



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 072 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for St. Paul's.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SMILE CANADA

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday night I attended the sixth annual SMILE Canada Fundraising Gala at the Swagat Banquet Hall in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville, which was attended by many families supported by this program.

During National Volunteer Week, I wish to pay tribute to SMILE, which is 100% volunteer run. SMILE Canada is an organization dedicated to supporting children and their families from minority communities who are living with a disability and/or critical illness. Through a very active volunteer framework, SMILE offers a support system, integrative events, educational workshops, scholarships, and a buddy program that supports children with different abilities.

I encourage people in the community to help support SMILE through a donation of time, talent, or resources. Go to www.smilecan.org.

Our communities are only stronger when we all make the effort to help each other. This organization rightly says, “We all smile in the same language”.

* * *

[Translation]

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am greatly honoured to rise today to commemorate the anniversary of one of the Canada's most significant military victories, the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

After three years of unsuccessful attempts at taking control of the ridge, French and British troops looked to the Canadians in the hope that we could succeed where they had failed. For the first time, the four Canadian divisions worked together to win a battle that most considered unwinnable.

Answering the call of duty, soldiers such as Georges Vanier, William Milne, Lance-Sergeant Sifton, Captain MacDowell and Private Pattison fought to take Vimy Ridge. A total of 3,600 Canadians gave their lives on the battlefield. Their resourcefulness and courage scored a victory, and that battle marked the moment that Canada became a nation, carved out its own identity and gained recognition as a country.

Let us pay a glowing tribute to all of those who took up arms in Canada's defence, risked their lives and paid such a great price for peace and liberty.

* * *

[English]

PETE MCGARVEY

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to one of Orillia's most prominent citizens and a great Canadian, James A. “Pete” McGarvey, who sadly passed away last month.

Pete started his stellar career in radio journalism with Orillia's CFOR radio in 1947, where he would stay for nearly 20 years before moving to CFCO in Chatham and then on to CKEY in Toronto.

As a journalist, he reported from Moscow, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Washington, Jerusalem, and Beirut, and he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Radio-Television News Directors in 2004. However, Orillia was always home for Pete. He served there for 10 years on town council and was part of the 1950s campaign to restore the summer estate of Stephen Leacock. He was one of the founders of Orillia's Mariposa Folk Festival in 1961, which remains one of Canada's best each season.

On behalf of all parliamentarians, I extend our heartfelt condolences to Eileen and sons Peter, Will, and Doug and their families, with the full knowledge that Pete McGarvey's memory and his legacy will live on for generations.

*Statements by Members***DAFFODIL MONTH**

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month for cancer awareness. We all know someone who has been affected by cancer: members of our families, friends, or colleagues.

The daffodil is a symbol of strength and courage, and each year, volunteers throughout the country raise funds for the Canadian Cancer Society by selling fresh daffodils or daffodil pins. The funds raised through this campaign go toward prevention, research, and support for those living with cancer, and by raising these funds, we will find a cure. By wearing this pin, we offer our thoughts and support. Those fighting cancer know they are not alone in their fight. We also wear it in memory of those we have lost to this disease.

Every three minutes, cancer changes the life of another Canadian. Wear a daffodil in honour of someone.

* * *

HALVOR MOORSHEAD

Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour and remember my dear friend Halvor Moorshead, who was a strong-spirited, community-minded man and a true friend to all. This past March, Stouffville lost a dedicated community leader and volunteer.

Halvor held a lifelong passion for genealogy and cutting-edge technology, which he was happy to share with anyone who was interested. Throughout his life, he was a dedicated magazine publisher in the fields of genealogy and technology. After a successful career as an editor and publisher, Halvor retired from publishing in 2008, and to Stouffville-ites, he came to be known as a voice of Whistle Radio, where he served as chair of the board of directors and as a community host. Halvor had a great passion for our local community radio, and I was glad to have been able to share time with him both on and off the air.

Halvor will be sadly missed by all who knew him, but I am personally honoured to have called him a friend.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

MICHEL PICARD

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to the career of Michel Picard, a Radio-Canada mainstay whose voice inspired confidence in the Outaouais since he first arrived here in 1976.

He spent over 40 years in radio and television, and all of those who worked with him will tell you how much they respect and appreciate his passion and integrity. He is our own Bernard Derome.

Michel Picard also spent four decades deeply involved in teaching, in social causes and in the region's cultural scene. He will forever be remembered by the people of Gatineau and Ottawa.

I had the honour and pleasure of interacting with him over the years, both during our many interviews and when we worked together to make things better for local people. Every time we got

together, I was touched by his great respect for others and his compassion.

Today, we would like to express our admiration and our appreciation for his unwavering dedication.

I invite all of my colleagues to wish Michel Picard a happy and well-deserved but never restful retirement. Thank you, Michel.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the IPCC, the UN group that since 1990 has been gathering evidence on our warming planet, issued its most sobering assessment yet.

The government should be acknowledged for the action already taken to reduce GHGs in coal-fired electricity, passenger cars and light trucks, heavy-duty vehicles, and renewable fuels. These actions will result in meaningful reductions in GHGs. However, more needs to be done. I encourage the government to roll out the rest of its climate change plan and to introduce regulations for the oil and gas sector and for other large final emitters.

Now, it is true that many are still skeptical of the science of climate change, but it is also true that governments can convince the public. As former Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said this week:

Leadership is the process, not only of foreseeing the need for change but making the case for change. Leadership does not consist of imposing unpopular ideas on the public but of making unpopular ideas acceptable to the nation.

* * *

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2014

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, there are great things done under Albertan sun

When people stand together
In support of a town whose arena came down
in the worst of winter's weather.

The Sylvan Lake lights have seen queer sites
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the street when Lakers did meet
For a photo in minus 40 degrees.

Now this tale that I weave, most wouldn't believe
If you'd asked them a few weeks ago
But opportunity knocked, Sylvan volunteers rocked
When Kraft provided some hope.

Those who played in this game, I'll call them by name
For victory belongs to them
They gave it their all, no task was too small
And if I've missed any, please forgive.

Statements by Members

Here is to Parsons and Rosie, who worked for the trophy,
 Along his lovely wife, Kim
 Brenda Dale, Jared Waldo were easy to follow
 What was started by Kevin Putnam.

Jas, Kelly and Kris also took part in this
 Dale and Crystal, well they never tired
 Nor Diane, Megan, Steve, and the one in the lead
 Inexhaustible Mayor McIntyre.

For those who work in the news, and give us their views
 I give credit where credit is due
 You provided air time, never charging a dime
 unto you goes a worthy salute.

The Sylvan Lake lights have seen many great sights
 But the greatest that they ever will
 Was that Saturday night amidst cheer and delight
 Sylvan Lake won Kraft Hockeyville.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC CITY CABLE CO-OPERATIVE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House to commend the excellent work done by the Coopérative de câblodistribution de l'arrière-pays in the Jacques-Cartier RCM.

This co-operative, which provides local television programming, has been nominated in four categories at the national level for the “I heart local cable” awards.

These awards, presented by the Canadian Cable Systems Alliance, celebrate excellence in cable television, community spirit and the development of national content.

By showcasing the region's culture, history and heritage, while providing access to high-quality local information, the Coopérative de câblodistribution de l'arrière-pays has distinguished itself and put the Jacques-Cartier RCM on the map.

I would especially like to commend Chloé Patry-Robitaille for her nomination in the “best local cable personality” category for her program, *On parle de vous*. Over the past few months, I have seen how seriously Chloé takes her work and how much energy she puts into it. This nomination is certainly well deserved.

Once again, I wish to congratulate the entire team at the Coopérative de câblodistribution de l'arrière-pays on their four nominations and on their outstanding commitment to the community in the Jacques-Cartier region.

* * *

[English]

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is Vimy Day. Like many members of this House, I wear my Vimy pin to recognize the sacrifice of those who fought at Vimy but also the

unique achievement the Battle of Vimy Ridge represented for a young country.

Last night at the Canadian War Museum, Canadian Forces members, veterans, sponsors, and guests gathered for the First World War Centenary Gala to raise money for the museum's Operation Veteran program and the Royal Canadian Legion's poppy trust fund.

It is our duty to remember the 425,000 Canadians who served overseas in the Great War, the 66,000 who gave the ultimate sacrifice, and the 173,000 who returned to Canada wounded.

On the road to 2017, a year that represents the 150th anniversary of Canada and the 100th anniversary of Vimy, I urge Canadians to understand our past, commemorate these achievements, and thank our veterans.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

ABORTION

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a Conservative member again announced his intention to reopen the abortion debate. Every once in a while, the Conservatives attack women's rights and we in the NDP must stand together to fend off those attacks.

If this Prime Minister is sincere when he says that the right to abortion is not threatened in Canada, then why do his members keep attacking that right?

The NDP knows that the vast majority of Canadians believe that women have the right to choose. We are the only party in the House that voted unanimously to uphold that right. We are calling on the Conservative government to move on and do something tangible to ensure women's equality.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre may want to live in the past, but we know that today, every woman decides for herself what to do with her body.

* * *

[English]

ST. ELIAS THE PROPHET UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mr. Kyle Seebach (Brampton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, St. Elias the Prophet Ukrainian Catholic Church in Brampton tragically burned to the ground. I have attended services at St. Elias many times. It was an exceptionally beautiful and striking church. The woodwork and craftsmanship were extraordinary.

Anyone who attended a service there will attest to the solemn and angelic hymns that seemed to lift one to a heavenly place. When people take part in celebrations or services at St. Elias, they are filled with peace.

Father Roman Galadza of St. Elias, who I am privileged to call a friend, demonstrated great wisdom and leadership amidst this tragic event. He told his parish not to grieve; that they will build again.

Oral Questions

He reminded them that the temple of God lives in each of us, so despite losing the building, they have not lost their church.

If the devotion and faithfulness of the Ukrainian Catholics at St. Elias are any indication, St. Elias will be rebuilt and again be the magnificent and holy place it once was.

* * *

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the 97th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, we commemorate the role Canada played in this victory and remember the more than 10,000 Canadians killed or wounded in this battle.

[Translation]

Four divisions of the Canadian Corps, fighting together for the first time, launched an attack under intense machine gun fire, in the snow and sleet, and stormed enemy lines. They succeeded where thousands of others had failed.

[English]

Vimy became a symbol for our unity as a nation and for the extraordinary skills, sacrifice, and courage of the Canadians that captured the ridge. As Brigadier-General Ross declared after the war, "...in those few minutes [we] witnessed the birth of a nation".

Although I was quite young when I visited Vimy, the impact of standing in that hallowed place has never left me.

[Translation]

N'oublions jamais. Lest we forget.

* * *

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this day 97 years ago, during the First World War, there began a four-day battle that would culminate in the capture of Vimy Ridge in France.

This battle for peace and freedom is a turning point in our history. It marked Canada's birth as a nation. However, this feat was accomplished at a price. Almost 3,600 Canadians lost their lives.

Our government will never forget the service and the sacrifices of our veterans, and we have tremendous respect for all those who continue to serve our country.

I am proud to rise in the House to salute the courage and bravery of the Canadian soldiers who won this ridge, where we now find the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

Lest we forget.

* * *

● (1420)

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister once heaped praise on Marc Mayrand, calling him "a

strong and energetic manager...particularly well suited to take on this important position".

Now he sends his Minister of State for Democratic Reform to launch a blistering personal attack on Mr. Mayrand for having the temerity to do his job.

In the words of Sheila Fraser, "...if this was to continue, we will all pay because no one will have faith in government, in chief electoral officers, or our democratic system".

Our laws should defend voters and show respect for our officers of Parliament. Instead, Conservatives are crafting laws that help themselves and savage any officer of Parliament who dares to oppose them.

To any Conservative colleagues across the way who have a shred of respect left for Parliament, its traditions, and our democratic institutions, I say this to them: Their Prime Minister is leading them off a cliff on this issue, but it is not too late to do the honourable thing: to stand up, speak out, and join the crowd opposing the unfair elections act.

* * *

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to all those who served and sacrificed in service to Canada during World War I.

Today marks the 97th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, where 3,600 brave young Canadians lost their lives and 7,000 more were wounded.

Ninety-years later, Canadians still regard the Battle of Vimy Ridge as more than a much-needed victory in the First World War. Many also proudly point to it as Canada's coming of age as a nation.

It is our national duty, as Canadians, to ensure that the memories of those who died that day live on forever.

Lest we forget.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me read a quote:

...using time allocation for electoral law, doing it quickly and without the consent of the other political parties, is the kind of dangerous application of electoral practices that we are more likely to find in third world countries.

Who said that?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP decided, itself, before reading the bill, that it would oppose changes to the electoral act.

The government has brought forward important modifications that we believe have the support of the Canadian people, in particular the idea that one should not vote without being able to produce any ID whatsoever. We are strongly committed to this legislation.

Oral Questions

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that quote was from the Prime Minister, of course. That is what he used to say.

