rules that apply in certain situations. I cannot talk about specific situations, but I can say that we are working with the company and the employees to check that the rules were followed.

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[English]

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, health care groups are alarmed over the government's decision to dismantle the Health Council of Canada, which was set up in 2003 by Prime Minister Chrétien and the premiers in order to ensure accountability and equality of access to health care across the country by all Canadians. This, plus its decision unilaterally to cut 50% off health transfers, signals clearly that the government wants to walk away from medicare.

Did the Minister of Health actually know that these decisions would lead to the dismantling of medicare, or was that always part of her government's master plan anyway?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was that party that cut health transfers in Canada.

The Health Council of Canada's 10-year mandate expires in 2014, meaning there is no need to continue federal funding. Our government announced long-term stable funding transfers to the provinces and territories to help them achieve their health care priorities.

Federal health transfers have grown from \$19 billion in 2005-06 to \$27 billion in 2011-12 and will reach \$40 billion by the end of the decade.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those increases and transfers were put in place by a Liberal government.

Recently, diluted chemotherapy endangered the lives of about 1,200 Canadians, yet the Minister of Health shrugs it off and blames the provinces when she knows full well that the provinces only have responsibility for pharmacies and that it is the federal government that has responsibility for drug safety.

Canadians have lost confidence in their medications. Hospitals cannot trust drug labels and the instructions on them.

When will the minister stop blaming the provinces—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was the finance minister for Nunavut dealing with the Liberal health care cuts.

Patient care in a hospital, the practice of pharmacy and admixing all fall under the provincial jurisdiction. The Ontario government has said it would be regulating these sites.

I have instructed Health Canada's officials to co-operate fully with the investigation that the Wynne government has been leading. If the review determines that there is a federal role, we will seriously consider any changes that are recommended.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us give the Minister of Natural Resources one more chance to try to explain himself.

He let slip that this unintelligible form that he created exists to stop the public from "gaming the system".

Oral Questions

In reality, these are obstacles to regular people trying to raise their voices about important issues. Under these new rules, the 4,000 Canadians who testified about the northern gateway pipeline would never have made it through the door.

Will he now agree to open up this process and allow Canadians to speak, even the ones he happens to disagree with?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for the member opposite to get his facts right. Some 4,400 people signed up for the hearings, but only about 1,400 actually showed up, which indicated what the purpose of those registrations were. They were there to repeat the same canned message. They were there to undermine the process.

Everyone who has a direct interest has every right to appear, and they will be heard by the National Energy Board.

* * *

• (1505)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a minister who knows nothing but canned messages. It is an insult to the Canadians who came forward to defend their interests and raise their voices in defence of their communities and homes.

However, this is only the latest minister from a long line of incompetents, from Bev Oda to Peter Penashue to the former minister of aboriginal affairs. Under the current Prime Minister, shocking incompetence seems to be the fast track to cabinet, and now we have a minister who denies the science of climate change.

Is there not anyone over there who will stand up and denounce this bogus claim, or do the Conservatives still believe that all scientists are not actually worried about a two-degree rise in this planet's temperature?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this gives me a chance again to say that our government in fact does take very seriously the science of climate change and does take real actions, not the picking of the pockets of hard-working Canadians for a carbon tax that will increase the cost of just about everything but not reduce a single megatonne of greenhouse gases.

We are abiding by our commitment to the Copenhagen accord and we are halfway to achieving our 2020 targets.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday we were shocked to see the explosions that rocked the finish line of the Boston Marathon. We have seen many moving stories of exhausted runners reaching the finish line only to continue running to the nearest hospital to give blood.

In light of this act of senseless violence, can the Minister of Public Safety please update this House on actions taken by our government to ensure Canadians are kept safe from those who wish to harm us?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I want to express my deepest sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives in this horrific crime as well as those who were injured.

Canada condemns these senseless acts of violence. We stand ready to assist our American neighbours in any way we can.

I also want to assure Canadians that our authorities are at a heightened state of vigilance, and we are assisting Canadians on the ground. CBSA and the RCMP are working to ensure that Canadians are kept safe from those who wish to harm us.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources made the outrageous claim that people are not as worried about climate change as they once were and that their fears are exaggerated. His misguided beliefs are reinforced by the drastic cuts he has made to his department, including \$162 million from the clean energy fund.

How does the minister expect to be taken seriously when he goes to Washington next week to sell Canada's pipeline when he is living in fantasyland?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is always delighted to compare our record against that of the previous Liberal government.

For 13 years the Liberals merely paid lip service to the environment. Despite their signature on a hastily conceived and hastily considered commitment to the Kyoto accord, GHG emissions in Canada actually went up more than 30%.

We have a plan. Our plan is working.

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SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the death of a man on a freighter in English Bay last week has raised new questions about the reckless Conservative decision to close the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. It took paramedics nearly 40 minutes to reach the patient.

It was a reckless and dangerous decision to close this station. Will the minister now do the right thing and reopen the Kitsilano Coast Guard station before another tragedy occurs?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facts are that since the closure of the Canadian Coast Guard station in Kitsilano base on February 19, 2013, the Canadian Coast Guard Sea Island station has responded to 37 search and rescue maritime distress incidents in the greater Vancouver area. These incidents involved 47 lives at risk. In all cases the CCG hovercraft has consistently had a reaction time of less than 10 minutes after receiving the tasking, which is well within the national service standards of 30 minutes.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today our Prime Minister, alongside Her Majesty The Queen and with many other dignitaries from around the world, is among the many mourners in London remembering and honouring the life of a truly inspiring leader, Margaret Thatcher.

Baroness Thatcher, also affectionately known as the Iron Lady, will always be remembered as one of the greatest politicians and leaders of our age. She changed history.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages please tell this House how Margaret Thatcher will be remembered and honoured in Canada?

• (1510)

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we do remember the life of Margaret Thatcher, who rose from humble beginnings as a grocer's daughter to become the first female prime minister of Great Britain.

Margaret Thatcher was a true leader who had a strong vision for her country and was proud of her values and her principles. During her three terms as prime minister, Margaret Thatcher was a true champion of freedom and liberty and of fighting Communism around the world. She inspired millions around the world to the cause of freedom.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, I join all Canadians in saluting the life and legacy of Lady Thatcher.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Conservatives have not done an impact study on changes to employment insurance.

A number of my constituents have had their benefits cruelly cut off, without any forewarning. Yet the director of the Laurentides and Outaouais area had assured us that there was no way any benefits would be cut off without all factors being taken into account.

We were told that claimants would never see their benefits cut off without warning.

When are the Conservatives going to stop these attacks on Canadians?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, employment insurance is there to provide financial support to people who have lost their jobs.

We have improved the system so that it can support people during their job search. We have added ways for people to see the jobs that are available in their field and their region. Unlike the NDP, we will continue to help people find new jobs.

Privilege

1982 REPATRIATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, all of the parties represented in the Quebec National Assembly—both federalist and sovereigntist parties—rose above party lines to address an issue that is fundamental to the Quebec nation.

They joined together to call for clarification on the events leading to the proclamation of the Constitution Act, 1982. They are asking the federal government to give access to all the information contained in its archives.

Will the Prime Minister take action, rise to the occasion, set partisanship aside—partisanship that the Liberals and the NDP were all too happy to participate in—and make this information public?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have no interest in revisiting old constitutional squabbles.

The Supreme Court of Canada is responsible for determining what happened during the time of Trudeau's Liberal government in 1982. Lawyers and public servants are responsible for making decisions regarding access to information for federal documents, in accordance with the law.

We have an economic action plan and that is what we will be working on.

[English]

The Speaker: That concludes question period for today.

The Chair has notice of a point of order and a point of privilege. I will hear the point of privilege first.

The hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier.

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PRIVILEGE

LEGISLATION ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege concerning the disclosure of information contained in legislation not yet introduced in the House of Commons.

This arises from a story written by Steven Chase in *The Globe and Mail* and published this afternoon at 1:36 eastern daylight time. I would like to quote portions of that article. "The...government is temporarily delaying the introduction of its electoral reform legislation following a discussion in Conservative caucus Wednesday morning". Sources say Tory MPs, in the closed-door meeting, "raised concerns" about how some sections of the bill were drafted and suggested rewrites. "Asked for comment Wednesday afternoon... the minister of state for democratic reform said the Tories found some last-minute problems with the new bill".

Privilege

One of the lines that I quoted implies that instead of any general briefing and discussion on the orientation of the awaited bill, the Conservative caucus may have been provided with actual text of the draft bill, which is yet to be introduced, and as such, should have remained secret.

This is why, whether they are private bills or government bills, when they are being drafted, they are printed secretly.