Does the Prime Minister still stand by his statement that ramming this type of bill through Parliament without the support of any other political party is a tactic fit for a third world dictatorship, not for a democracy like Canada?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you know well, the legislation before this Parliament has been, and will continue to be, subject to considerable debate and considerable scrutiny. Obviously, I encourage all members to examine the provisions carefully, and I believe we will arrive at the conclusions that this legislation is certainly in the best interests of Canadians.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only does he not have the support of any other political party but yesterday when I asked the Prime Minister if he could name a single expert in Canada who backs this bill who is not connected to the Conservative Party, he could not name one. Can he name one today?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP continues to try to avoid debate on the substance of the legislation. Of course, the substance here is that we believe, and Canadians believe, that people should be able to produce some identification to prove who they are before they vote.

I hope the leader of the NDP has more of a strategy for the next election, other than just bogus parliamentary offices and voters who cannot produce ID.

• (1425)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Not one.

[*Translation*]

The Minister of State for Democratic Reform accused the Chief Electoral Officer of misleading Parliament.

We want a clear answer. Does the Prime Minister support his minister's comments, yes or no? I would like him to avoid dodging the question for once in his life.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of dodging, I see that the NDP leader still has not reimbursed Canadian taxpayers for the \$3 million used for parliamentary offices outside Ottawa, which violates the rules of the House of Commons. It is time for the NDP leader to do the right thing.

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister either has confidence in his minister or he does not. We would like to give him another chance because, so far, he has yet to express his confidence in his minister.

Does the Prime Minister stand by his minister's claim that the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada made "amazing" and "astounding" false statements before Parliament? Does he support that? Yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fair elections act makes a number of changes to the functioning of Elections Canada proposed by the minister for democratic reform involving splitting functions of administration and investigation, involving requiring written judgments and consistency in the application of those things, and appropriate notifications to the parties. I think these proposals by the minister for democratic reform are wise changes to Elections Canada.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' elections act alters the fundamental laws of our democracy. It was drafted without consultation with Elections Canada, experts, or opposition members. Sheila Fraser calls it an "attack on...democracy".

If the Prime Minister will not listen to outside counsel, will he at least allow Conservative MPs to listen to their constituents and vote their conscience? Will he allow a free vote on his elections act?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think all members of Parliament are hearing very clearly that over 99% of Canadians were able to produce identification when voting in the last election. Canadians clearly believe that this is an appropriate thing that one would do. One has to produce identification for much less important functions in our society. I am sure, and I hope, that members on all sides of the Chamber will listen to Canadians and make sure that our elections are conducted with the utmost integrity.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will try this again. Marc Mayrand dared to speak out against a government bill.

The Minister of State for Democratic Reform then engaged in a vicious, partisan attack against him, which former auditor general Sheila Fraser called "totally inappropriate".

The Prime Minister should allow his members to speak without fear of being discredited. Will he allow them to vote freely on this bill?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, more than 99% of Canadians voted with identification at the last election. It is not acceptable in this day and age for people to vote without being able to identify themselves.

I think that all members in the House will listen to Canadians and make our elections fairer.

[*English*]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Assembly of First Nations says that the Conservatives' elections act creates a new barrier to voting for aboriginals. CARP says it is an attack on seniors' voting rights. Civil liberties advocates say it will erode an individual's right to vote. If the Prime Minister is so convinced by the "rightness" of his bill, why will he not allow a free vote by his MPs?

Oral Questions

•(1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, as I have said, 99% of Canadians, whether they are seniors, aboriginal Canadians, or students, are able to produce identification, which is not surprising because there are 39 pieces of allowable identification, such as old age security cards, student cards, Indian status cards, and of course many others.

Once again, I would encourage the leader of the Liberal Party to get away from the rhetoric and focus on the substance. Canadians expect that we know who votes, that elections are decided by secret votes but not by secret voters. That is what we are prepared to do.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has just said that he is hoping that members on both sides would listen to Canadians. For three months, we have been asking him to do just that. Does that mean that he now accepts to hold hearings on his unfair elections act across Canada, like we have been asking for?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been telling us that they think it is reasonable to present identification when one casts a ballot. We understand that not everyone has photo ID. That is why there are 39 different forms of acceptable ID. If Canadians provide those identifications, then they would be able to cast their ballot in the next election.

This is reasonable. It is a vast and comprehensive list that should provide every Canadian with the ability to identify themselves when they cast their ballot. This is reasonable and Canadians support it.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, actually, it was the Prime Minister who just made that statement in answer to the member for Papineau. We are addressing ourselves to the Prime Minister, who is the only one who can give the answer. We have been asking for public hearings on the bill since day one. He just said, word for word, that he is asking members on both sides of the House to go out and listen to Canadians on the bill. Is he willing to hold parliamentary hearings on this across Canada? Yes or no?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of our caucus listen to their constituents every single day. If the leader of the NDP were doing the same, he would understand that the average Canadian believes it is completely reasonable to bring some form of identification to show who they are when they cast their ballot.

One has to present ID to cross the border, to buy alcohol, to rent a car, to board an airplane, and to do a whole series of basic things that Canadians do all the time. We think it is reasonable that they do the same when they vote.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that minister has said that parliamentary committee hearings to listen to Canadians are an expensive circus.

It is the Prime Minister who just said, word for word, in this House, that he wants members on both sides to go out and listen to Canadians.

Why is talking out of both sides of his mouth? On one side he says to listen to Canadians; on another side he stands this lightweight to give his answers for him.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I have asked hon. members before, and I will do so again, not to make personal allegations of our colleagues.

Is the hon. minister rising to answer?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about parliamentary committees. I think all of us look forward to the day when he will finally arrive at a parliamentary committee to explain how he took from taxpayers that which did not belong to him.

In the meantime, we will continue to stand up for a fair and reasonable elections act that requires people to provide ID, that gives independent investigations, that requires mass calls to be registered, and that brings in new penalties against fraud at election time. This is fair. This is reasonable. We stand by it.

•(1435)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just said that people can use Indian status cards to vote. Since that is completely untrue, can he tell us who gave him that false information?

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are 39 different forms of identification that Elections Canada authorizes so that people can establish their status as an eligible voter. One of them is a certificate of Indian status card, which is the sixth on the list. There is also an attestation of residence issued by a responsible authority of a first nations band or reserve. Those are lots of options.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Actually, Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Prime Minister just said, the address does not appear on that card, and most of the people in question do not even possess one.

Does the Prime Minister understand that even if one has a social insurance card, a credit card, a health insurance card, a birth certificate, and a passport, one still cannot vote because the address is on none of those?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP's position is that people should be allowed to vote without any ID whatsoever. That is an unreasonable position and it is not shared by Canadians.

Oral Questions

Of the 39 pieces of valid ID that Elections Canada accepts, there are 13 which do have one's address on them. In addition to a standard government-issued photo ID, there are utility bills, such as telephone, TV, public utilities, hydro, gas; bank card statements; vehicle ownership; correspondence from a school, college, or university; statement of government benefits; an attestation from an Indian band; a government cheque or cheque stub; pension statement of benefits; residential lease; insurance policies. I could go on. All these have the address.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has claimed time and again that Canadians can use a cable or phone bill to vote, but not if that bill came by email. Thanks to the Conservative Party's failure to ban pay-to-pay billing, more and more people are having to pay to get paper bills.

Does the Prime Minister believe that people should have to pay in order to vote?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Elections Canada establishes the list of 39 acceptable forms of ID. The CEO has the legal authority under the existing act, and he will retain that authority under the fair elections act to amend the list and to alter it to keep up with the times. If he believes that there is a need to update the list, then I would encourage him to do so.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, now that we have once again heard the empty words of his minister, let us quote somebody who knows what he is talking about. Keith Archer, the Chief Electoral Officer of British Columbia, testified at committee that in British Columbia, 14,000 people used vouching to vote.

If vouching had not been available in the last election, Mr. Archer said, "I would expect that many of them would have been disenfranchised...".

Does the Prime Minister think that Mr. Archer is just another uninformed hack? Is he going to hide behind his minister again, or is he going to finally stand in the House and try to defend the indefensible, as he has been doing for three months?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact that the leader of the NDP thinks it is indefensible to ask people to bring ID when they vote just shows how out of touch with reality he has become.

There are 39 different forms of acceptable ID that Canadians can use when they cast their ballot. We think it is reasonable in a democratic society for people to bring ID when they vote. That is all that the fair elections act requests.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will give the Prime Minister another example of someone who actually knows what he is talking about.

David Brock, the Chief Electoral Officer for the Northwest Territories, testified at committee, that in 27 of the 33 communities in the Northwest Territories more than half of the residents do not have proper ID. These people have been relying on vouching to identify themselves for years with no problems.

Why, in good faith, is the Prime Minister stopping honest Canadians from being able to vote?

● (1440)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is doing no such thing. He is simply requiring, through the fair elections act, that people present ID when they cast their ballot.

It is not necessary to bring government-issued photo ID, though that is an option. There are 39 different forms of ID that are accepted when people show up to vote. We think that is reasonable, and Canadians agree with us.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, too many Conservative ministers have a casual relationship with the truth on Bill C-23. The Minister of the Environment is claiming that she was in the provincial cabinet in 2001 and helped to solve a crisis with identification following the September 11th attacks. Yet, she was not even elected until 2004.

The minister claims that every hamlet has photo ID, yet the MLA for South Baffin said that his constituents have to fly to Iqaluit.

Will the Minister of the Environment come clean on voter ID cards for northerners and agree to stop reinventing history?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the comments yesterday, after 9/11, in Nunavut, we required identification from our citizens in order to access and get on aircraft for medical purposes. I was in cabinet in 2004 when we purchased the cameras for the municipalities in Nunavut so that Nunavummiut could access identification cards to board the aircraft.

After the 9/11 incident, as we all know, the laws were changed and identification was required. In fact, I was in cabinet when we purchased those cameras.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister still has not responded to Sheila Fraser. I am giving him the opportunity to do so. What does he have to say about the statement she made in response to the minister's blatant attack on the Chief Electoral Officer? Ms. Fraser said:

This does not do anyone any favours. It undermines the credibility of our institutions. Ultimately, if this goes forward, we will all pay the price because no one will have any faith left in the government, the Chief Electoral Officer or the democratic system.

What does he have to say to Ms. Fraser?

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we think it is reasonable to expect Canadians to bring ID when they vote. Now, it is not necessary to bring photo ID. Canadians can choose from 39 options. The fair elections act will require Elections Canada to inform voters of these options so that they can all vote.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not appropriate for the Minister of State for Democratic Reform to verbally assault the Chief Electoral Officer. That is wrong.

The minister owes not only the Chief Electoral Officer an apology; he owes Canadians an apology. I look to the Prime Minister to demonstrate leadership, and he should be asking his Minister of State for Democratic Reform to apologize to all Canadians and the Chief Electoral Officer.

My question is specific to the minister. Will he do the honourable thing, stand in his place, and say he is sorry to the Chief Electoral Officer today?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member criticizes my testimony without citing a single word of it. I suspect he has not read it, as he has probably not read the fair elections act. If he had, then he would know that what we are proposing is that people present some form of ID when they cast their ballots.

There are 39 options from which they can choose to do that. It is fair and reasonable to expect that they would, and Canadians agree with us on that point.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister's conduct yesterday was a disgrace to Parliament and to Canadians.

Dealing with this minister is like playing chess with a pigeon. He flaps his wings all over the place, knocks the pieces off the table, messes all over the table, then struts around as if he won the game.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1445)

The Speaker: I know it is a Wednesday. I do not know what was in the coffee at caucus this morning, but members are getting a little over the top.

I have asked members before to hold off on using animal references. I do not think they are helpful for the course of debate.

I did not hear a question, and I do not know if the minister wants to respond.

The hon. Minister of State for Democratic Reform.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the member some credit for creativity, although I think he has confused the games. He is playing charades and not chess over there.

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, Canadians cannot file their taxes online or access the CRA's online services because the website has been shut down in response to a security breach caused by the Heartbleed bug.

Let us remember that, two years ago, the Auditor General harshly criticized the Conservatives for their failed approach to cybersecurity.

How many Canadians have been affected and how much money has the government invested in cybersecurity per year over the past five years?

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a result of information received late yesterday evening concerning an international Internet security vulnerability named the Heartbleed bug, the CRA has temporarily shut down public access to electronic services as a preventive measure to safeguard the integrity of taxpayer information. I reiterate that this was done as a preventive measure.

CRA should be praised for its quick action on this issue that is affecting international web applications. We recognize that this represents a significant inconvenience for Canadians, but we are committed to investigating it and we have informed the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on top of the recent privacy breaches that compromised the personal information of thousands of Canadians, now at the height of tax season, Canadians are not able to access the Canada Revenue Agency website.

What is worse, they have no assurances that their personal information has not already been compromised by this security vulnerability.

Will the minister agree to extend the filing deadline to ensure Canadians will not be penalized for waiting to file until the CRA website is secure?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, consideration will be given to taxpayers who are unable to comply with their filing requirements because of this service interruption.

As I have said before in this House, the security of taxpayer information is a CRA priority. The Heartbleed bug is an issue affecting international web applications worldwide. We are taking all necessary measures to protect taxpayer information, including precautionary measures.

The member opposite should recognize that this was a sound management decision taken to help taxpayers, in their best interests.

Oral Questions

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last three years, both Treasury Board and Finance were shut down by concerted attacks by overseas hackers. Last night, the taxation department had to be told by outside sources that its computers were compromised. One would think they would have learned some lessons.

However, yesterday at committee, CRA officials admitted they had not even bothered to start tracking data breaches until I raised the issue. An official said, that with the member for Timmins—James Bay's "guidance, we've changed our process so that we now are able to...track...numbers of breaches...".

I have a simple question. Does the member not think she needs to do a better job protecting the private information of Canadian citizens?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that this is an international issue affecting web applications worldwide. The CRA recognizes that this problem may represent a significant inconvenience for Canadians. It is fully engaged in resolving the matter as soon as possible and restoring online services, but we need to do it in a manner where privacy and private information remain safe and secure.

I have to stress that the security and integrity of taxpayer information is CRA's number one priority. We will be providing daily updates at 3 p.m. on our website, and we are doing the job to—

• (1450)

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PORT OF MONTREAL

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Robert Abdallah was the Prime Minister's choice for taking the helm of the Montreal Port Authority. Telephone recordings have revealed that the Prime Minister's Office and the "boss in Quebec" at the time, Dimitri Soudas, were involved in dealings that would have benefited Tony Accurso.

Coincidentally, several firms were also involved in the plan to give him the top job at the Montreal Port Authority, so that they would have an advantage when it came to getting federal contracts. This morning, nine officers from the anti-corruption squad raided Robert Abdallah's home in Quebec.

Why did the Prime Minister pushed so hard to have Robert Abdallah as the head of the Montreal Port Authority?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the president of the Port of Montreal is appointed by the board, and it did not appoint Mr. Abdallah president.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, polio is a serious disease with a terrible impact on those it affects, most of whom live in the developing world. My constituents are concerned about this epidemic and would appreciate an update on Canada's actions.

I would note that recently UNICEF officials remarked that the Government of Canada has provided unwavering support, resulting in immense gains for children's health. Can the minister please tell this House what our government is doing to help address the issue of polio?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased yesterday to announce an enhanced partnership with UNICEF and the World Health Organization. We also work closely with the Aga Khan Foundation and Rotary on this file.

[*Translation*]

All children, no matter where they live, have the right to dream of the future with hope and optimism, and that is why Canada is taking meaningful action to eradicate polio once and for all.

The Muskoka initiative, launched by the Prime Minister, will ensure that every child is immunized. The vaccine is a very cost-effective investment. It saves 2.5 million lives a year.

[*English*]

Canada is making a difference and will we will continue to lead this—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Newton—North Delta.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps citing a hotline number and email address for Canadians to tell on employers who abuse the temporary foreign workers program. This kind of damage control does not work or fix the problem.

Canadians are being overlooked for jobs, and the best the minister can do is slap those employers on the wrists for breaking the rules. When will the minister take granting of LMOs seriously and stop letting employers give away Canadian jobs?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the other day I had a New Democratic member of Parliament come over here to complain about the fact that some LMOs were refused for a hotel in that MP's riding in northern Ontario, because apparently there is not an availability of workers in the hotel industry. The LMO was refused because the employer was not offering a prevailing regional wage rate. This MP asked me to intervene. I said no; we are going to stick by the rules.

Oral Questions

We are going to do everything we can to ensure that Canadians always come first; that the temporary foreign worker program is only and always a last resort. This is why we invite people, if they are aware of abuse, to call the tip line: 1-800-367-5693.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are outraged at the Conservatives' catastrophic management of the temporary foreign worker file.

On the one hand, they encourage people to report employers who abuse the program, and on the other, they provide labour market opinions to any company that asks, with no concern for the actual labour market situation. Right now, Canadians are being fired by companies that would rather hire cheaper temporary foreign workers.

When will the minister put a stop to this circus and take the labour market seriously?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is what all of the NDP MPs say in public, but when they contact me privately, they have a different tale to tell.

We will always follow the rules and require employers to comply with their obligation to look for available Canadians first. If Canadians know of someone who is abusing the program, they should tell us by calling 1-800-367-5693. That is an information line for people to tell us about those who abuse the program.

* * *

•(1455)

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report has confirmed that budget cuts are preventing CBC/Radio-Canada from meeting its linguistic obligations.

Since the Conservatives came to power, they have been constantly cutting the public broadcaster's budget at the expense of its obligations, and francophone minority communities are directly affected by this obstinacy. Having access to local French content is essential to the development of those communities, and it takes resources to do so.

Now that further devastating cuts are expected to be announced tomorrow, can the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages tell us how, despite these relentless cuts, she expects CBC/Radio-Canada to fulfill its duty to these minority language communities?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is a crown corporation that operates at arm's length from the government. It is responsible for its own day-to-day operations.

That said, according to the corporation's president, its problems stem from the declining number of viewers. CBC/Radio-Canada has enough money to fulfill its mandate under the Broadcasting Act, and it is up to that corporation to provide all Canadians, francophones and anglophones alike, with the programming they want.

[*English*]

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we need a government that believes in supporting public broadcasting, not dismantling it.

CBC/Radio-Canada plays a unique role for both our official languages, but the Conservatives, like the Liberals before them, severely cut the budget: no more local content in minority francophone or anglophone communities. Even worse, tomorrow we expect deeper cuts.

Will the government finally commit to provide CBC/Radio-Canada with stable, long-term funding, so it can fulfill its mandate?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat this in English. What was just said is absolutely false.

As we all know, CBC/Radio-Canada has a mandate to offer both French and English broadcasting, and that falls under the act itself.

Now, when it comes to its president's comments, with respect to declining viewership, that is one of its key challenges. When we talk about viewership, it is up to the CBC and Radio-Canada to provide viewership and programming that Canadians are interested in.

In the meantime, this government has given record funds. It has enough to deal with its mandate, and I encourage it to do so.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, municipalities across Ontario face mounting infrastructure costs and are begging for federal help. They cannot even effectively apply to the building Canada fund since agreements will not be ready in time for this year's construction season.

The Conservatives have clearly been foot-dragging on the paperwork since they pickpocketed the program funding to the tune of over 87%.

Why are the Conservatives punishing taxpayers for their government's waste, delays, and economic incompetence?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is completely false. We have sent renewals of all the components of the building Canada plan to provinces and territories. There are several components to the plan. The building Canada plan will be a very good plan, the longest ever, with more money than we ever invested. We have no lesson to receive on this point.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us put the new infrastructure funding cut into perspective.

Ten years ago, the federal government committed \$500 million for just one investment: the Canada line to Vancouver airport.

However, today, the Conservatives' fund is down to just \$200 million for an entire country.

Oral Questions

Vancouver's Broadway corridor generates billions in economic activity. However, to grow, it urgently needs rapid transit.

Why are the Conservatives making our cities wait years longer for help with their critical infrastructure investments? Why are they sabotaging them rather than supporting them?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): That is false, Mr. Speaker. I said there were several components. There is the community improvement fund, which includes background on the gas tax and GST credit, amounting to \$32 billion. There is the building Canada fund, which includes \$4 billion to support projects of national importance and \$10 billion reserved for provinces and territories. There is \$1.25 billion for P3 Canada, and the \$6 billion for current programs will continue to flow. That is the best ever.

* * *

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the new veterans charter has major shortcomings. There are many problems with the delivery of services to veterans and the government knows it. Instead of helping, the Conservatives have decided to ignore the dozens of recommendations in recent reviews and are simply doing nothing. To add insult to injury, the Conservatives are disputing their requests in court.

Why is the minister spending public money and energy in court instead of providing our veterans the benefits and care they deserve?

• (1500)

[English]

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has a strong record when it comes to supporting Canada's veterans, especially under the leadership of our Prime Minister right here.

We have invested almost \$5 billion in additional funding since coming to office in 2006. The real question is, why do the opposition, the NDP and Liberals both, continue to oppose virtually every single initiative we have brought forward to help Canada's veterans?

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, veterans are not the only ones being forgotten by the government. Decades of Canadian Forces members and civilians who were exposed to the toxic defoliant Agent Orange are also being ignored. It is not so in the U.S., where the Governor of Maine is working with the U.S. Department of Defence and veterans affairs to help Maine national guard members exposed to Agent Orange at Gagetown get ongoing compensation and health care.

When will all Agent Orange victims in Canada see this kind of help and full compensation from their government?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in fact the only government that ever worked on this file and fixed it.

That being said, just as in this instance and carrying forward, we will make the best interests of our men and women in uniform and our veterans a priority for this government. I am very proud of that.

* * *

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is working hard to ensure that innovation leaders in my home province of Manitoba and across Canada have access to opportunities to enhance their ideas and to connect with new markets. My community of Winnipeg is home to many innovative businesses and researchers. I have heard from my constituents that they are keen to see greater opportunities to bring their ideas to market.

Can the Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification please inform the House of the efforts our government is making to ensure that innovators in western Canada have the support they need to succeed in today's global economy?

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that innovation is key to ensuring our continued economic success. Western Canada is home to many innovative businesses and institutions, and we are keen to assess them and for them to realize their full potential. That is why we will be holding the western innovation forum in Vancouver on April 16 and 17. The forum will promote opportunities for prime contractors to connect with innovators from business and research, and will spark the development of new ideas.

It is thanks to our government that these innovators will have access to opportunities such as this forum while benefiting from a stable economic environment for investment. For more information, check out [wd_canada](#) on Twitter.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is making a big mistake when it comes to the shrimp cuts off Newfoundland and Labrador. She is cutting 26% of the inshore fleet and only 3% on the offshore fleet.

Yesterday in the House she said that she is applying the 1997 last in, first out policy, but here is the problem. The press release from DFO in 1997 made no mention of that policy whatsoever. What it did mention was priority access, adjacency, and maximizing employment.

Therefore, why is she twisting the facts in her favour just to make these drastic cuts to our communities in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, allocation of quota decisions are never easy, particularly when stocks are on the decline.

Back in 1997, this last in, first out policy was adopted by the Liberal government of the time, I might add, to protect those with the longest attachment to the fishery. The inshore fishery today has a quota of 22,000 tonnes more than it did in 1997. The offshore fishery has a quota of only 2,000 tonnes more than it did in 1997.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Mirabel airport could become an economic engine for the region. Local officials and the business community want this facility to be used to stimulate the region's economy. However, the property manager, Aéroports de Montréal, is planning to demolish it instead.

The federal government still owns the airport and has the final say on the matter.

What are the Minister of Transport's plans for this important infrastructure?

• (1505)

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member has rightly pointed out, it is Aéroports de Montréal that actually runs that airport as well as the other airport in the Montreal vicinity. In doing so, it makes the best decisions it can for the local community and what is needed for the business community. I understand that its officials have had many conversations with local stakeholders as to what to do with respect to this infrastructure, and I look forward to their advice and their action on the matter.

* * *

INDUSTRY

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry. We now live in a digital world and almost every job, every sector, every aspect of our lives is affected by digital technologies. What connects us today are the Internet and new technologies that have created tremendous opportunities for Canadians to communicate with each other and businesses to compete globally.

Could the minister please tell the House what our government is doing to ensure that Canadians can take full advantage of the digital age?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I was very pleased to be joined by leaders of Canada's tech community in Kitchener—Waterloo to announce Digital Canada 150, our government's digital policy framework going forward.

Here is what Chris O'Neill, the managing director of Google Canada, said: "This strategy will accelerate digital adoption and technological innovation among Canadian businesses which is essential to remain a global economic power".

Mark Barrenechea, the president and CEO of Open Text, said: "Digital Canada 150 lays the foundation for a connected and competitive Canada".

In the last campaign we said that we would deliver to Canadians an effective national digital policy. Digital Canada 150 has five pillars, 39 new initiatives, one national policy that will benefit 35 million Canadians in the digital age.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Jeanne-Le Ber are worried about the future of postal services. The end of door-to-door delivery will primarily affect seniors and people with reduced mobility. Then there is the 60% increase in the price of a stamp while Canada Post executives pocket millions of dollars in salaries.

Why do the Conservatives want to stop Canadians from having access to postal services?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is firmly behind the plan for Canada Post, the reason being that we do want to have a sustainable Canada Post and postal service going on for many years. Given that Canada Post at the current rate, and in the current scenario, will lose \$1 billion a year in the future, their five-point plan makes a lot of sense. That is their way to come back to self-sustainability to ensure that they are not a burden on the taxpayer.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the first things the new Quebec government will do is reintroduce, as is, the bill on the right to die with dignity. In Quebec there is broad support for this bill, which has emerged from a process that has been recognized for its rigour and non-partisanship.