It is also worth noting that the Conservative caucus may imply that some persons other than the Conservative parliamentarians may have had access to this. We have in our caucus non-parliamentarians who participate, and I suspect it may be the same for other caucuses as well.

If the yet-to-be-seen text has already been introduced specifically, this may very well constitute a serious breach of parliamentary privilege. I would like to quote the 40th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, in 2001, where such an incident had occurred.

The Committee reiterates its position that it views the disclosure of bills prior to their tabling in the House of Commons, while on notice, with extreme seriousness. Members of the committee are committed to protecting the privileges of the House of Commons and of its Members in this regard.

Given the possibilities that are before us, I would ask that you undertake an investigation to see exactly what happened, and if indeed text of legislation that was yet to be introduced had been presented to a caucus. That would be a serious breach of privilege. If you do find that a prima facie case of privilege exists, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

• (1515)

The Speaker: The Chair also had notice from the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth on the same point.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reinforce the points that were just made.

It has been reinforced many times that the normal procedure for a government bill, once placed on notice, is that the bill be kept confidential until introduced in Parliament. If what we heard is true, for a few select parliamentarians to be able to view the content of government bills prior to the rest of their colleagues in the House damages the integrity, the dignity and the authority of the House of Commons.

I do believe that there is a prima facie case of contempt of the House and breach of privileges, my privilege as the member for Toronto—Danforth, as well as the breach of privileges of all my colleagues in this House who have yet to see the contents of the aforementioned bill.

The reports that appeared earlier this afternoon, at 1:07 p.m. precisely, in an article by Steven Chase of *The Globe and Mail*, do suggest that certain members of the Conservative caucus had access to the content of this new bill, which is currently on the notice paper, prior to the rest of the members of this House.

Given the seriousness of the matter of prematurely disclosing the content of a bill, it is my duty as a member of Parliament to bring this question to the attention of the Chair and to this House at the earliest opportunity.

In that article, Steven Chase said that sources say Tory MPs, in the closed door meeting, “raised concerns” about how some sections of the bill were drafted and suggested rewrites.

The bill being mentioned, I should emphasize, if that is not clear, is the one that has been put on the notice paper yesterday by a minister of cabinet, the Minister of State for Democratic Reform, entitled “An act to enact the Canada political financing act and to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts”.

The *Globe* article, by advancing that some MPs have expressed concerns about specific sections of the bill, clearly implies that those Conservative MPs have had access to a copy of the bill that is still on the notice paper and has yet to be introduced for first reading in this House. We will definitely need clarification on whether or not they have seen the text of the bill.

The question of the premature disclosure of a bill has been raised multiple times before this House. For instance, on March 14, 2001, the member for Provencher at the time, who is now the Minister of Public Safety, rose on a question of privilege regarding a briefing the Department of Justice held for members of the media where there was discussion regarding a bill not yet introduced in the House, Bill C-15 of the 37th Parliament, while denying access of the same information to all members of Parliament.

Speaker Milliken at the time ruled that this constituted a prima facie case of contempt. He said the following:

In preparing legislation, the government may wish to hold extensive consultations and such consultations may be held entirely at the government's discretion. However, with respect to material to be placed before parliament, the House must take precedence. Once a bill has been placed on notice, whether it has been presented in a different form to a different session of parliament has no bearing and the bill is considered a new matter. The convention of the confidentiality of bills on notice is necessary, not only so that members themselves may be well informed, but also because of the pre-eminent rule which the House plays and must play in the legislative affairs of the nation.

These were in the *Debates* of March 19, 2001.

In a similar case raised on October 2001, the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast at the time rose on a question of privilege regarding Bill C-36 in the 37th Parliament, arguing that before the tabling of the bill the *National Post* newspaper had reported its content and indicated it had been briefed by officials from the Department of Justice.

On October 15, Speaker Milliken ruled there was a prima facie case of privilege, noting the matter was similar to the one I just discussed from March 2001.

In October 2009, the member for Joliette raised a question of privilege regarding Bill C-52, and again this question of privilege was validated by the Speaker.

Finally, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons rose on a question of privilege, in 2010, concerning the premature disclosure of a private member's bill, arguing that the member for St. Paul's had been given notice of a bill and then posted a copy of the draft on her website before it was read a first time in the House.

The matter was dropped when the member apologized, but the Speaker did remind members:

It is indisputable that it is a well-established practice and accepted convention that this House has the right of first access to the text of bills that it will consider.

Therefore, there is abundant precedent that establishes that a bill, once placed on notice, must be kept confidential until introduced in Parliament.

• (1520)

For a few selected parliamentarians to have been able to view the content of the bill in question today prior to the rest of their colleagues is unacceptable and seriously damages the integrity, dignity and authority of the House of Commons. I believe that this matter should not be taken lightly and should be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs for a complete study.

I would add that it is all the more serious that the interventions within the Conservative caucus resulted in it being decided that the bill would not be tabled on the day the minister said it would be. That means that they have had an earlier vantage point on the bill than we have had. Under the minister's announced scheme, we would be debating this next Wednesday in the House. If he had not been convinced to pull it back, the members of the Conservative caucus would have seen it a week in advance of any attempt by our caucus to discuss the same bill. It is not just the fact that this was looked at today and withdrawn; it is the fact that had nothing occurred and the bill had gone forward, the Conservative caucus would have had a week's advantage.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my two hon. friends for raising this point, as they have done, at the earliest possible opportunity. That is one of the disadvantages they labour under. The other disadvantage is that they are asserting facts about a meeting that they did not attend and are relying on assertions from a news article written by somebody who also was not in attendance at the subject meeting.

I can clarify this matter fairly simply to make it clear that in the case of this caucus meeting on this particular legislation that is on notice in draft form, there were no draft copies of this legislation circulated at any caucus meeting that the Conservative Party held today. There were no draft copies displayed for anybody to review at this meeting. There were no sections of the bill on display, and there were no excerpts provided. None of what he is alleging, in fact, happened. I can assure him, with 100% certainty, notwithstanding the normal practice of not discussing what happens in caucus, that this is something that did not happen in caucus. Therefore, I feel quite comfortable discussing it here on the floor of the House for all Canadians to hear.

While the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, I agree, has an abundance of precedents, what he lacks are any facts. The fact is that what the members are alleging simply did not occur.

The Speaker: I want to thank the hon. members for Ottawa—Vanier and Toronto—Danforth and the hon. government House leader for responding to the question of privilege. Of course, I will come back to the House in due course on that matter.

Mr. Marc Garneau: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to bring to your attention a correction required in the written record of *Hansard* on Monday, during the debate on the NDP opposition

Routine Proceedings

motion. After the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo spoke, I had the opportunity to ask her a question, which was, essentially, how the government would deal with the more than \$100 billion it has added to the national debt.

Unfortunately, in the written record of *Hansard*, it says \$100 million. Now, \$100 million is a lot of money, but it is still 1,000 times less than the debt the government has added in the past seven years. I wanted everyone to know that the figure is over \$100 billion.

• (1525)

The Speaker: I will remind the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie that members have the opportunity to correct the blues after their interventions in the House. There is a mechanism for doing that rather than doing it on the floor of the House days later.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT: ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Employment Equity Act, Chapter 44, section 20, I have the honour to table the annual report of the Employment Equity Act for the year 2011, in both official languages.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House proceed to orders of the day.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1605)