My question is very simple. Will the federal government respect Quebecers' decision to allow the dying to die with dignity, or will it again challenge the bill?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that this is a very emotional, very divisive debate. It also has issues of jurisdiction that have to be considered. We know that the matter is now in fact before the courts and for that reason, as Attorney General, I will comment no further.

*Points of Order***POINTS OF ORDER**

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during question period, after the Minister of the Environment answered a question by the member for Churchill, the Minister of International Trade made an inappropriate gesture, making a gun with his hand while saying “boom” in the direction of the member for Churchill.

I am sure that every member would agree that this gesture has no place in the House of Commons, and I would like to ask the minister to apologize.

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this member is making that up. It is completely false. I made no such gesture. I said no such word.

I am surrounded by my colleagues here. None of them saw me make a gesture or make that kind of a comment.

I ask that member to apologize to me and to this side of the House.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1510)

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my point of order is a fairly lengthy one.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I have given the floor to the hon. member for Malpeque. I will hear his point of order. I will ask other members to come to order. The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order in relation to private members Bill C-483, which stands in the name of the member for Oxford.

I want to begin by stating that my concerns are not related to the intent of the bill. I also want to acknowledge that the member for Oxford placed this bill before the House and the committee with the best of intentions, and in his remarks both in the House and at committee, he stated eloquently and with conviction the intent and principle behind the bill.

However, I would submit to the Chair that in the process of the committee's examination of both the bill and the amendments that the government was compelled to bring forward, the bill as amended has in fact moved a great deal away from its original intent and principle as articulated by the member for Oxford, as well as other members of the government in speaking to the bill and witnesses who testified before committee in support of the bill, all of whom were in support of the bill prior to the government amending the bill, but which is now substantially different from what those witnesses and members were speaking to.

At this point I would also draw to the attention of the Chair the fact that each of the private members' bills by government members that has come before the public safety and justice committees have required amendments that most often have exceeded the number of original clauses in the bills.

This, I would submit, is a situation of either bad drafting of bills or of government members insisting upon a specific course within their private members' bills, resulting in legislation that is so flawed that the government, with its legal advisers, literally has to redraft the legislation through the use of amendments.

The private members' bills in question were Bill C-489, Bill C-479, and now Bill C-483.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am having difficulty hearing the member for Malpeque.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The member for Wascana is rising on a point of order during the member for Malpeque's point of order.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I suggest that the members who do not wish to hear the member for Malpeque's point of order perhaps leave the chamber and come back when they are ready.

The hon. member for Malpeque is raising an issue with the Chair, and I would like to hear the point he is making. I will ask the members who are standing around and talking to take their conversations outside the chamber, calm down a little bit, and then return. The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the private members' bills in question are Bill C-489, Bill C-479, and now Bill C-483. I would suggest that this is a matter the Chair might wish to carefully examine.

With respect to Bill C-483, I would like to cite a number of references made by the member for Oxford and other members of the government with respect to what the intent of the bill was and what in essence the principle of the bill was.

At page 1236 of *Debates*, November 21, 2013, the member for Oxford stated what the purpose and the principle of Bill C-483 was. He said:

The bill proposes to grant the Parole Board of Canada authority for the full length of the sentence to grant or cancel escorted temporary absence for offenders convicted of first or second degree murder.

...This would mean that the wardens of federal prisons would no longer have authority to grant temporary escorted absences to inmates convicted of first- or second-degree murder, except in a medical emergency.

There is no ambiguity in the statement by the member as to the intent of the legislation. The bill was written to specifically remove the ability of wardens to grant escorted temporary releases.

Under the current legislation, Correctional Service of Canada, through the wardens of federal institutions, has the authority, when offenders serving a life sentence are within three years of their eligible parole date, to grant escorted temporary absences.

The reason the member has moved, through Bill C-483, to undertake these changes to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, were stated as follows during second reading debate on November 21, 2013, at page 1236 of *Debates*:

...for some victims' families, the decision-making authority of wardens to grant escorted temporary absences to murderers has been a matter of great concern. ...

Routine Proceedings

...no hearings are conducted, as decisions are made on an administrative basis by institutional heads. In contrast, when decisions by the Parole Board of Canada are made, hearings are conducted...

The member continued by saying:

...when the Parole Board of Canada conducts a hearing, a victim or a member of the public who applies in writing is permitted to attend...

During the course of second reading, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness contributed, at page 1241 of *Debates*, November 21, 2013, to the declaration as to what Bill C-483 would achieve. She stated:

...the bill we are here to talk about today relates to escorted temporary absences from prison. More specifically, it is about ensuring that only the Parole Board of Canada has the power to release prisoners except in very limited circumstances.

There is no ambiguity as to what the member for Oxford or the parliamentary secretary believes Bill C-483 would bestow upon victims. They would have a direct role as participants in the escorted temporary absence system from the first day of incarceration until the last day of incarceration of those convicted of first and second degree murder.

The parliamentary secretary continued at page 1241 by stating:

As the member for Oxford has said, we continue to hear calls from victims of crime who feel that decisions on these absences should remain with the Parole Board, rather than an unaccountable official.

During the course of the hearings on the legislation before the public safety committee, the statements related to the key principles of the bill were restated a number of times. I will not go through all of those particular statements from witnesses, other than to say that as noted on page 11 of the *Evidence*, Sue O'Sullivan, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, stated on March 25:

Bill C-483 seeks to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to shift the authority of the warden to authorize the escorted temporary absence, or ETA, of an offender convicted of first- or second-degree murder within three years of full parole eligibility to the Parole Board of Canada. At its core, this bill aims to bring a more transparent and inclusive process to victims of crime.

• (1515)

Let me sum up in layman's terms.

The Speaker: I appreciate the point the hon. member is raising and I wonder if he could give some indication to the Chair as to how much more he has to go through. If he is making a rather lengthy submission, it might be better for the House if we picked up on his point after routine proceedings, but if he is wrapping up, I will let him conclude.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with you. I indicated at the start it would be a fairly lengthy point of order, and I would be willing to do it later. The key point is that the bill is substantially changed from the principle that was introduced in the House and that it came back to the House as a different bill. However, I will conclude those remarks when you give me the point in time later.

The Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member's flexibility. I think it would serve the House if we could go through routine proceedings. Then I will give the floor back to him to conclude his remarks.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1520)

[English]

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the summary of the Global Centre for Pluralism's corporate plan for 2014.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 10 petitions.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP) Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in relation to its study of chapter 2, "Access to Online Services", of the fall 2013 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

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

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, in relation to its study of the main estimates 2014-15.

* * *

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-590, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (blood alcohol content).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce my private member's bill, an act to amend the Criminal Code on blood alcohol content.

The act amends section 22 of the Criminal Code to establish more severe penalties for drunk drivers who have blood alcohol content that exceeds twice the legal limit. The bill would increase penalties for drunk drivers who harm or kill.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

CANADA PENSION PLAN

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-591, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act (pension and benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and honoured to rise today to introduce my bill, an act to amend the Canada pension plan and the Old Age Security Act. The bill would ensure that those who are convicted—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Essex has the floor.

Order. The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Essex.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue on among the tumult.

The bill would ensure that those who are convicted of first or second degree murder of their spouse could not collect their victims' survivor pensions. The bill is important to ensure that victims' rights are enshrined in this legislation.

I would like to point out the good work the member for Hamilton Mountain has done in advocating for the bill. I hope to work with her and her colleagues for the timely passage of the bill. I hope to have the support of all members and look forward to debate on the bill.

Mr. Speaker, if you would indulge me, I would also like to point out that this was my first private member's bill, and I am joined here today by my wife as I present this, my first bill.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-592, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (cruelty to animals).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce a bill to amend the Criminal Code with respect to cruelty to animals.

In January, a husky and a cat were found dead in a Calgary alleyway with their mouths taped shut. In October, a police dog named Quanto was stabbed multiple times when he was on duty in Edmonton.

We need new policies. There is a growing movement calling for better protection for our animals. At the request of my constituents, I decided to look at what the federal government could do to help animals.

I hope that all members of the House will vote in favour of this bill, which provides a better definition of an animal, defines the intentions and acts of cruelty, such as animal fights, and sets the penalties for those found guilty of these unacceptable acts.

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

● (1525)

[*English*]

CANADIAN FORCES AND ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE FORMER MEMBERS PERSONAL INFORMATION ACT

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-593, An Act to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Act, the National Defence Act, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act and the Access to Information Act (personal information and medical records).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and table my bill, which would amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Act, the National Defence Act, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act, and the Access to Information Act.

The purpose of the bill is to guarantee that members of the Canadian Forces and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police will receive a certified copy of their medical records at the time of their release or when they leave the force or at any time thereafter upon request.

It would also provide that the Minister of Veterans Affairs may release personal information relating to a veteran to the appropriate authorities if the disclosure is in the public interest or would clearly benefit the individual to whom the information relates.

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

* * *

PETITIONS**IMPAIRED DRIVING**

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present this petition, representing thousands of British Columbians.

The petition highlights that 22-year-old Kassandra Kaulius was killed by a drunk driver. A group of people who have lost loved ones to impaired driving, called Families for Justice, believes that the current impaired driving laws are much too lenient.

They are calling for new mandatory minimum sentencing for people who have been convicted of impaired driving causing death.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present three petitions, all on the same subject matter. They call on the government to reinstate the federal funding that allowed for the operation of the Algoma Central Railway. These petitions are signed by residents of northern Ontario from Wawa, Manitouwadge, and Sault Ste. Marie.

Routine Proceedings

The Algoma Central Railway provides the sole point of access for many businesses, homes, and communities along its route, and cancelling this railway would be damaging to the economy, the health and safety, and the accessibility of residents of northern Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition put together by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. It is asking for Parliament to demonstrate international responsibility by recommitting Canada to contributing 0.7% of the GDP to overseas development assistance; prioritize responsive funding to those NGOs that Canadians support and that have seen their funding cut by CIDA; and, in the spirit of global solidarity, to grant in full the funding of \$49.2 million requested by Development and Peace over the next five years.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise with petitions signed by people from the regions of Wawa and Sault Ste. Marie.

As the House knows, the issue of public transportation in northern Ontario is becoming increasingly critical with the shutdown of the Ontario Northland. Now we see the failure of the Conservative government to protect the interests of the people in the Sault Ste. Marie region with the Algoma Central Railway.

It plays an important role in development in our region. Many of our communities rely on it. For many of our businesses, it is an economic corridor as well.

The petitioners are calling on the Conservative government to stand with the people of northern Ontario and support public transportation by maintaining support for the Algoma Central Railway.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition on behalf of a number of residents. The petition calls upon Parliament to refrain from making any changes to the Seeds Act or the Plant Breeders' Rights Act through Bill C-18, an act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by more than 100 people. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to help repair and maintain the railroad between Bathurst and Miramichi by investing the necessary funds and getting a guarantee that Canadian National will maintain VIA Rail train service in eastern New Brunswick and Quebec. The petitioners are from Acadie—Bathurst.

[*English*]

CANADA POST

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have another petition to present from over 200 people from my riding of

Acadie—Bathurst. The petitioners maintain that a reduction in service could lead to the privatization of Canada Post, which is an essential public service. Therefore, they call on the Government of Canada to reject Canada Post's plans to reduce service and to explore other options for updating the crown corporation's business plan.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition today from residents of the city of Kingston and the surrounding rural areas. It concerns Bill C-18.

The petitioners are asking Parliament to refrain from making changes to the Seeds Act and the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, and they are asking Parliament to legislate the rights of Canadians to save, reuse, select, exchange, and sell seeds.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I present two petitions. One is from residents throughout the Edmonton area as well as Sooke, B.C., calling on Parliament to reject the proposed Enbridge northern gateway pipeline as presenting unacceptable risks.

The second petition comes from residents of Regina, Saskatchewan, as well as Waterloo, Ontario, calling for the government to act to ban, in the interests of protecting pollinating populations, neonicotinoid insecticides.

TIBET

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today. The first is on behalf of many members of my community who are asking the Minister of Foreign Affairs to call on China to immediately release the respected abbot Khenpo Kartse from prison.

Khenpo Kartse has been a tireless advocate of the Tibetan language and culture. He was imprisoned in December 2013. He is very ill with a serious liver condition and is not being allowed medical treatment.

The petitioners are calling for his release from prison and for Canada's ambassador to China to give an update on his visit to Tibet in September 2013.

RAIL SAFETY

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is on behalf of many members of my community concerned about rail safety.

The petitioners are calling for the DOT-111 cars to be labelled with exactly what is being transported, but they also want strategies and timelines for the phasing out of these railcars. They also want to have an emergency response plan in the community should there be a spill, explosion, car malfunction, or derailment.

My riding is bounded on three sides by rail lines. People are very concerned about their health and safety, and they are calling for immediate action.