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

(Division No. 657)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong

Government Orders

Ashfield	Aspin	Brison	Brosseau
Bateman	Benoit	Byrne	Caron
Bergen	Bernier	Casey	Cash
Bezan	Blaney	Charlton	Chicoine
Block	Boughen	Choquette	Christopherson
Braid	Breitkreuz	Coderre	Comartin
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Côté	Cotler
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge	Crowder	Cullen
Butt	Calandra	Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Calkins	Cannan	Day	Dewar
Carmichael	Carrie	Dion	Dionne Labelle
Chisu	Chong	Donnelly	Dubé
Clarke	Crockatt	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Daniel	Davidson	Dusseau	Easter
Dechert	Del Mastro	Eyking	Foote
Devolin	Dreeshen	Fortin	Freeman
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra	Fry	Garneau
Fantino	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Garrison	Genest
Fletcher	Galipeau	Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Gallant	Gill	Goodale	Gravelle
Glover	Goguen	Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Goodyear	Gosal	Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Gourde	Grewal	Hsu	Hughes
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn	Jacob	Julian
Hayes	Hiebert	Karygiannis	Kellway
Hoback	James	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Larose	Latendresse
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Kent	Kerr	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Liu	MacAulay
Lake	Lauzon	Mai	Marston
Lebel	Leef	Martin	Masse
Leitch	Lemieux	Mathysen	May
Leung	Lizon	McCallum	McGuinity
Lobb	Lukiwski	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Lunney	Mackay (Central Nova)	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
MacKenzie	Mayes	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
McColeman	McLeod	Mulcair	Murray
Menegakis	Menzies	Nantel	Nash
Merrifield	Miller	Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		Pacetti	Papillon
Moore (Fundy Royal)		Patry	Pécllet
Nicholson	Norlock	Pilon	Plamondon
Obhrai	O'Connor	Quach	Rae
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon	Rafferty	Rankin
Opitz	Paradis	Ravignat	Raynault
Payne	Poilievre	Regan	Rousseau
Preston	Raiitt	Saganash	Sandhu
Rajotte	Rathgeber	Scarpaleggia	Scott
Reid	Rempel	Sellah	Sgro
Richards	Rickford	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Ritz	Saxton	Simms (Newton—North Delta)	
Schellenberger	Seeback	St-Denis	Stewart
Shea	Shipley	Strahl	Sullivan
Shory	Smith	Stoffer	Tremblay
Sopuck	Sorenson	Thibeault	Turmel
Storseth	Strahl	Trudeau	
Sweet	Tilson	Valeriote— 127	
Toet	Toews		
Trost	Trottier		
Truppe	Tweed		
Uppal	Valcourt		
Van Kesteren	Van Loan		
Wallace	Warawa		
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)			
Wilks	Williamson		
Woodworth	Yelich		
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)		
Zimmer— 151			

PAIRED

Nil

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FAMILY HOMES ON RESERVES AND MATRIMONIAL INTERESTS OR RIGHTS ACT

BILL S-2—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

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

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi

Government Orders

That, in relation to S-2, An Act respecting family homes situated on First Nation reserves and matrimonial interests or rights in or to structures and lands situated on those reserves, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before this House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Pursuant to Standing Order 67(1), there will be a 30-minute question period, and, as has been customary in the past, preference is given to members of the opposition to put questions in the course of this 30-minute question period.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks an inauspicious day for the government. It is a record that no government would ever seek to have, because today breaks the all-time record for the invocation of closure, the shutting down of debate, the use and abuse of the powers, the guillotine. The Conservatives may clap for this, but Canadians will not because they have also done it at a pace exceeding the previous Liberal government, which they used to criticize.

The Prime Minister, the House leader and the Minister of Foreign Affairs used to criticize the Chrétien government for shutting down debate time and again. The current government is doing it almost every seven sitting days of the House, five times faster than even the worst abuse of power previously.

Parliament exists for two fundamental reasons. Members of Parliament are elected to do two central things. The first is to speak on behalf of those we represent with all the capacity and ability that we have. The second is to hold government to account. However, how can we perform the roles that members of Parliament are meant to do if we have a government sitting in majority that consistently and without shame abuses the power that is given to it under our system?

Time and again the government has to justify not only muzzling its own MPs, shutting down debate in Parliament, but ignoring the wishes and hopes of Canadians. There will be a time of judgment for the government for the abusing of the powers that were given to it under our system. The government has no shame, has no recourse and Canadians will decide its fate come the next election.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member fails to mention or consider is that there is an important part of the Canadian population that happens to be aboriginal people, first nation mothers and families, that for years have lacked the same degree of protection and rights as all other families outside of reserves have in our country.

I know opposition members do not care about aboriginal women and children, but we do. After 25 years, the time has come for action.

•(1610)

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I hardly think it is believable that the New Democrats do not support aboriginal women and children. We are consistently in the House day after day speaking up on those issues.

Our House leader has ably pointed out that this is the 31st time the Conservatives have shut down debate, and it is a very sad record in Canadian history. This time we have Bill S-2 on matrimonial real property and once again it is an example of the government unilaterally imposing its legislative agenda on first nations without allowing appropriate debate. The bill has been before the House a number of times, but on this occasion it has been barely debated in the House and it has never before made it to a parliamentary committee.

Why does the minister not want all the members in the House to perform their duties as parliamentarians and have an honest, legitimate debate on this very important legislation?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, the record will show that since 2005 to 2007, this matter has at times been before the House and unfortunately it has never passed to become law. During all this time, it is the aboriginal families living on reserve that pay the price of inaction. After all those hours of debate that have taken place in the last few years, we simply want to render justice to that segment of the Canadian population.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to make note that this is now, as has been pointed out, 31 times in which the government has chosen to use time allocation to try to get legislation passed through the House of Commons. It is, indeed, unprecedented.

I would look to the government House leader to respond to the question as to why his government has failed in its ability to negotiate a way in which legislation could pass through the House in a more timely fashion that would ensure that members of Parliament would be afforded the opportunity to contribute to debate, not to be constantly limited in terms of how much time they would have to spend on very important legislation.

As I say, there have been 31 occasions now where the government has brought in time allocation with respect to things such as the Canadian Wheat Board, the pooled pension plan, the copyright bill, back-to-work legislation, financial systems review, budget legislation and the list goes on.

The question I have for the government House leader is why the government has failed to sit down with opposition parties? Why has it not be able to negotiate in good faith a time frame that would allow for adequate debate on the many pieces of legislation that need to pass through the House?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that if we look at the family homes on reserves and matrimonial interests or rights act and we look at the hours that it has been debated and studied, five hours in the House on a previous incarnation of Bill S-2, in the Senate for another number of hours—

•(1615)

Mr. Paul Dewar: The Senate?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: That is where it originated. Again, there were more hours at the committee level. I know those members like to speak for the sake of speaking, but there comes a point where we must take action.

Government Orders

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for most Canadians undergoing a breakdown of a conjugal relationship or the death of a spouse or a common-law partner, there is legal protection to ensure that the matrimonial real property assets are distributed equitably. For couples living on reserves governed by the Indian Act, sadly this is not the case.

For more than 25 years, since the 1986 Supreme Court of Canada rulings in *Paul v. Paul* and *Derrickson v. Derrickson*, aboriginal women and children living on reserves have not had the same rights to matrimonial real property. For them, the breakdown of a relationship or the death of a spouse or a common law partner could mean insecurity, financial difficulties or homelessness.

Now is the time for action. I do not know why the members opposite do not support women having rights on reserves.

Could the minister explain how time allocating Bill S-2 would help fill this long-standing legislative gap and enhance access to justice for first nation communities and, in particular, for aboriginal women?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, matrimonial real property, or the family home, is without question the most valuable piece of property that a couple on a reserve owns. Upon the breakdown of a marriage or a common law relationship, the division of property affects all involved, both spouses, their children, their families and, by extension, the broader community.

In this case, time allocation is necessary to ensure that women and children living on reserve do not have to wait any longer to benefit from the same rights and protections that people living off reserve are afforded. They deserve and expect no less.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister deals with the government's constitutional obligations in this case in particular.

The minister must know that the government's constitutional obligations to consult and to accommodate go hand in hand. Will the government meet its obligations in this case?

From what I see and based on the correspondence on this issue, the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations are complaining that they have not been heard in this case.

Can the minister answer the following question: has the government met its constitutional obligations to consult and to accommodate as it addresses the concerns that have been expressed?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, first, the member should know that aboriginal rights are protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

What we are talking about here is a flaw in the Indian Act. Based on two Supreme Court decisions, it prevents aboriginal couples on reserves from enjoying the same matrimonial rights as other people in the province they live in.

Broad consultations were held for almost two years. There were some 100 gatherings in 76 locations across the country in order to

consult with first nations on the issue. To answer his question, yes, there was ample consultation.

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the 31st time allocation motion. The motion we are debating is not about the merit or the lack of merit of the bill; it is about limiting debate. It is an affront to democracy. If there is anything the government is becoming infamous for, it is its undermining of democracy, everything from the omnibus bills to 31 time allocation motions.

We have seen some legislation go through this place that did not have proper review and has now been turned back by the courts. We will likely see more because this place is not allowed to function properly under the Conservative government. The backbenchers over there are not allowed to speak most of the time. We are seeing some of that these days. They jump up and down like they are trained to do, which is a sad affront to democracy as well.

What does the minister have to fear about allowing proper debate and proper hearings, so the good and the bad points of legislation can come out, so this place can pass legislation that will stand the test of time? What does the minister have to fear?

• (1620)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, let me repeat this. It is unacceptable that people living on reserve have for decades been deprived of the same rights and protections afforded Canadians living off reserve simply because of where they live. This is not the first time this has come before the House. This year our government is determined to see this legislation pass so the injustice that aboriginal women and families on reserves have suffered for 25 years will be finally corrected. That is why it is important that we act now.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the minister said, this is the fourth time that we have discussed this issue in the House. One of the key recommendations in the ministerial representative's report on on-reserve matrimonial real property issues, which was tabled in the House of Commons on April 20, 2007, was that the legislative measure include a way for first nations to exercise their legislative power in this area.

In response to those recommendations, Bill S-2 provides for two ways in which on-reserve matrimonial real property rights and related protections can be guaranteed. First, it allows first nations to enact their own laws to reflect their culture and traditions and, second, it provides for provisional federal rules.

Could the minister describe how the ability to enact their own laws would empower first nations and what role the centre of excellence for matrimonial real property plays in the implementation of Bill S-2?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre for her excellent question.

As the member said, under the proposed legislation, first nations can choose to enact their own laws on matrimonial real property rights and interests—legislation that would address their own specific needs and respect their customs—or to apply provisional federal rules.

By allowing first nations to enact their own laws, Bill S-2 respects their diversity. As a result, they could pass laws that are aligned with the needs of their communities, enabling them to take a different and effective approach to matrimonial real property rights issues on their respective reserves.

The bill also provides for an implementation period so that first nations have the information and time they need to enact their own laws on matrimonial real property rights.

That is why we made a commitment to create an independent centre of excellence for matrimonial real property that will help first nations either to enact their own laws or to apply provisional federal rules.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I would just remind hon. members that there are still a number of members who wish to pose questions, so I ask that they keep their interventions to no more than a minute and the same for responses.

Questions, the hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

• (1625)

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it puzzling because we remember not that long ago this government was against the Liberal government when it brought in closure.

However, what is really troubling is the fact that the minister says that there has been proper consultation. The bill came from the other place. No one in the other place was elected to represent Canadians, let alone first nations. For him to say that it is okay not only to bring in closure, but to suggest that the bill, which comes from the other place, is legitimate—and we have about 14 of these bills coming to this place from the other place—is very troubling. How can the minister get up and say that it is okay to bring in closure when Bill S-2 came from the other place? It is a form of closure on our very democracy in terms of representation for everyday Canadians. That is not correct in this place.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, the rhetoric of the hon. member aside, the fact remains that the department undertook an extensive two-year national consultation process. It included over 100 meetings in 76 sites across Canada, at a cost of more than \$8 million.

More importantly, the legislation responds to calls for action over the past 25 years by first nations and groups such as Amnesty International, the United Nations, women's organizations, and parliamentary committees to Canada for the resolution of this long-standing inequity.

Since the family homes on reserves and matrimonial interests right act was first introduced in 2008, more than 39 hours have been dedicated to debate and study of the bill in Parliament. More than half of this time occurred during committee on study of the bill, with 60 appearances from first nation organizations, individuals, and

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federal and provincial representatives among others. Now, almost five years later, it is time for action.

[Translation]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could the minister explain just what he means by extensive consultation? Those affected by this issue were not consulted, community members were kept in the dark about what this entails, and this bill was enacted behind closed doors.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I invite the member to review his files to avoid making such far-fetched statements in the House.

As I said earlier, improvements have been made to this bill since 2007, and it has been introduced a number of times.

The provinces and first nations across the country were consulted. Groups everywhere asked the government to take action to restore equality between aboriginal families living on and off reserve.

I am still wondering why anyone would want to oppose restoring this fundamental aspect of equality.

[English]

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister if he has made any effort to read the report of the committee on the status of women from 2006 and perhaps take note of the draft report from 2010.

We talked to aboriginal women, and they were very clear, they said that the crux of this problem is a lack of decent housing, a lack of transitional housing, and nowhere for them to go.

If the government were truly interested in addressing the issues of violence against aboriginal women, it would not have trashed the draft report of 2010, and it would make sure that the resources were there so that women had a place in their home community to go rather than being forced out.

I am very suspicious about the motives of the government in regard to forcing first nations people out of reserves.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, it is incredible. That is a complete fabrication.

They are saying that we should ignore this inequality for first nations women and children of families that live on reserve. This has been dragging on for 25 years, and they have the gall to stand in opposition to the government's attempt to finally restore a fair system for aboriginal families in Canada.

I would ask them to reconsider their position and support the government's effort to finally restore equality in this country.

[English]

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable to me as well that on the majority of reserves, most men, women, and children have no legal rights when it comes to their family home.

Government Orders

In cases of family violence, women victims can find themselves re-victimized by being kicked out of their homes with nowhere to go.

With new provisional federal rules and first nations laws, Bill S-2 will ensure that the rights of first nations people during the occupancy, transfer, or sale of their family home are guaranteed, where there previously was not a guarantee.

More important, Bill S-2 will grant them access to the emergency protection orders and these exclusive occupation orders, which would allow spouses and children the consistency and stability that they need in their lives. I cannot believe the NDP and Liberals would use procedure to vote against this important bill.

Could the minister please detail how the emergency protection and exclusive occupation orders would help protect aboriginal women and children?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, currently, as the hon. member alludes to and it is a fact, aboriginal women cannot go to court to seek exclusive occupation of the family home or even apply for emergency protection orders when living in a family home on reserve, a right which every other woman in Canada has.

Bill S-2 extends this basic protection to individuals living on reserves.

In situations of family violence, a spouse would be able to apply for an emergency order to stay in the family home with the exclusion of the other spouse for a period of up to 90 days with the possibility of an extension.

These provisions would allow victimized spouses and common-law partners in abusive relationships to ask for exclusive occupation of the family home for a specified period of time, providing victims and their dependants with a place to stay. That in itself is a good reason—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): We are running out of time.

Questions, the hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again, this government has decided to move a time allocation motion to limit debate in the House of Commons. Imposing closure on Bill S-2 is simply an attack on our democracy.

This bill requires in-depth consideration by parliamentarians and continued debate. We are now debating this bill under a time allocation motion. We asked for true consultation of aboriginal peoples, and that is not at all what is happening.

Once again, the government is revealing its hypocrisy by, on the one hand, supporting a bill and, on the other, reducing the number of speakers to the absolute minimum. We are condemning the Conservatives' constant denial of democracy.

How can the minister justify such action?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, the minister can justify such action because, for 25 years, aboriginal families living on reserve have not had the protection afforded other Canadians. As my

colleagues and I have said over and over, these families have been asking for protection for years.

A government has finally decided to take action. The government should have the support of the opposition parties in order for this legislation to go into effect as quickly as possible.

• (1635)

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I cannot believe that anyone in this House would vote against this legislation to stand up for the rights of aboriginal women on reserves let alone members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I have sat here and listened to the NDP claim that women who fall into situations in their households on reserves should be sent to shelters. Well, here is a novel idea: how about they be allowed access to their matrimonial property, the same rights that every one of us in this House has today?

I also have to say, because the NDP is voting against every one of these things, that right now a spouse on reserve who holds interest in the on-reserve family home can sell the home without the consent of the other spouse, and can keep all the money. Apparently the NDP thinks that is okay. The spouse who holds the interest in the family home can bar the other spouse from their own family home. Apparently the NDP thinks that is okay. And in cases of domestic violence—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. We are getting short on time.

The hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I fully understand the indignation of the hon. member.

If we listen to members opposite, it is as if we are preventing a reasoned debate on this bill. However, once the bill has been debated in the House, and they will have the chance to debate the bill in the House, it will then go to the status of women committee where, again, the bill will be subjected to a long debate. If they have a brilliant idea to improve the bill, they can present it there. The bill will then come back here to Parliament where we will discuss it again and then, hopefully, it will become law.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was just waiting for the microphone to come on here and, yes, I am getting some feedback, I guess in more ways than one. I will probably get more as I go on.

I noted particularly in the comments from the Conservatives that they are talking about the substance of the legislation. However, the vote we are about to have is not about the legislation, it is about time allocation. It is about closure. It is about what the government is doing. It is about a top-down process.

The government does not want to listen to people. It does not want to consult first nations or people across this country about anything. The government wants to impose things, as it is trying to do on this chamber and on this Parliament with this measure of time allocation. The Conservatives have been imposing closure at a rate never before seen in this Parliament or even in this country.

How does the minister justify the rate at which the government has been imposing closure on bill after bill when it does not have to, as it has a majority government?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, it is not as if hon. members do not have the opportunity or the right to talk about the bill. The bill is going to be debated in the House. However, there comes a time, especially in this situation where for 25 years first nation families on reserve have been deprived of basic rights that all other Canadians enjoy.

The bill has come here in the past in different forms. It has been improved. Surely it is ready to be passed, and this is what we propose to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): This will bring to an end the period contemplated by Standing Order 67(1).