CANADA POST

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition regarding postal services in general and postal services for smaller communities, where the service is now being diminished under the current regime. As a result, many of the communities are losing a very important facet of their way of life.

The community in particular is the town of Charlottetown, which is next to Terra Nova National Park in the eastern part of the island. All these signatories are from the community of Charlottetown. They want a better postal service.

SEX TOURISM

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present petitions signed by over 6,000 Canadians who point out that Canadians continue to travel overseas to perform sex acts with children with impunity, in spite of the introduction of the sex tourism legislation. The petitioners are calling on the government and Parliament to enforce Canada's extraterritorial laws for sex tourism and human trafficking and to make it a priority.

About a month ago, I asked for unanimous consent to table a representative copy of these petitions. I was granted that request. However, I did not have the entire quantity of petitions with me at that time, so I am asking for unanimous consent, because of the severity of this issue, to table these petitions.

• (1535)

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to table a petition from the incredible Braves for Development and Peace Action Team. These students from St. Jean de Brébeuf Catholic Secondary School in my riding of Hamilton Mountain are actively engaged in fighting for social justice in the global south. They are keenly aware that too many legitimate cases of human rights abuses and environmental destruction are going unchecked in the name of development. As advocates for corporate social responsibility, they believe that all corporate activities must be premised on a fundamental respect for social justice, human rights, labour rights, and environmental stewardship.

As a result, the petitioners are calling on the federal government to appoint a Canadian ombudsperson to do four things: to receive and investigate complaints and assess compliance with corporate accountability standards, to make public its findings, to recommend remedial action, and to recommend sanctions by the Government of Canada.

While the rules of the House do not allow me to endorse a petition, I am thrilled to be able to present this petition here today,

Routine Proceedings

and I want to congratulate all of the students at St. Jean de Brébeuf for getting politically engaged on this important issue.

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of Development and Peace, which is calling for the creation of a legislated ombudsman mechanism for the Canadian extractive sector, which would have the authority to receive and investigate complaints, make public its findings, recommend remedial actions and recommend government-imposed sanctions such as withholding financial and political support to any company that does not comply with standards.

[*English*]

The Speaker: I just want to inform members that there are only about four and a half minutes left for petitions, so those who are wishing to present petitions would do their colleagues a favour if they provided only a brief summary of the petition they are presenting.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from Londoners who are very concerned about recent deaths in the city of London in regard to permanent residency applications. The petitioners want the Government of Canada to ensure that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration is properly staffed to reach decisions in a fair and timely manner and to ensure that immigration officials consider all factors in regard to an application, including humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

CANADA POST

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people from my riding have signed and continue to sign a number of petitions protesting the loss of home mail delivery by Canada Post. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to reject Canada Post's plan for reduced services and to explore other options to update Canada Post's business plan.

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here from thousands of Canadians who call on the House of Commons and Parliament to take note of the fact that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known. In fact, more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial and occupational causes combined.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

Routine Proceedings

SHARK FINNING

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from Canadians who want the government to take measures to stop the global practice of shark finning and to ensure responsible conservation management of sharks. They call on the government to immediately legislate a ban on the importation of shark fins to Canada.

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions.

The first concerns the creation of a legislated ombudsman mechanism for more responsible mining.

VIA RAIL

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): The second petition calls for the resumption of VIA Rail's daily service between Montreal and Halifax passing through Campbellton and Miramichi, New Brunswick.

[*English*]

DURHAM REGION FEDERAL LANDS

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to present two complementary petitions. They are both broadly about the preservation of agricultural lands for agricultural purposes.

The first calls on the Government of Canada to rescind all plans for an airport and non-agricultural uses on the federal lands in the Durham Region.

• (1540)

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to implement a Canada-wide strategy on local food and to require the Department of Public Works to develop a policy for purchasing locally grown food for all federal institutions.

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC TRANSIT OPERATORS

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am here to present a petition that seeks to stop violence against bus drivers. In light of the large number of assaults of bus drivers every year, the petitioners are calling on the House to amend the Criminal Code to create a separate offence for assaults committed against bus drivers while they are working and to set harsher penalties for the attackers.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from people from Thunder Bay and across Canada who want our government to recognize the importance of study of aquatic ecosystems and to continue to financially support science, particularly science in the Experimental Lakes Area.

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 305, 306, and 308 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 305—**Ms. Annick Papillon:**

With regard to funding of Quebec City's Jean Lesage International Airport, what is the total amount of government funding allocated to the airport from fiscal year 2006-2007 to the current fiscal year, broken down (i) by department or agency, (ii) for each department or agency, by initiative or project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 306—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to the Manolis L. shipwreck: (a) what activities have taken place to monitor all leakage from the shipwreck site, broken down by (i) departments involved, (ii) method, (iii) number of people involved, (iv) jobs and roles of people involved, (v) date, (vi) result, (vii) cost; (b) what activities are currently taking place to monitor all leakage from the shipwreck site, broken down by (i) departments involved, (ii) method, (iii) number of people involved, (iv) jobs and roles of people involved, (v) date, (vi) result, (vii) cost; (c) what activities are planned or anticipated to take place to monitor all leakage from the shipwreck site, broken down by (i) department involved, (ii) method, (iii) number of people involved, (iv) jobs and roles of people involved, (v) date, (vi) result, (vii) cost; (d) what activities have taken place to remediate all leakage from the shipwreck site, broken down by (i) departments involved, (ii) method, (iii) number of people involved, (iv) jobs and roles of people involved, (v) date, (vi) result, (vii) cost; (e) what activities are currently taking place to remediate all leakage from the shipwreck site, broken down by (i) departments involved, (ii) method, (iii) number of people involved, (iv) jobs and roles of people involved, (v) date, (vi) result, (vii) cost; (f) what activities are planned or anticipated to take place to remediate all leakage from the shipwreck site, broken down by (i) departments involved, (ii) method, (iii) number of people involved, (iv) jobs and roles of people involved, (v) date, (vi) result, (vii) cost; (g) what are the details of all plans that are in place by the government to prevent the shipwreck from shifting; and (h) what is the timeline to recover all oil from the ship and end this unfolding disaster?

(Return tabled)

*Speaker's Ruling*Question No. 308—**Mr. Guy Caron:**

With regard to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) Program: (a) since 2003, in Canada and for each province, (i) how many overpayment recovery decisions were made by Service Canada, (ii) how many of these decisions were made concerning a problem with a beneficiary's marital status; (b) under which policy, government directive, legislation or regulation is the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) authorized to share personal information with Service Canada about the marital status of taxpayers regarding their GIS file, and where can it be accessed; (c) since 2002, in Canada and in each province, how many individuals, annually, receive GIS benefits; (d) since 2002, in Canada and in each province, how many individuals, annually, qualify for GIS benefits but do not receive them, regardless of the reason; (e) why, between July 2003 and 2011, did Service Canada not have access to the marital status of GIS beneficiaries despite the information sharing protocol it has with the CRA; (f) why did Service Canada (or the department at the time) set aside certain notices of debt regarding overpayment recovery decisions involving GIS beneficiaries between June 1995 and July 2003; and (g) between 2003 and 2013, were there any cases where Service Canada reviewed GIS benefit files to determine whether the government owed amounts to individuals for whom the change in marital status was to their advantage financially, and if so, how many cases per year?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 12

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC) moved:

That a ways and means motion to introduce an act to give effect to the Tla'amin Final Agreement and to make consequential amendments to other acts be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PRIVILEGE

REMARKS BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised on March 31, 2014, by the hon. member for Victoria regarding statements made in the House by the Minister of State for Finance during debate on an official opposition motion on December 9, 2013, regarding the New Democratic Party's proposal to phase in

increases to basic pension benefits under the Canada and Quebec pension plans.

[Translation]

I would like to thank the hon. member for Victoria for having raised this matter, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the House Leader of the Official Opposition and the hon. member for Winnipeg North for their comments.

[English]

In presenting his case, the member for Victoria claimed that documents recently obtained through an access to information request had revealed that the Minister of State for Finance had deliberately and repeatedly misled the House by providing misleading numbers and deliberately drawing false conclusions with respect to his party's plan for CPP reform.

The Minister of State for Finance, he suggested, had knowingly cited information about potential job losses from a Department of Finance study, which he linked to the NDP's plan for pension reform, even though the study itself did not do so and even though the Finance study was based on a different basic assumption than that of the NDP plan.

As a result, the member for Victoria concluded that the three conditions for establishing a case of contempt for misleading the House had been met, since the minister of state's statements were misleading, he knew when he made the statements that they were incorrect and, finally, that he had intended to mislead the House.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons argued that, given the existence of many studies by many organizations on this matter, with the Minister of State for Finance having used numbers prepared by the Department of Finance, the conclusions to be drawn are bound to vary. He also stated that:

The hon. member for Victoria was at pains to point out that the finance department's analysis covered a one-year implementation window, not his seven-year phase-in period. In fact, the Department of Finance uses one year as a simplifying assumption adopted to compare the economic impact of various CPP expansion proposals.

Thus, he felt that this was nothing more than a matter of debate and perspective.

[Translation]

At page 145 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, it is stated:

If the question of privilege involves a disagreement between two (or more) Members as to facts, the Speaker typically rules that such a dispute does not prevent Members from fulfilling their parliamentary functions nor does such a disagreement breach the collective privileges of the House.

● (1545)

[English]

The member for Victoria was clear that this was not a matter of whether the studies in question are accurate, but whether the minister of state misrepresented the studies he cited. In fact, he spoke of the importance of accuracy of information brought forward in the House when he stated:

Points of Order

Mr. Speaker, members need to be certain that they are receiving the information they need to adequately represent voters, and they must be able to have confidence in the information provided, especially when it is provided by ministers and ministers of state.

[*Translation*]

As has been suggested, the information shared in this House does hold extraordinary value as it forms the basis upon which decisions are made in the House. As Speaker Milliken reminded the House on December 6, 2004, on page 2319 of the *Debates*:

Disagreements about facts and how the facts should be interpreted form the basis of debate in this place.

It is not surprising, then, that the threshold in determining that a member has deliberately misled the House is purposely high. The member for Victoria referred to the three-part test, which I most recently reiterated on March 3, 2014, at page 3430 of the *Debates*:

...one, it must be proven that the statement was misleading; two, it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect; and three, that in making the statement, the member intended to mislead the House.

He then argued that the situation at issue fulfills the three conditions that must be met in order for the Chair to find that there is appearance of contempt for deliberately misleading the House.

[*English*]

The Chair has thoroughly reviewed the relevant information provided with this in mind, and it is clear to me that there is no parallel to be drawn between the present case and the cases from February 1, 2002, and March 3, 2014, as has been suggested, nor has the three-part test been met.

Instead, the Chair has before it two interpretations of the issue. On the one hand, the member for Victoria has explained that he believes the statements of the Minister of State for Finance are deliberately misleading because the minister improperly claimed that a Department of Finance study referred to potential job losses due to the NDP pension reform proposal. On the other hand, the parliamentary secretary rejects that characterization, arguing that the minister believes he is justified in linking the finance department report and the NDP pension proposal. Thus, I can only conclude that the Chair is confronted with a matter of debate and a dispute as to the facts in this case.

[*Translation*]

It should be noted that in my ruling of March 3, 2014, I reminded the House of Speaker Parent's ruling on October 19, 2000, at page 9247 of the *Debates*, which states:

[*English*]

Only on the strongest and clearest evidence can the House or the Speaker take steps to deal with cases of attempts to mislead members.

For all these reasons, I cannot conclude that this qualifies as a prima facie question of privilege. I thank hon. members for their attention.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of

the House is desired: Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak. As I said earlier, it is a fairly lengthy point of order, and my apologies for having to disrupt the chamber right after question period.

I was closing the quote on Sue O'Sullivan, Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, who stated in evidence on March 25, on Bill C-483, "At its core, this bill", and what she meant was the original bill, before the amendments: "At its core, this bill aims to bring a more transparent and inclusive process to victims of crime. I fully support this shift and the benefits it brings to victims".

Another witness, Kim Hancox, spoke in support of Bill C-483 stating that "Accountability is severely compromised as a result of this closed-door process". She was referring to the process whereby prison wardens are empowered to grant escorted temporary absences. She continued by saying:

There is a lack of consideration for victims, which impedes progress of victims' rights and recognition in the criminal system. This practice undermines the public's confidence in a system that is supposed to keep them safe from violent offenders.

Krista Gray-Donald, director representing the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, an organization that the committee was informed had been working closely with the member for Oxford on the legislation, was clear in her testimony before the committee, on March 27, as to what she believed the legislation would terminate, namely, the ability of wardens to grant escorted temporary absences. She said:

The board of directors of the CRCVC feels the process that allows wardens to grant ETAs to offenders serving life does not assess risk as thoroughly as the release decision-making process undertaken by the Parole Board. We believe this allows offenders to avoid accountability for the harms they have caused and closes the decision-making process to the public.