Before we proceed, 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 Edmonton—Strathcona, Public Works and Government Services; the hon. member for Etobicoke North, The Environment.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

• (1715)

[*English*]

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

Government Orders

(Division No. 658)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hoback	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Raiitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)

Government Orders

Young (Vancouver South)

Zimmer— 154

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Choquette	Christopherson
Coderre	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Masse
Mathysen	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Piamondon	Quach
Rae	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Tremblay	Turnel
Valériote— 123	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

● (1720)

SECOND READING

The House resumed from November 22, 2012, consideration of the motion that Bill S-2, An Act respecting family homes situated on First Nation reserves and matrimonial interests or rights in or to structures and lands situated on those reserves, be read the second

time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak to the piece of legislation before us, Bill S-2. This bill marks the fourth attempt by the government to address a serious problem in the first nations community, a problem created by the Indian Act itself. Sadly, like the first three attempts taken by the government, it simply misses the mark.

[*Translation*]

Bill S-2 is a very simplistic attempt to rectify a very complex problem that stems from the Indian Act.

On reserves, gender discrimination clearly exists when it comes to matrimonial real property. However, Bill S-2 will be impossible to implement for the following reasons: a lack of financial resources to support first nations governments to actually implement the law; a lack of funding for lawyers and legal advice; a lack of funding to account for limited geographic access to provincial courts; a lack of on-reserve housing; and a lack of land mass that would be necessary to give both spouses separate homes on reserves.

There are no measures in the legislation to address the systemic problem of violence that faces so many women and that leads to divorce. According to Statistics Canada, first nations women are 3.5 times more likely to be victims of violence than non-aboriginal women, and 35% of aboriginal women have already been victims of violence.

Overcrowded housing has been linked to a number of health and social problems, including higher rates of respiratory infections as well as mental health and domestic violence problems.

In 2006, 14% of aboriginal women and girls were living in overcrowded housing—a proportion three times higher than among non-aboriginal women. On reserves, 26% of women and girls were living in overcrowded conditions, compared to 6% of those living off-reserve.

[*English*]

All the statistics I have just read into the record show that we have a serious problem before us. Those problems require a serious, well-thought-out solution. That is not what the Conservatives have brought before us today. They are once again fast-tracking legislation without addressing all of the relevant non-legislative problems first nations women and families have identified. They are showing that they are not interested in a fulsome discussion of this bill or any other issue affecting the indigenous peoples of this land. I am left with the strong impression that all they want is to quickly enact a bad law, just to say that they have done something.

Government Orders

The problems we are facing require a comprehensive response that is led by first nations communities first and foremost. The Conservatives did do some consulting with first nations and the Native Women's Association of Canada, but then in typical Conservative style, they ignored the results of the consultation when preparing the original legislation. As a result, both the Native Women's Association of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations are demanding better legislation, because the consequences of passing inadequate legislation are so dire.

One of the basic problems with this bill is that while it removes some of the most onerous parts of previous legislative attempts, it still refuses to recognize first nations' inherent right and jurisdiction in this matter. As a result, we again have the government telling first nations how they should run their lives, their communities and their systems rather than respecting their laws, their traditions and their inherent right to self-government.

This is the ultimate “daddy knows best” approach taken by the government, and it does nothing to make life better for women who live on reserve.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

The Assembly of First Nations determined that three broad principles were key to addressing matrimonial rights and interests on reserves: recognition of first nation jurisdiction; access to justice, dispute resolution and remedies; and addressing underlying issues, such as access to housing and economic security.

Bill S-2 does not take any of these three principles into account in any meaningful way.

My province, Quebec, is a good example of the problems this bill will create. According to lawyer David Schulze, the particularities of my province have been overlooked in Bill S-2. Under the Civil Code, common-law partners do not hold any rights to property, but they would under Bill S-2. For example, a first nations member would have rights to his spouse's home on the Uashat reserve, but she would not have any rights to his home in Sept-Îles, across the street.

The lands covered by the most recent treaties, such as the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act, which applies to large portions of my riding, are excluded.

Under this bill, a Naskapi would have rights to his Innu spouse's home in Schefferville, but she would have no rights to his home 80 km away in Kawawachikamach, which is part of the Category I-N lands under the CN Commercialization Act and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement.

[*English*]

These examples show the new problems this legislation would cause in my home province alone, and they highlight another glaring problem with the bill: the imposition of provincial law on reserve. Imposing provincial legislation on first nations without their consent is ethically lacking and practically problematic and ignores the inherent rights of first nations citizens. By taking this avenue, the Conservatives are trying to make a quick fix, the equivalent of slapping a band-aid on an injury that requires major surgery. This

approach is lazy and disrespectful toward those women who they claim to seek to help.

This proposed bill also runs afoul of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the Conservatives finally endorsed in 2010. According to the declaration, consultation requires consent as well. While Canada has conducted some limited consultations, no consent was given by the rights holders to have provincial laws applied in their communities. Therefore, if the House passes and moves to enforce Bill S-2, we will be in violation of article 32 of the UN declaration, which ensures free, prior and informed consent on any matter relating to the lands or welfare of the rights holders.

Given the government's view of the UN declaration, I doubt that it sees that as a problem. Maybe that is why, after 14 months, we are still waiting for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to reply to the request of the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights to study Canada. This approach shows why a bill like Bill C-469 is so important and needed today.

We have a big problem before us. It will require a comprehensive approach to arrive at a solution, one that must be led by first nations communities and be respectful of their own laws and traditions. Simply forcing provincial laws that were not written with those traditions and laws in mind will only make matters worse.

Part of the reason many first nations find themselves in this legal position today is that past governments took the “daddy knows best” approach, telling first nations how they should act, behave and govern themselves without giving any thought to their wishes, their needs, their desires or their rights. Today we know that this approach was wrong and a mistake, yet the Conservative government is determined to force us down the same failed path.

We cannot have true reconciliation and build that better tomorrow for all Canadians until we throw that failed approach into the trash can of history, where it belongs. We must renew a nation to nation relationship that begins with working with first nations communities, not dictating to them.

The Conservatives obviously have a great deal to learn about this. They seem more interested in being seen to do something while doing nothing, which is something they do with great skill. Now is not the time for pretending. It is the time to act and do this correctly right now. I hope that the government will take my words to heart, agree, and start to work with us to get this right, right now.

• (1730)

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a brief point of order. I have the honour to table, in both official languages, documents entitled the government's responses to questions on the order paper numbers 1207, 1208, 1209, 1210 and 1211.

Government Orders

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to what members opposite were saying about the matrimonial rights issue. I find it really sad. Women's rights are being negated in the House. We need to support this issue. I have worked with many aboriginal women who have had so many challenges. They want to have these rights. They are so important. That has to be known to members opposite.

Why would the member deliberately shut off, just cut out, women's rights on reserves? That is exactly what is happening.

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, a lot of aboriginal organizations have spoken against this bill. I am including in these organizations the Native Women's Association of Canada. If the member is suggesting that the Native Women's Association of Canada is against women in first nations communities, she is wrong. The Native Women's Association of Canada is right.

When we talk about respect for women, telling women what to think and what to do is not respect, for me at least. We have to listen to what they are saying. We have to act on the advice they are providing to the members of this House, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the position he is taking on this bill. It is completely in keeping with what I have been told by the aboriginal community where I come from.

What deeply concerns me is the superficiality of the action taken by the government, and we see this over and over again. It is one thing to pass a bill in theory that gives a right to an aboriginal woman to go to court. However, how many of those women are living in isolated communities where there is a dearth of safe housing for anyone, including men, women and children? They cannot afford the bus fare, let alone have an available bus to go to town to hire a lawyer, let alone have the resources to hire a lawyer to fight these matters in court. Can the member speak to that and elaborate on the fact that the offer of the extension of the right is an extremely superficial one?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, which is very pertinent to our debate and our discussion about this bill.

In fact, there is much to be desired, even when it comes to contemplating how to apply and implement this bill. In our system of justice, the rule of law is part of our constitutional system. In this case, the rule of law is the government's constitutional obligation to consult the first nations and to make accommodations reflecting the concerns expressed during the consultations.

It is not enough to say that 100 organizations were consulted for hundreds of hours. It is not enough if the first nations are not heard or if the concerns they express during those consultations do not result in accommodations. That is the constitutional obligation that we have towards the first nations, the aboriginal peoples of this country. The government seems to be forgetting this.

•(1735)

[*English*]

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand for victims today. I stand for those victims who are afraid, who have been kicked off reserve, who have begged us as a government to provide them with the same rights as all other Canadian woman. I stand for those victims who were kicked off reserve, who were sent into cities, who became exploited in the sex trade, whose children were taken away, and who will not come forward because of the fear of people on reserve who do not agree with giving them rights. Those victims are who we care about. That is what this bill is about.

I am ashamed of that side for not supporting it.