I believe it is important to place on the record the statements made before the committee by both of the commissioner of the Canadian Parole Board, in testimony on March 25, 2014, page 13 of the evidence, and the Commissioner of Correctional Service Canada, in testimony on March 27, 2014, page 8 of the blues. Both stated that with respect to the ETA program that their agencies are responsible for permitting and overseeing, the success rate is 99%.

At no time, and I repeat, at no time, did any member of the committee, government members in particular, challenge either commissioner on the success rate of the escorted temporary release program. This program is by all accounts a success, with no demonstrated risk to public safety.

On April 1, 2014, and this would be after the above witnesses presented, the government presented its amendments to Bill C-483 at the public safety committee, and that is where my concerns arise.

At page 767 of O'Brien and Bosc, it states with respect to amendments made to legislation which may be found to be out of order:

The committee's decisions concerning a bill must be consistent with earlier decisions made by the committee. An amendment is accordingly out of order if it is contrary to or inconsistent with provisions of the bill that the committee has already agreed to....

I would also remind the House of the ruling of Speaker Fraser on April 28, 1992, at page 9801 of *Debates*:

In cases in which the Chair is asked to rule on the admissibility of committee amendments to bills, any modifications which offend a basic principle in the legislative process are struck from the bill.

However, the amendment from the government has undermined that principle. It reads in part as follows, which was presented to the House in the third report of the committee.

• (1550)

On clause 1.1, and I am reading from proposed subsection 17.1 (2):

If the Parole Board of Canada authorizes the temporary absence of an inmate under subsection (1) for community service, family contact, including parental responsibilities, or personal development for rehabilitative purposes and the temporary absence is not cancelled because the inmate has breached a condition—

This is the critical section:

—the institutional head may authorize that inmate's subsequent temporary absences with escort if the institutional head is of the opinion that the criteria set out in paragraphs (1)(a) to (d) are met.

In my view, this would change the principle of the bill.

The witnesses all came before the committee on the original bill and claimed that they did not want the institutional head to be allowed to make those decisions. That was the basis of the witnesses' presentation at committee.

That whole thrust changed with the amendments from the Government of Canada.

In speaking to the amendments presented by the government, the following exchange illuminates the concern I have with respect to the principle of the bill having been changed as a result.

I put the following question to the director of policy for Corrections Canada on April 1, 2014:

As I understand it, the original bill was ensuring that the warden would not be in a position to allow any temporary absences at all during the last three years of a sentence. Now with this amendment, the Parole Board will be involved in the first request for a temporary absence during that three-year period, but not anymore after that unless there is a problem with what happened on the temporary absence.

The response from the director of policy stated, in part:

You are correct...in that once that lifer reaches the three-year window before their full parole eligibility, once the Parole Board grants a positive decision for a rehabilitated ETA and that ETA period is successful—in other words, the offender does not breach their conditions while on that ETA—any subsequent ETA decisions can then be made by the institutional head.

Therefore, I am suggesting that the government amendments to the bill are inconsistent with the original principle of the bill as articulated by the member in whose name the bill stands, by other

Points of Order

members of the government during second reading and at committee, and witnesses appearing before the committee. Namely, that as a result of this legislation, it was expected that the Parole Board, and only the Parole Board, would be involved in the granting of escorted temporary releases as they apply to offenders convicted of first and second degree murder.

Given that evidence as to the success of the ETA program, evidence which was available prior to the tabling of Bill C-483, I would submit that the principle of the bill as originally passed at second reading, has, by the government amendments, been completely undermined.

The principle of the original bill has ceased to exist and has been replaced.

Again, while the intent of the member for Oxford is not in question, the ability of his legislation to achieve what he committed to this House and, more important, what he committed to the victims of crime in whose name he presented the bill, has been refuted through government amendments.

As such, I would submit that the amendments have placed the bill as reported from committee within the context of being out of order.

I would conclude by reminding Canadians that as we undertake a debate on Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights, that they examine the text of that bill closely and match the content of that bill with the rhetoric of the government with respect to what has been promised.

It is my submission that Bill C-32 is worthy of support. It will fall to the government to explain to the victims why the legislation would likely not achieve the promises that have been made.

Let me sum up in layman's terms. These private members' bills are becoming a shell game. Witnesses come before a committee, the promoters promote their bill on the basis of the original bill, and on the basis of what the promoters of the bill have said relative to the original bill.

• (1555)

However, after all the witnesses have appeared before committee, the justice department's legal counsel, also from the government side, then come before committee and either water down the bill or change it in such a way that the original principle and intent of the bill is undermined.

Thus the bill no longer does what the promoter of the bill, in these cases backbench Conservatives, said it would do. Therein lies the problem. That is my point of order; that the bill no longer represents the principle and the intent of the bill brought in by the backbench Conservative member. In fact, government lawyers, themselves, changed the intent of the bill at committee, after all the witnesses had appeared.

• (1600)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be a little more brief than my friend, but hopefully I will be able to respond fairly conclusively to the concerns he raised.

Points of Order

At first, the member said that the opposition, who are usually in the position of complaining that they do not see enough amendments made to bills, are now complaining that there are too many amendments made to a bill. That is a bit ironic.

I should also say I am not surprised to hear, once again, that a bill that is designed to protect our communities, to give victims a say, and to make our communities safer, is being obstructed by the Liberals. Their language is one thing but their actions are always the same. They vote against these bills, standing in their way and obstructing them, because the Liberals really do not stand on the side of victims of crime.

That being said, the particular question, on the scope of this bill and whether amendments to it were within that scope, is one that was actually raised by the hon. member at committee. He did that on Tuesday, April 1. It was discussed before the committee, which was the proper place for that to be done.

Not only did the chair of the committee allow the amendments in his initial approach to it, but in actually turning the chair's mind to the specific question, the specific arguments raised and are being raised here again today, the chair also ruled that the amendments were in order. In fact, I will read what the chair said to the hon. member at the end, on April 1, at committee:

...thank you for bringing the issue up. I think if the situation were such that the bill were dramatically changed and/or the perspective of the entire bill was changed to such an extent that it would actually reflect something that is different from what was originally proposed, certainly the chair would agree with you. On this particular group of amendments that have come forward, it's the chair's opinion that the principles and the perspective of the original intent of the bill are respected at this point, so I would overrule your objection at this point and I thank you for your interjection.

Then they proceeded to a further study of the bill.

I think that is conclusive. That is where the matter was settled. Our process is such that a question like that can be determined at committee. It was determined at committee, and that was where it was properly and finally settled.

I know the member is seeking to re-litigate it here. I am not sure that is appropriate.

Second, the member makes an argument about the number of amendments and that perhaps there were more amendments than there were original clauses of the bill. Of course that is not how one determines these questions. That is irrelevant to the exercise.

The question is on what these things do, regardless of how many words it takes to give them effect. That is not a factor or a basis on which amendments would be considered to have gone beyond the scope of the original bill.

As I understand it, in the simplest of terms, the purpose of the bill, or what the bill sought to do, was to give victims an opportunity to participate in a parole board process in decisions in which they did not have that opportunity to participate under the existing law, these last three years of terms of certain convicted offenders. That is what the bill sought to do.

What the amendments did was say that the first time it is up, they will have the opportunity to do that, and should the parole board make its decision, they do not have to come back every single time

to the parole board for subsequent decisions essentially on the same issue, same circumstances. That is what the amendments did.

Certainly, the purpose remains the same with the amendments; to give those individuals, those victims, and the parole board an opportunity to have a say where they did not have one before. On the question of the intent or the purpose, it remains exactly the same.

On the other question, on the scope, which I think is the more relevant one, the existing law says there is no opportunity for them to participate. The proposed amendments change that significantly, to the extent the amendments came along, they reduced the extent of the change.

It is not a question of going beyond the scope of the original bill. In fact, the amendments are very much within the scope of the original bill. They reduce the extent to which the existing statute is being amended. They do not expand it; they reduce it within the context and the framework of the original private member's bill they were studying.

To that extent, I would say there is actually no issue of the amendments being beyond the scope of the bill. They are certainly very much within the scope of the bill, while at the same time respecting and honouring the purpose, overall, of that private member's bill.

As such, I really see no merit in the point of order raised by my friend.

• (1605)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I found the point of order raised by the member for Malpeque to be very compelling. I did not find the intervention from the government House leader very convincing at all.

We would like to look at the blues, and I will be coming back in short order through the course of the session to provide any additional comments as needed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Malpeque and the hon. government House leader, and I note that the hon. opposition House leader may have the opportunity to weigh in on this particular question at some point later in the proceedings. We will take the hon. member's comments under advisement and get back to the House in due course.

Before we go to orders of the day, 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 Drummond, Environment; the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, Democratic Reform; and the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood, Environment.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS ACT**

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC) moved that Bill C-32, An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I am honoured to be here to take part in this important debate, second reading of Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act.

As members know, this bill is to create a Canadian victims bill of rights and entrench the rights of victims into federal law for the first time in Canadian history.

Victims of crime have been an important priority for our government since our election in 2006, and our contributions to improving the victim's role in our justice system is well known and well documented. It is our contention that there are numerous ways, which we will present through the victims bill of rights, to continue down the path of enhancing our justice system and the victim's role in that system. The creation of the federal victims strategy as well as the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, in 2007, are examples of our government's commitment.

Further, the allocation of \$120 million as well as \$10 million additionally for child advocacy centres in 20 locations throughout the country are examples of victims' programs specifically, as well as other numerous victims' law reforms and criminal justice reforms intended to enhance the experience of victims in the law.

Last year, our government promised to enhance victims' rights by entrenching or embedding their rights in a single law at the federal level. We are delivering on that promise through the creation of clear statutory rights to information, protection, participation, and restitution for victims of crime in Canada.

I want to unpack these concepts in more detail in a moment. Before I do, I want to emphasize again the inclusive effort to hear from Canadians.

My earliest days as Minister of Justice were spent consulting broadly and hearing directly from Canadians. In fact, we heard from more than 500 stakeholders through online and in-person consultations held across the country while developing this legislation. Most importantly, we heard from victims of crime themselves. Advocates, provincial and territorial officials, organizations, criminal justice associations, and criminal justice professionals, crown and defence counsel, law enforcement—all have provided views on this important legislation, participants all, and the Canadian victims bill of rights reflects that input, particularly those of provincial and territorial officials who have the important role and task of enforcement.

As well, we received a great deal of information and input during these consultations, specific to the reforms contemplated in federal, provincial, and territorial forums. Best practices from international, provincial, and territorial victims' legislation and programs were also contemplated. After much and thorough consultation and collaboration into this bill, we believe we have struck a very good balance.

I also want to recognize that each province and territory very much had that input, but we also drew from their own victims' services legislation unique to their provincial and territorial reality. All provinces and territories have legislation for victims of crime, which in some cases includes provisions worded as "rights", such as a right to information, a right to consideration of personal safety, and a right to respectful treatment. The federal bill would not impede in any way existing provincial or territorial legislation but would, in fact, complement it or provide cohesion, while respecting constitutional divisions of power. It is important that we have this continuing and cohesive effort in building on the best of all efforts, across the country, to make the expression and inclusion of victims' rights more respectful, more user-friendly, and improve the lives of victims and their experience in our justice system.

• (1610)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, every victim deserves to have an effective voice and to be heard. That is why we have included a broad definition of victim in the Canadian victims bill of rights. All individuals directly affected by an offence in a physical, emotional or economic way would be considered victims.

The bill would also enable individuals to act on behalf of victims who are deceased or who are incapable of exercising their rights.

[English]

Again, the rights proposed in this bill apply to victims involved in the Canadian criminal justice system. I think it is important here to read specifically from the bill that definition of victim:

It states:

"victim" means an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as the result of the commission or alleged commission of an offence.

Clearly, the intention here is to protect Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are abroad but were victimized in Canada, who could also invoke their rights. Victims who are in Canada, or Canadian citizens or permanent residents could also invoke their rights in a case where they were victimized abroad, but where Canadian officials are investigating or prosecuting the offence in Canada. These provisions would ensure a broad, inclusive application of the rights in circumstances where there is a clear link between the victim, the crime, and the criminal justice system here in Canada.

Government Orders

Fully implemented, the bill would also extend rights to every stage of the criminal justice process: during the investigation and prosecution of an offence; during the corrections process; during the conditional release process, or parole; and while there are proceedings in the courts and before review boards in respect of an accused found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder, or who is unfit to stand trial. However, the bill would also provide that the application of the rights cannot interfere with the police or crown prosecution's discretion and must be reasonable in the circumstances. In other words, this is a rubicon that we did not cross. Going back into the archives, this was in keeping with a parliamentary report entitled, "A Voice, Not a Veto". That statement encapsulates the intent here.

Access to information was perhaps the most identified need by victims. Victims themselves, their advocates, and federal ombudsmen for victims of crime, and criminal justice professionals, such as the crown and police, often highlighted this need to ensure that basic information was flowing to victims and their loved ones.