Mr. Romeo Saganash: Mr. Speaker, what the women in particular have begged for is to do things right. They did not do it. That is the problem. That is what we are trying to fix. That is what the representations that were made were about. That is what the consultations were supposed to be for, and that did not happen. The Conservatives did not listen to them.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed pleased to speak today in support of Bill S-2, the family homes on reserves and matrimonial interests or rights act.

Let me start by affirming and stating quite clearly that it is completely unacceptable that men, women and children living on reserve have for decades been deprived of the same basic rights and protections afforded Canadians living off reserve simply because of where they live.

Through this legislation, our government is addressing a long-standing legislative gap and ensuring that women, children and families on reserve can live in safe, stable home environments. I believe that the bill offers a practical, balanced and much needed solution that I wish to insist has been informed by national consultations with stakeholders, numerous reports, in-depth analysis and reasoned debate. I say now is the time for action.

I cannot emphasize enough the urgency of the issues that Bill S-2 proposes to resolve. Every day that passes until a solution is in place is one more day that women and children living on reserve do not have access to the same protections offered those living off reserve. Without the rights to matrimonial real property that other Canadians enjoy, more and more individuals and families, primarily aboriginal women and children living on reserve, are left defenceless, and in many cases, homeless and destitute. They are ostracized from the only community they have ever known and are forced to start life all over again elsewhere.

Government Orders

Bill S-2 offers an effective solution that would provide individuals with the rights and protections they need to ensure that they have access to the family home no matter which spouse is listed as the owner. The effect that the absence of legislation has on the lives on many individuals and families is a compelling reason for the members of the House to acknowledge the urgency of the situation and to pass Bill S-2.

Currently, and no one can dispute that, there is no law in place addressing matters related to on-reserve matrimonial real property and interests.

More than 25 years ago, two Supreme Court of Canada rulings clarified that provincial laws pertaining to matrimonial real property rights and interests do not apply in first nation communities. Given that no equivalent federal law exists, these interests and rights are not protected for individuals living on reserve in the event of a breakdown of a conjugal relationship or the death of a spouse or a common-law partner. This situation is unacceptable and should make endorsing Bill S-2 a top priority for the House.

● (1740)

[*Translation*]

Individuals who live off reserve have access to the protections and legal recourse set out in the provincial or territorial laws. However, individuals living in first nations communities, with few exceptions, do not benefit from such protections. No judge, police officer or court representative is authorized to intervene if someone throws his or her spouse out of the house or sells the family home and keeps all the proceeds from that sale. In other words, our justice system is not currently in a position to be able to end the harmful discrimination faced by an identifiable group of Canadians.

Canadians should not tolerate this fundamental injustice. The fact that this has been going on for 25 years is shameful.

It is true that a small number of first nations have developed laws pertaining to matrimonial rights and interests under the First Nations Land Management Act or self-government agreements. However, these options are not currently available to most first nations. As a result, over 100,000 Canadians do not have any legal protection in this regard. This has been harmful to many people, families and communities. These injustices have a negative impact on the lives of all Canadians, without exception. The only way to move forward is to enact an effective legislative solution, which is what Bill S-2 seeks to do.

Earlier, I heard the member opposite going on about consultations. Bill S-2 is based on extensive national consultations and Parliament's study of this issue. This work produced a wealth of high-quality information in the form of reports, studies, testimony and analyses. Bill S-2 is the result of all these contributions and analyses. The facts show that previous attempts strengthened the bill—

The Deputy Speaker: You have one minute left to wrap up your speech.

[*English*]

Hon. Bernard Valcourt: Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the consultations in 2010. The Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights studied an earlier version of the bill. The committee heard from more than 30 witnesses and adopted 12 amendments to

improve the bill and reflect the input and comments received from stakeholders, including first nations and provinces. That version of the bill died on the order paper with the dissolution of Parliament, it but serves as an example of how previous studies and testimony have strengthened the legislation now before us.

In 2011, Bill S-2, the current iteration of the legislation, was introduced. It included not only the 12 amendments but also three additional changes that were suggested and made to the bill.

Therefore, I would say that we have spent enough time on it. This is the time for action. Let us pass this bill.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

The question is on the motion that the question be now put. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1825)

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

(*Division No. 659*)

YEAS

Members

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

Government Orders

Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Daniel
Dechert
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Fantino
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Gourde
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hoback
Jean
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
McColeman
Menegakis
Merrifield
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Norlock
O'Connor
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Rickford
Saxton
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Toet
Trost
Truppe
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Crockatt
Davidson
Del Mastro
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Gosal
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Mayes
McLeod
Menzies
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Nicholson
Obhrai
O'Neill Gordon
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Rathgeber
Rempel
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Tilson
Toews
Trottier
Tweed
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 150

Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Freeman
Garneau
Genest
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hassainia
Hughes
Julian
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Pilon
Quach
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valeriotte — 123
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Eyking
Fortin
Fry
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Goodale
Grogulé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hsu
Jacob
Karygiannis
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McGuinity
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Péclet
Plamondon
Rae
Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
Stewart
Thibeault
Turnel

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Quickly, because I do not want to interrupt the vote, and I may have heard it incorrectly. Did Mr. Penashue second the bill?

The Speaker: That is right, at second reading.

NAYS

Members

Allen (Weland)
Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle

Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Brahmi
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Coderre
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly

Government Orders

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Can he second a vote, historically speaking?

The Speaker: That is correct. At the time, he was both a member of the House and a member of cabinet. The motion at second reading was properly before the House.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: It remains in his name even though he has been sent from the House?

The Speaker: That is correct.

• (1830)

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

(Division No. 660)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hoback	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Norlock
Nicholson	O'Connor
Obhrai	O'Toole
O'Neill Gordon	Payne
Paradis	Preston
Poillievre	Rajotte
Raitt	Reid
Rathgeber	Rickford
Rempel	Ritz
Riiz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith

Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 151	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseauit
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Gameau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Hassainia	Hsu
Hughes	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Pacetti	Papillon
Patry	Pécllet
Pilon	Plamondon
Quach	Rae
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Simms (Newton—North Delta)	
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Thibeault
Tremblay	Turmel

Government Orders

Valerioté— 123

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

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

The Speaker: The Chief Government Whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Mr. Speaker, for Bill S-2, the previous question, I believe that the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound arrived after the question had been read. I do not think his vote should have been recorded.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, that was on the very first vote. I was here for the last one. I did walk in; it was like walking into a parade or being a spectator, and I just joined the parade. My apologies.

The Speaker: Just to be clear, the hon. member's vote will not count for the previous question, but on the second reading vote he was in his place on time.

• (1835)

Mr. Larry Miller: Yes, I was there for that one.

* * *

HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

The House resumed from March 27 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The question is on the amendment.

• (1840)

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

(Division No. 661)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Angus	Armstrong
Ashfield	Ashton
Aspin	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bateman	Bélangier
Bennett	Benoit
Benskin	Bergen
Bernier	Bevington
Bezan	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney
Block	Boivin
Boughen	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brosseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Casey	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine

Chisu	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crockatt
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Fantino
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Foote	Freeman
Fry	Galipeau
Gallant	Garneau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Gravelle
Grewal	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hassainia
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hoback
Hsu	Hughes
Jacob	James
Jean	Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Karygiannis
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kellway
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larose	Latendresse
Lauzon	Laverdière
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Leung
Liu	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	Mayes
McCallum	McColeman
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	Menegakis
Menzies	Merrifield
Michaud	Miller
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nicholson	Norlock
Nunez-Melo	Obhrai
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Pacetti
Papillon	Paradis
Payne	Péclét
Pilon	Poillievre
Preston	Quach
Rae	Rafferty
Raiitt	Rajotte
Rankin	Rathgeber
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Rickford
Ritz	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Scott
Seeback	Sellah
Sgro	Shea

Government Orders

ShIPLEY
 SIMMS (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 SIMS (Newton—North Delta)
 SMITH
 SORENSON
 ST-DENIS
 STORSETH
 SULLIVAN
 THIBEAULT
 TOET
 TREMBLAY
 TROTTIER
 TURMEL
 UPPAL
 VALERIOTE
 VAN LOAN
 WALLACE
 WARKENTIN
 WESTON (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 WESTON (Saint John)
 WILKS
 WOODWORTH
 YOUNG (Oakville)
 ZIMMER— 269

SHORY
 SOPUCK
 STANTON
 STEWART
 STRAHL
 SWEET
 TILSON
 TOEWS
 TROST
 TRUPPE
 TWEED
 VALCOURT
 VAN KESTEREN
 VELLACOTT
 WARAWA
 WATSON
 WESTON (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 WESTON (Saint John)
 WILKS
 WOODWORTH
 YOUNG (Oakville)
 ZIMMER— 269

NAYS

Members

BELLAVANCE
 MOURANI
 PLAMONDON— 5

FORTIN
 PATRY

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion as amended.

● (1850)

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

(Division No. 662)

YEAS

Members

ABLONCZY
 ADLER
 ALBAS
 ALEXANDER
 ALLEN (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 AMBLER
 ANDERS
 ANGLUS
 ASHFIELD
 ASPIN
 AUBIN
 BATEMAN
 BENNETT
 BENSKIN
 BERNIER
 BEZAN
 BLANCHETTE-LAMOTHE
 BLOK
 BOUGHEN
 BRAHMI
 BREITKREUZ
 BROWN (Leeds—Grenville)
 BROWN (Barrie)
 BUTT
 CALANDRA
 CANNAN
 CARON
 CASEY
 CHARLTON
 CHISU
 CHOQUETTE
 CLARKE
 COMARTIN

ADAMS
 AGLUKKAQ
 ALBRECHT
 ALLEN (Welland)
 ALLISON
 AMBROSE
 ANDERSON
 ARMSTRONG
 ASHTON
 ATAMANENKO
 AYALA
 BÉLANGER
 BENOIT
 BERGEN
 BEVINGTON
 BLANCHETTE
 BLANEY
 BOIVIN
 BOUTIN-SWEET
 BRAID
 BROUSSEAU
 BROWN (Newmarket—Aurora)
 BRUINOOGÉ
 BYRNE
 CALKINS
 CARMICHAEL
 CARRIE
 CASH
 CHICOINE
 CHONG
 CHRISTOPHERSON
 CODERRE
 CÔTÉ

COTLER
 CROWDER
 CUZNER
 DAVIDSON
 DAY
 DEL MASTRO
 DEWAR
 DIONNE LABELLE
 DREESHEN
 DUNCAN (Vancouver Island North)
 DUNCAN (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 DYKSTRA
 EYKING
 FINLEY (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 FOOTE
 FRY
 GALLANT
 GARRISON
 GENEST-JOURDAIN
 GILL
 GOGUEN
 GOODYEAR
 GOURDE
 GREWAL
 HARRIS (Scarborough Southwest)
 HARRIS (Cariboo—Prince George)
 HAWN
 HIEBERT
 HSU
 JACOB
 JEAN
 KAMP (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 KEDDY (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 KENNEY (Calgary Southeast)
 KERR
 KRAMP (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 LAMOUREUX
 LAROSE
 LAUZON
 LABELLE
 LEBLANC (LaSalle—Émard)
 LEITCH
 LESLIE
 LIU
 LOBB
 LUNNEY
 MACKAY (Central Nova)
 MAI
 MARTIN
 MATHYSSEN
 MCCALLUM
 MCGUINITY
 MCLEOD
 MENZIES
 MICHAUD
 MOORE (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 MOORE (Fundy Royal)
 MORIN (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 MULCAIR
 NANTÉL
 NICHOLLS
 NORLOCK
 OBHRAI
 O'NEILL GORDON
 PACETTI
 PARADIS
 PÉCLET
 POILIEVRE
 QUACH
 RAFFERTY
 RAJOTTE
 RATHGEBER
 RAYNAULT
 REID
 RICHARDS
 RITZ
 SAGANASH
 SAXTON
 SCHELLENBERGER
 SEEBACK
 SGRO
 SHIPLEY
 SIMMS (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 SIMS (Newton—North Delta)

CROCKATT
 CULLEN
 DANIEL
 DAVIES (Vancouver Kingsway)
 DECHERT
 DEVOLIN
 DION
 DONNELLY
 DUBÉ
 DUNCAN (Etobicoke North)
 DUSSEAULT
 EASTER
 FANTINO
 FLETCHER
 FREEMAN
 GALIPEAU
 GAMEAU
 GENEST
 GIGUÈRE
 GLOVER
 GOODALE
 GOSAL
 GRAVELLE
 GROGHIÉ
 HARRIS (St. John's East)
 HASSAINIA
 HAYES
 HOBACK
 HUGHES
 JAMES
 JULIAN
 KARYGIANNIS
 KELLWAY
 KENT
 KOMARNICKI
 LAKE
 LAPOINTE
 LATENDRESSE
 LAVERDIÈRE
 LEBLANC (Beauséjour)
 LEAF
 LEMIEUX
 LEUNG
 LIZON
 LUKIWSKI
 MACAULAY
 MACKENZIE
 MARSTON
 MASSE
 MAYES
 MCCOLEMAN
 MCKAY (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 MENEGAKIS
 MERRIFIELD
 MILLER
 MOORE (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 MORIN (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 MORIN (Laurentides—Labelle)
 MURRAY
 NASH
 NICHOLSON
 NUNEZ-MELO
 O'CONNOR
 O'TOOLE
 PAPILLON
 PAYNE
 PILON
 PRESTON
 RAE
 RAITT
 RANKIN
 RAVIGNAT
 REGAN
 REMPEL
 RICKFORD
 ROUSSEAU
 SANDHU
 SCARPALEGGIA
 SCOTT
 SELLAH
 SHEA
 SHORY

Adjournment Proceedings

Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
St-Denis	Stewart
Storseth	Strahl
Sullivan	Sweet
Thibeault	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Tremblay	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Turmel	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 271	

NAYS

Members

Bellavance
Mourani
Plamondon— 5

Fortin
Patry

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-394, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the National Defence Act (criminal organization recruitment), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: Order. There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 24, 2013, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on December 5, I put a question to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services asking if her new anti-corruption measures would address any subcontracting problems or illegalities, including those related to a half-billion dollar contract with SNC-Lavalin to manage 300-plus federal buildings. The contract involved numerous subcontractors. It may be noted that she advised that these concerns about this general contractor were brought to her attention by the media, not by her own officials.

My question was whether the new improved measures would be made retroactive to existing contracts and subcontracts and whether they are being applied and enforced by the government or by contractors. I still await an answer to those questions.

This scenario also raises the question of how well the government is delivering its own watchdog responsibilities. It is fine to strengthen the code of conduct, but if not closely monitored and stringently enforced, it has little deterrence, let alone punishment, value.

The minister reiterated that her government's contractual obligations are with only the general contractor—in other words, not with the subcontractors.

The minister also responded that following specific allegations about the bidding process, officials brought in a private forensic auditing company, PricewaterhouseCoopers. What did this cost? Are there no compliance or audit officials within Public Works and Government Services?

The audit called for increased frequency of audits of contracts and improved documentation of expenditures, including providing time sheets. These are pretty basic duties one would have expected to already be in place for a contract to spend half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money. These are pretty basic accounting and audit functions for any contract. A great concern is that these functions were not already being addressed. Are they now being better addressed in light of staff reductions?

Adjournment Proceedings

Problems with procurement can also be found within Public Works and Government Services itself. We have the case of the two-decade long dispute over federally contracted relocation services for military, RCMP and public servants. It ended in a 15-month trial, with a finding against the government. The case centred on conflict of interest allegations about Public Works and Government Services, then under a Liberal government. The contract was awarded, cancelled, re-tendered, re-awarded to the same company, reviewed by an international trade tribunal, then by a parliamentary committee, and then the Auditor General, before finally being referred to the courts. The report of the Auditor General is scathing. The case centred around yet another public works procurement pilot case to address rising costs of relocation.

This month, the court found the federal government at fault with a \$30-million cost award. The case is noteworthy, as the government is apparently yet again receiving complaints about its latest pilot relocation procurement process from potential bidders and federal employees.

I am advised that the latest reform may shortchange both the small moving companies and the families of service men and women. Concerns raised about the latest new, improved procurement process for relocation mirrors many of the exact concerns raised in the successful ongoing court action. This includes failure to fully disclose information necessary to submit a well documented bid. As noted by a former senior official, the government needs to understand that the key role of Public Works and Government Services is to protect the integrity of the bidding process.

Of concern, the judge in the Envoy case noted that the problems in the procurement process were not detected until the audit by the Auditor General. These were not findings of kickbacks, bribes, or political meddling under the code of practice. The root of the problem appeared to be the lack of scrutiny or fairness in the overall procurement process.

I ask the government this: What measures have they taken to address these failings, with the resulting monumental costs to taxpayers, beyond a revised code? What reassurance is there that the same failed processes will not be repeated in the 2014 renewal?

•(1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the member for Edmonton—Strathcona. I am delighted that she asked to have an adjournment debate on this topic.

As part of enhancing the integrity of the real property and procurement process, Public Works and Government Services Canada is constantly reviewing and strengthening its measures to improve integrity.