[*Translation*]

Victims of crime seek information about the criminal justice system generally and their role in it. They also want specific information about their case and the decisions made by criminal justice professionals as the case moves forward.

[*English*]

This right to information would articulate that a victim has the right to meaningful information that affects them, such as conditions of release that pertain specifically to the accused in the case, or something as basic as the time, place, and date of proceedings taking place before the court that could impact on the victim. This would also include information about the criminal justice system, victims services programs, outcomes of criminal investigations and proceedings, and the status of an offender in the correctional system. The Criminal Code amendments that are proposed to implement this right would include the ability of the victim to receive copies of bail and conditional sentence or probation orders, physically ensuring that the victim is in possession of that information.

In addition, the bill proposes important changes to the Criminal Code provisions for plea negotiations, which is one of the more controversial elements, I suspect. For murder or any serious personal injury offence, the court would be required to ask the prosecutor if the victim had been notified of a plea bargain. For any other offence with a term of imprisonment of over five years, the victim could request to be notified of a plea bargain. The amendment does not give victims a veto over plea bargains. However, given the significant portion of cases with guilty pleas that are resolved in this fashion, this right to information would benefit a large number of victims at a key stage of the criminal justice process. I would suggest it would prevent any shock or further trauma to a victim to have that information in advance of any public announcement.

In order to help facilitate a victim's access to more information about available programs and services, one of the amendments in the bill would also require that Correctional Services Canada inform victims about the availability of victim-offender mandated mediation services.

Lastly, in order to enhance the information provided to victims, our government would create a single government website to make information about the Canadian victims bill of rights available to all Canadians and victims of crime.

Victim safety, including the enhancement of protection measures for victims, was also mentioned frequently by victims, their advocates, and professionals during the consultations. The desire to feel protected, safe from reprimand or retaliation, is an important right to recognize. Currently, there are numerous provisions in federal law to prevent or respond to harm to victims, but the creation of this right would build on a strong foundation and Canada's positive international reputation for the treatment of vulnerable victims, including in the courtroom.

•(1615)

The right to protection ensures that victims have their security and privacy considered in their interactions with criminal justice system officials. Proposed amendments to the code would broaden the availability of such things as testimonial aids, which are commonly known as "screens", or closed-circuit television cameras to allow the victim to testify from a neighbouring room. This is also specifically to help protect victims from intimidation or retaliation throughout the proceedings and to provide that victims' safety and security would be taken into consideration through various means when making bail orders, for example, or when the offender were being released from custody.

Victims would be provided with access to a photograph of the offender at the time of the conditional release or end of sentence. This is a very practical and, I suggest, compassionate means to give victims information as to how they need to govern themselves or take protective measures. This is an important change for victims, and just one of the many changes that we would make to implement a victim's right to protection.

[*Translation*]

This right is strongly supported by many stakeholders, and victims identified this as an important need during the consultations, and we have listened. The benefits are numerous.

[*English*]

In order to provide meaningful participation and to give victims the sense that the criminal justice system will continue to respect their concerns and those of their loved ones, we wanted to underscore during the consultation that meaningful participation is also embedded in the bill. This is about recognizing the impact of victimization on the lives of victims and to help them understand what is sometimes a very complicated, foreign, difficult, and stressful process. The right to participation would allow the victims to convey views and to have those views properly considered by decision-makers when decisions are being made that affect them. This would be implemented through measures to clarify and broaden the scope of the victim and community impact statement provisions in the Criminal Code. Victims of crime have told us that they would support improvements to the victim and community impact statement provisions of the code.

Government Orders

For example, in this proposal, victims would be able to have a support person close to them while presenting their statement or community impact statement, and would be able to bring a drawing or photo or proximity of their loved one to the courtroom when presenting this statement. Again, this is a very compassionate, open-hearted way to allow the victim to draw comfort from proximity through these items. We have amendments to the Criminal Code that would clarify that a judge should consider those parts of a victim impact statement necessary to determine an appropriate statement.

When visiting a child advocacy centre, I saw something similar in intent. That was allowing children, for example, to have a pet or a stuffed animal, something that provided them comfort, with them during interviews with the police. Again, this emulates that same intention to provide individuals, child victims, comfort during what is inevitably a very stressful situation.

Also entrenching in this bill is the provision of guidance to victims on the creation of their victim impact statement through a mandatory form. These amendments would ensure that victims' voices were truly heard in the process.

The bill is also proposing important amendments to the purposes and principles of sentencing, to increase consideration of victims' views in that process. First, the bill proposes to reinforce the sentencing objective of denunciation in paragraph 718(a) of the code, by specifying that it is not only the criminal conduct that is being denounced, but also the harm to the victim and communities that has been caused by that conduct, which is a reality, I would suggest.

Second, the bill proposes to reinforce the sentencing principle of restraint in paragraph 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code that requires courts to consider alternatives to imprisonment where it is reasonable to do so.

Adding a requirement that the court also consider the harm done to victims and to the community would help to ensure there is a proper balance between the rights of offenders and those who have been victimized by offenders' behaviour. This would also bring sentencing principles in line with similar changes to the objectives of sentencing in paragraph 718(a).

● (1620)

In order to assist victims and allow them to choose how they would like to participate in the corrections and conditional release process, proposed amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act would allow registered victims to designate a representative to receive information on their behalf or waive their right to access to information. We know that in some cases victims want nothing more to do with the process after the victimization has occurred, and I would suggest that another general collateral benefit to this bill is that it would give victims more choice and control over their lives in a very stressful period.

We have listened very carefully to the views of many people who work in the justice system, including, as I mentioned, provinces and territories, and we are responding to some of the criticisms of the bill. For example, some have said that the bill does not propose to make victims a party to the criminal trial or create a right to receive legal aid. It is our view that these two items would create additional

complications and potential delays, which is completely counter-intuitive to what we are attempting to achieve here. Further delays or complications are very much in our minds as we bring this bill forward.

That is one of the great complaints of many in the system, that the time it took to proceed through the courts caused greater re-victimization. Therefore, we have very much intended to include measures that would reduce the delays in criminal proceedings without in any way contributing to the type of delay that we know is sometimes endemic in courts in the country.

[*Translation*]

The bill's proposed right to participation seeks to strengthen existing and successful approaches that provide opportunities for victims to actively participate in the criminal justice system, and contribute to more effective decision-making by police, crown prosecutors and judges.

[*English*]

Victims of crime have expressed significant concerns about the financial burden that often places them in real hardship. Many have reported that as a result of the crime, they were unable to work and yet faced significant out-of-pocket expenses to continue attending criminal proceedings or to receive counselling. In 2008, a Department of Justice study estimated that the tangible and intangible social and economic costs of Criminal Code offences in Canada were approaching approximately \$100 billion annually, and approximately 83% of those costs were borne by victims themselves.

There has been discussion about crime rates falling in Canada. In fact, there are over two million crimes reported annually and, sadly, one of the more shocking figures is that there has been a 4% increase in child sex offences, offences against children, our most vulnerable.

[*Translation*]

The bill will help to alleviate the financial burden of crime for victims by enabling victims to seek a restitution order, which obliges the offender to pay the victim for costs incurred as a result of the offence.

● (1625)

[*English*]

Specifically, this bill proposes to amend the Criminal Code to require a court to consider restitution orders for all offences, to specify that an offender's ability to pay is not determinative in ordering restitution and to create, for accuracy, a mandatory form to help victims identify and claim their losses. As well, proposed amendments would specify that when any part of a restitution order is not paid, victims can have that order enforced as a civil debt.

Government Orders

Victims would be provided with assistance to help them enforce restitution orders through several program measures. For example, an electronic tool kit for victims would give them easier access to greater information about restitution; and financing and funding would be made available to the provinces and territories to develop their own restitution programs to help victims collect on those orders. This approach would enhance awareness and enforcement of restitution and provide victims with information and financial support. We know as well that many provinces and territories, in fact the majority, have the fine option program that will allow offenders to at least make some restitution to society at large, where they do community-type service.

In order to give meaningful effect to victims' rights by all players in our criminal justice system, our government is proposing that this bill have quasi-constitutional status. This would mean that the Canadian victims bill of rights would prevail over other federal statutes, with the exception of the Constitution Act, which includes the Charter of Rights and other quasi-constitutional statutes within our legal system, such as the Official Languages Act, the Privacy Act, and, of course, the Canadian Human Rights Act.

[Translation]

These other quasi-constitutional statutes will also exist on a level playing field with the Canadian victims bill of rights. As an example, courts must interpret the Official Languages Act in a manner that is consistent with the Canadian Human Rights Act.

If there is a conflict between these two quasi-constitutional statutes, the court would balance the rights in these two statutes.

[English]

During many of these consultations, we heard about the need to have enforceability behind the bill. We have provisions that pertain specifically to that in working with provincial ombudsmen and the discretionary judicial remedies that exist already.

Spousal immunity and other elements of this bill will, I know, receive due consideration. I would suggest that there is ample opportunity now to discuss the bill in greater detail as it proceeds to the House, and I look forward to the debate and hearing from members who are participating.

[Translation]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his speech, which reminds me of a Bee Gees song called *It's Only Words*.

All of the victims, every single one, told us that they need programs, support services, rehabilitation and compensation. However, in Bill C-32, the government decided to abandon all of those pricey requests and opted for symbolism instead. I am wondering why that is.

I am also wondering why it took eight years to draft a text that contains no real legal obligations, as was attested to by officials from the Department of Justice. Bill C-32 does not create any legal obligation for crown prosecutors, police or support services to provide that information to the victims. It creates no binding legal recourse for the victims.

Did the minister get confirmation that Bill C-32 is consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms?

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

Unfortunately, she has decided to trivialize this bill.

[English]

What we have before us is a very comprehensive effort to include what we heard through the past number of years, but more recently and specifically on this legislation, in an effort to balance the rights of victims, the entrenched protections within our criminal justice system, and the discretion necessary for the crown, police, and judges.

However, there is very much an increased and heightened obligation found within this bill. There are enforceable measures that include the discretion of the judge to ensure that the various individuals who have these obligations and responsibilities to victims follow through and there are mechanisms in place within every province and territory that allow for victims to seek recourse and follow up if they do not receive the proper treatment and information that they seek.

The member would probably be the first person in the House to stand here and criticize if the government tried to somehow go outside of its jurisdiction and demand of provinces something that is clearly within the constitutional rights of the provinces.

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if one were to canvass the constituents I represent in Winnipeg North and the vast majority of Canadians for their opinions on what would constitute an important issue in the crime and safety file, quite often what would be raised is the fact that we are not doing enough to prevent crimes from happening. If we did more of that, we would have fewer victims.

My question to the member is related to the impact of this bill on police forces. I met with police representatives of the City of Winnipeg Police Service just yesterday. One of the concerns is that police put a lot of time and effort into areas that have nothing to do with actual police work. For example, it might be in a hospital institution or sitting in a court.

Would this bill do anything related to assisting our police officers in preventing crimes in the first place? It seems to be a high priority. If the bill would not, can the member indicate what the minister has done to assist that particular file?

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, it was a very muddled question on the issue of victims' rights. I think the hon. member should go back to some of those constituents whom he represents in Winnipeg and ask them if they feel that victims are currently being given the right to inclusion, the right to respect, the right to information. That is what the bill seeks to do.

In terms of helping the police, the police are very supportive of this effort. Because they work every day with victims, they want to see improvements in the lives of victims and their loved ones.

Government Orders

As for what we have done, I am pleased to be joined in the House by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and I can tell the House that we have done a great deal to enhance the ability of police to do their work. In fact, I suggest that there is no government in the history of Canada that has included more police officers elected to the House of Commons to come here and ensure that we are doing more for the law enforcement community. We are giving them the tools they need, including legislative tools that will improve their ability to do their work and protect Canadians. Those improvements include the ability to share data, to have more forensic investigations, to improve their work environment.

This government has made tremendous strides in improving the way in which law enforcement and police officers can do their work in this country.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for his first speech as we look at the victims bill of rights, Bill C-32.

I wonder if he could outline for us the extent to which the bill mirrors the recommendations that came from the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. The Conservatives chose not to take some of the advice put forward by the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. They obviously have taken on some of the recommendations, but not all. I wonder if he could set out for us why certain pieces of that useful advice was not included in the bill.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her very pertinent question, and we did, as she has alluded to, draw quite heavily on the recommendations of Sue O'Sullivan, the federal victims ombudsman.

As I mentioned in my remarks, many of the areas were seen as contentious. We would perhaps create further delays in the system and slow down the process by requiring the victims to have standing or to be able to insert themselves in a way that would cause the process to stop or to hesitate.

There are also resource implications. We have given the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime a budget. We have just recently expanded her ability to have signing authority in some areas.

This office itself, as I know the member opposite would recognize, was a creation of the current government. This office did not exist prior to our coming to government in 2006. We believe it is an enhancement, as is the role of ombudsmen at the provincial level. They will work collectively to ensure enforcement and ensure that the bill is giving meaning as well as the spirit of this legislation to enhance the role and the rights of victims. I look forward to the hon. member's further contributions.