In 2007, as part of the Federal Accountability Act and the federal accountability action plan, Public Works and Government Services Canada added a code of conduct for procurement to its RFP documents. The department also added measures to render suppliers ineligible to bid on procurement contracts if they have been

convicted of fraud or if they have paid a contingency fee to a person to whom the Lobbying Act applies.

In 2010, Public Works and Government Services Canada added an offence to its list of measures regarding integrity, thereby rendering suppliers ineligible to bid on procurement contracts if they have been convicted of corruption, collusion, bid rigging or any other anti-competitive activity.

In July 2012, Public Works and Government Services Canada implemented additional measures to strengthen the integrity of its real property and procurement operations.

As a result of these measures, the department is strengthening due diligence, reducing the risk of fraud and improving its ability to manage risk.

Allow me to summarize. We have already put in place provisions allowing us to render ineligible bidders found guilty of one of the following offences: fraud against the government under the Criminal Code of Canada; fraud under the Financial Administration Act; corruption, collusion, bid rigging or any other anti-competitive activity under the Competition Act; and the payment of contingency fees to individuals covered by the Lobbying Act.

On July 11, 2012, Public Works and Government Services Canada extended the application of integrity provisions to its real property transactions, such as leasing contracts, and added six new offences that would render suppliers ineligible to do business with the department: money laundering, involvement in organized crime, income and excise tax evasion, bribery of foreign public officials and drug trafficking.

These measures came into force when announced and apply to all future PWGSC solicitations and real property transactions, which include leasing agreements, letting of space, and acquisition and disposal of crown assets. These measures will also allow the department to terminate contracts and leases with companies or individuals that are convicted before the end of their contract or lease.

We are very proud of the efforts made by our department to ensure accountability and integrity in the way we do business.

•(1900)

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is my recollection that I raised additional questions on this matter a couple of days ago. I got exactly the same response today I got two days ago. I am giving the government another chance to address my particular concerns.

Adjournment Proceedings

The court this week held against the Government of Canada, not against the contractor. That is \$30 million of taxpayers' money. What measures are there in addition to a code that by and large is supposed to hold contractors accountable, but not the subcontractors? What new measures are in place to make sure that the government is finally delivering on its watchdog function? How is the government ensuring that the process is going to become more open and transparent? We have heard huge concerns from the contractors that because the process is no longer transparent, they do not know if it will be a fair process.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, our government has brought in accountability measures to ensure the appropriate use of taxpayers' dollars. Those measures are designed to ensure that we do not deal with fraudulent businesses.

PWGSC can refuse bids from suppliers found guilty of the following offences: fraud against the government under the Criminal Code of Canada; fraud under the Financial Administration Act; corruption, collusion, bid rigging or any other anti-competitive activity under the Competition Act; and the payment of contingency fees to individuals covered by the Lobbying Act.

In addition, PWGSC added the following to the list of offences that prevent businesses and individuals found guilty of those offences from bidding on contracts: money laundering, involvement in organized crime, tax evasion, non-payment of excise taxes, bribery of foreign public officials and, lastly, drug trafficking.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after the government received yet another embarrassing grade on the environment, I asked whether the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans would do the right thing and restore funding to the Experimental Lakes Area, or ELA.

Let me begin by discussing the government's dismal record on the environment, followed by why the government should fund the ELA.

The 2008 Climate Change Performance Index ranked Canada 56th of 57 countries in terms of tackling emissions.

In 2009 and again in 2013, the Conference Board of Canada ranked Canada 15th of 17 wealthy industrial nations on environmental performance.

In 2010, Simon Fraser University and the David Suzuki Foundation ranked Canada 24th of 25 OECD nations on environmental performance.

Having received such failing grades, an accountable, responsible government would have taken meaningful action to protect our fragile environment and the health and safety of Canadians, while building a vibrant green economy.

Instead, the government gutted environmental legislation of the last 50 years through economic plans 2012 and 2013 and its draconian omnibus implementation bills, Bill C-38 and Bill C-45, severely cut the budget to Environment Canada, cancelled the

National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, and continues to muzzle government scientists.

The government's appalling environmental policies have been rightly criticized by policy makers, scientists, Canadians, the international community and repeatedly by the prestigious international science journal *Nature*.

The Conservative government once again had the opportunity to improve its negative performance by changing its reckless decision to close the world-renowned ELA, with 58 lakes, and considered to be one of Canada's most important aquatic research facilities. Instead, the government began dismantling the station at the end of last month. In the space of a few weeks, 11,000 Canadians signed a public petition, sent hundreds of letters of support for the ELA to government officials and held rallies across the country.

Leading scientists from around the world and across Canada support the ELA's cause. Liberal MPs held briefings for all members of Parliament and senators and put forth motions to study the value of the ELA and the potential effects of transferring the facility to a third party.

Following the presentation of two Liberal motions regarding the ELA, in both the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans the issue was addressed in camera, without public explanation, and the motions are no longer before the committees.

Scientists suggest the Conservatives are trying to silence a source of inconvenient data regarding climate change with the closures of the Polar Environmental Atmospheric Research Lab, the ELA and with the Kluane Lake Research Station on the chopping block.

The government should know that, despite its denial and stonewalling, the science of climate change simply will not go away.

• (1905)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member opposite on the Experimental Lakes Area. The government has made its decision, as we have said many times. Fisheries and Oceans Canada will no longer operate the Experimental Lakes Area.

However, DFO understands that significant work has been done at the facility. As a result, the department hopes to transfer the facility to another operator that is better suited to managing it. That would ensure the facility is available to scientists, in universities or elsewhere, who would like to conduct whole lake experiments.

Adjournment Proceedings

At the same time, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is focusing on scientific work being conducted at other locations across the country. The department's science program in freshwater environments is diverse. The results of this diversity of freshwater research help to ensure the sustainability of our aquatic ecosystems.

Let me provide a little more detail about DFO's freshwater research. One of the priority areas for freshwater research in the department is fish habitat science. That is where departmental scientists conduct research and provide science advice related to the effects of human activities on fish habitat and the productivity of commercial, recreational and aboriginal fisheries. One such example of fish habitat science is research and advice related to the impacts of hydroelectric development.

There are hundreds of hydroelectric facilities across the country, generating electricity for Canadians. The rising demand for energy and the growing interest in renewable energy would require additional hydroelectric facilities and increased production from the existing installations. It is essential that we understand the potential effects of hydro power on fish habitat and fisheries productivity.

At Fisheries and Oceans Canada, scientific research focuses on the potential impacts of reservoir construction and management, fish passage, and modification to river flow as they may affect fisheries productivity. The results of this kind of research improve our understanding of the potential effects of hydro power and help to inform decision-making and promote the sustainable development of hydroelectric resources in Canada.

However, DFO scientists do not work in isolation. To complement the department's science program, DFO scientists collaborate with universities, other government departments, industry partners, and other science organizations. HydroNet is an excellent example. It is a collaborative national research network that aims to develop a better understanding of the effects of hydroelectric operations on aquatic ecosystems.

HydroNet is part of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's strategic network grants program and receives support from DFO. Through the network, research professionals from DFO, provincial governments, universities and industry come together to exchange ideas, expertise, data, and solutions related to sustainable hydro power and health aquatic ecosystems in Canada. This collaboration enhances scientific knowledge on the effects of hydroelectricity in support of the department's mandate and helps to leverage investments in government science.

I have described tonight some of the excellent work that Fisheries and Oceans Canada is doing to understand the effects of human

activities on fish habitat and fisheries productivity. This is just one area of freshwater science where the department is conducting scientific research.

We will continue to make wise investments in priority science areas that directly support conservation and fisheries management and ensure sustainable aquatic ecosystems.

• (1910)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, with mere weeks to go before the field season begins, it is still unknown whether ongoing research projects at the world-renowned ELA can continue or whether the longest and most comprehensive freshwater monitoring program in Canada will be broken.

The research conduct at the ELA must continue. The research must be made public and ELA must be owned by the public. We must fight for a government that understands that scientific research is fundamental to meeting Canada's needs, that will restore science to its rightful place, that will back promises with action and money, and that will protect scientific findings from being altered, distorted or suppressed.

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, as I said, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is continuing to invest in science where it counts most to achieve the best results for Canadians. Just as ecosystems and priorities of Canadians evolve, so do our investments in science.

However, be assured that the department's freshwater science program is an active and diverse program. Departmental scientists and biologists conduct cutting-edge research in lakes and rivers across the country in support of the department's mandate.

While we make wise investments in government science, the department will continue to collaborate with various academic and industry partners. These important collaborations enhance scientific knowledge and increase the richness of our scientific knowledge base.

The department will continue to conduct scientific research necessary to inform decisions and policies that would meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 7:14 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:14 p.m.)

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