• (1635)

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Minister of Justice for introducing the victims bill of rights. It was announced last week in my city of Mississauga by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

I and my constituents believe that this measure addresses the real needs of victims. It will go a long way toward restoring and

bolstering the faith of the people of my riding in Mississauga in our criminal justice system.

Prior to being appointed as Minister of Justice, the minister was one of Canada's longest-serving and most respected ministers of defence. I wonder if he could tell us if the victims bill of rights would apply to the military justice system.

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to praise my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, for his work and leadership on this particular bill and for his ongoing efforts in that regard.

He is right to raise this issue, and it was something that we contemplated. This victims bill of rights will not in fact apply to offences investigated or proceeded with under the Canadian military justice system.

That said, there are particular challenges to extending this bill of rights into the military culture and into their system, particularly for summary trials. By that I mean that we have disciplinary tribunals that are administered by the chain of command. This system carries out the vast majority of proceedings within the Canadian military justice system, and this victims bill of rights would not be immediately applicable to it upon final adoption by the House.

However, I am pleased to tell my friend in the House that after speaking with the Judge Advocate General, General Blaise Cathcart from Nova Scotia, who is a very capable officer, and with people like Bruce MacGregor, who is also working in the JAG office, I can say the intention is clear that we will determine how we can in fact incorporate the victims bill of rights into our military justice system in the future in order to ensure that we are mirroring it to the best extent possible and to ensure that our military justice system also provides these benefits and protections for victims who are subject to the military justice system.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-32, An Act to enact the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and to amend certain Acts.

First off, I am inclined to say that it is about time, since the government has been talking about this for awhile now. I know that the Minister of Justice likes to say that we decided to trivialize. This is not a matter of trivializing. I am simply stating the factual conclusions that everyone concerned about the issue of victims' rights here in Canada has already come to.

We are dealing with a Conservative government that has been talking about this issue for a long time and that has made serious promises in this regard. MPs who, like me, are members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights were able to hear from a number of victims as part of the debates on this issue held in the context of various law and order bills.

We sometimes heard very sad stories of a sensitive nature. This testimony helped us understand what needs to be done in terms of victims' rights and what victims need in certain circumstances.

Government Orders

The Conservative government has been promising to introduce this victims bill of rights for many years now. It has often dangled that promise in front of Canadians. The Conservatives have also held multiple press conferences in this regard, where they reiterated that they were in favour of introducing such legislation.

The official opposition is not trivializing. We are simply stating the facts.

If there is one thing that horrifies me, it is using already fragile individuals for political purposes. I do not want to impute motives, but these people have many, very specific needs. They have been speaking out about those needs for a long time. I will agree that the ombudsman for victims has already made recommendations.

I finally received Bill C-32 last week. I would like to digress for a moment to talk about the process. Bill C-32 was introduced on Thursday. Today, Wednesday, we are here in the House to begin debating the bill at second reading. It did not even take the Conservative government, through the Minister of Justice, even 24 hours to send out a householder to all Conservative supporters. I have good contacts who were able to show me that the Conservatives are already using the victims bill of rights to solicit interest in and support for the Conservative Party.

It always bugs me when people use something as serious as a victims bill of rights to generate political capital. I know that we are in the political business, but I think there are some issues that should not be used in this way.

All the same, I did thoroughly peruse Bill C-32. I wanted to give it a chance. The NDP always likes to give these things a chance. We always look at the bill and discuss it in caucus. At lunchtime today, I had the pleasure of talking to my colleagues about Bill C-32. I am not afraid to say here what I said to them: I was a little let down. When I read the bill, I felt that it did not really meet the needs of victims I had heard from.

It sounds good in principle, and we hope that something will happen in the courts, but it is not necessarily the guarantee or the cure-all victims thought it would be. The government did its very best to raise victims' expectations, and now I am sure they will be disappointed.

Kudos to the government for creating a victims bill of rights. Nobody in the House would be against that. I dare anyone to say that we are against victims. We brought forward some facts and we want to improve the process and the legislation. That does not make us anti-victim. On the contrary, we want to improve this bill to really meet the expectations of victims who expressed their opinion on this matter.

• (1640)

Could victims be disappointed in regard to certain expectations? Regardless of what the minister may think, anyone who was expecting the justice system to change, perhaps in terms of access to justice, will be disappointed, because there is not much in this bill to address that.

It does give victims certain rights when it comes to the possibility of being informed, being able to make comments, and so on. However, given how trial proceedings unfold, this bill is not

necessarily the guarantee they were hoping for. This is not necessarily a mistake on the government's part. Rather, the mistake was letting victims believe that they could have that right. Indeed, people will be even more disappointed about that. I feel sorry for the first victim who invokes the victims bill of rights and then makes a particular demand based on that. Many courts of law will say that that is not how it works.

Let me say right away that the NDP will be supporting this bill at second reading. I hope we will have time to read it and study it thoroughly in committee.

At least there are ways to ensure that victims fully understand the limits and the scope of this bill of rights, so that they do not have any more false expectations than they might already have. Indeed, if they are relying solely on the headlines we see in some newspapers, they probably think they have acquired certain rights that they absolutely do not have.

There is another huge problem with this bill of rights. It has many limitations. Again, no matter what the minister says, the Conservatives inserted a section on complaints. In caucus, I used the analogy of the complaints system that exists in the provincial health care system. For instance, someone who goes to the hospital and is unhappy with the service they receive can file a complaint, and this has no binding effect on anyone. The bill of rights states quite clearly that, regardless of the context of a complaint, this does give the person exercising their right to complain any further legal rights. Therefore, this is not a legal remedy that would allow us to say that anyone who does not listen to victims could be penalized.

It is the same thing with restitution. The minister talked about it earlier. This is not the first time he has talked about this, but he made much of the fact that the cost associated with everything involving crime is somewhere around \$100 billion and that the victims bear 83% of those costs. There is nothing in this bill, nothing in the budget, nothing anywhere to help victims where they really need it.

In committee, a mother talked to us about what happened after the murder of her daughter, who was in another province. Obviously, as the mother of someone who had been killed, she wanted to attend the trial. She had to pay her way to and from the courthouse. We know how long this type of trial can last. It cost her hundreds of thousands of dollars. Can I now tell her that thanks to the victims bill of rights, she can be compensated? There is not much hope for her.

Of course, members on the Conservative benches are going to say that when it comes to victims, certain things fall under provincial jurisdiction. However, there could have been a national agreement to send money to the provinces to provide victims the level of compensation they need. How many victims' compensation programs have been cancelled? How many programs are not really getting more money? The government is constantly throwing in our face the fact that it has invested \$120 million. Just saying \$120 million in the same sentence as the minister's \$100 billion shows how inadequate all this is.

Government Orders

As far as restitution orders are concerned, I will provide an example for the victims watching us who think they will be compensated after a criminal trial. First, the judge will have the discretion to establish whether that is appropriate in the case at hand. Does the government really think that every accused person in our justice system has the means to pay restitution?

• (1645)

In life we have to be realistic. In some cases, my client is justified in suing, but the person to be sued does not have a cent. We can get the order we want, but we will not be able to execute it.

With respect to expediting the process, in a case where the court finds that, in the circumstances, it can order payment of a given amount by the accused who is found guilty, the order may not necessarily be automatic, even if it is desirable. We must not get peoples' hopes up. Otherwise, they will think that they do not need civil remedy. Nowhere does it say that this will be a court order. However, if there is an order, the person can have it executed before the provincial court that would deal with the situation at the civil level.

I like that because I have always found it ridiculous that victims have to testify in several criminal courts and have a parallel civil suit, which often has to start at the beginning. In fact, the civil proceedings must often wait until the criminal trial has been completed, and so forth. That just slows down the entire process.

For the victims listening to us, I repeat that they must not expect too much. There is no guarantee that they will automatically have rights that are as specific as those described by the minister.

We wonder about some of the bill's provisions. We will have to see what it is about. I was a little surprised to see the removal of the exception to the Canada Evidence Act concerning testimony by spouses. I am not against that, but I question the fact that the victims bill of rights is being used to make this change to the Canada Evidence Act. We shall see. I do not know why they are doing that all of a sudden. It could have been done in another way, but we shall see.

Furthermore, there is something that has been bothering legal experts, and I asked the minister a question about it but did not get an answer. I asked him whether he has confirmation that the Canadian victims bill of rights is consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which takes precedence over this bill of rights and the Constitution.

Was any consideration given to testimony being provided under a pseudonym? This is allowed in some court cases for safety reasons, and I think everyone understands that. However, a number of these provisions already exist. They may not be codified as they are now in the bill of rights, but they already exist under the principles established by the statement for victims of crime that the federal government signed in 2003.

People are able to testify behind a screen for very specific reasons. The defence lawyer and the accused still have the right to see the persons involved, as long as there is no contact between them. The courts have some discretion in this regard.

As I said in the various panels I participated in after the bill of rights was introduced, I am very pleased—for once—to see that the government did not try to do what it loves to do with other bills, which is to take away the court's discretion to assess each case, since each case is truly unique. We must ensure that we achieve our goal without eliminating the fundamental concept of criminal law, which is the presumption of innocence.

In an article published in the *National Post*, Christie Blatchford, who is certainly no friend of the NDP, wrote a rather scathing criticism of the new Canadian victims bill of rights.

• (1650)

I would not want to misquote her, so here is the title of her article: “Victims need help? You must be kidding”.

In other words, it is tantamount to uttering a truism. It is true, but at the same time, if you read her article, you will see that many of these rights already exist.

In the courts, you often see crown prosecutors taking the time to explain the process to victims and talking to them about what they will have to get through. True, it is not the same everywhere. Still, it is also true that there is a major problem with resources in the courts considering the number of crown prosecutors and the number of judges.

These are very serious problems that this government should tackle if it does not want its whole law and order agenda to blow up in its face. Sooner or later, the government will have to be logical and provide resources. It will have to put its money where its mouth is.

That is the part that is always missing from government bills that talk the talk: they never walk the walk; they never give victims access to the resources they need in the courts.

Some do, sure. However, one of the major problems victims face is how slow the legal process moves. Until the government figures out how to fix that problem, it can put all of the principles it wants on paper, but it will never fix anything. The government has to improve access to justice so that the whole process can move faster. It has to ensure that neither the accused nor anyone else involved in a case has to wait too long.

Those who have some experience with criminal law know that victims often sit in the hall, waiting and feeling stressed because participating in the process is very stressful.

The minister is right when he says that not all victims will want to use this kind of service, but those who go to court—as witnesses, as victims, or just to ensure that everything is happening the way it should and to keep a close eye on every step of the process—would like to see justice served within a reasonable period of time.

When the minister appears before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, we want to ask him about funding. We want to know how much money will be allocated to implementing the measures in this bill on the Canadian victims bill of rights.

Government Orders

Victims need psychological help as part of their rehabilitation. I am not talking about rehabilitating the person who has been found guilty. I am talking about the victim who, at some point, must cease to be a victim and move on. We need to give them a hand, and I believe that the responsibility falls to each and every one of us.

The minister can stand up and say that we can fix the situation with the help of the person who has been convicted. That is all well and good, but that person needs to have the means to pay, which is not always the case.

In that situation, should the victim just be abandoned? Instead, should we, as a society acknowledge that it is up to us to take responsibility, even though the government is not keen on the issue?

It is our collective duty to help victims overcome difficulties, not only in relation to the trial and the various criminal stages, but also in relation to their personal lives, so that they are no longer in that group of people who take on 83% of the \$100 billion price tag.

• (1655)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments.

The NDP supports the principle of this bill and they support sending it to committee for further study. However, the comments that I heard did not criticize the substance of the bill.

[*English*]

I listened carefully to the member opposite and she appeared to criticize the fact that the bill had not come in soon enough, that it did not go far enough, but that it maybe went too far in other areas. I am still waiting to hear from her whether she sees actual improvements that could perhaps build upon the principle. Let us not forget for a moment that it is our government that is bringing forward a bill of rights to protect and enhance victims' participation in the system. No other government in the history of Canada has given the attention and focus this government has to the entrenchment of rights for victims.

She referenced, in fact, the issue with respect to spousal immunity. She would know that some 40 Criminal Code offences already waive spousal immunity, and we have gone further to ensure that all of the evidence in the truth-seeking exercises of the court can include the testimony of spouses for things such as murder, terrorism, and major fraud.

This is a bill that takes monumental steps forward in entrenching in one federal law the protection of victims. I would suspect that the members opposite would want to see this bill enacted quickly, and I look forward to working with her and other members to see this bill pass through the House and become the law of the land.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said that I did not criticize the substance of the bill, but it is somewhat difficult to do that when the bill has no substance. That is basically what I am trying to say.

I hope he understands that I am extremely disappointed. After hearing what the government was saying, I got my hopes up, as did victims. Perhaps it is impossible to put everything down on paper,

but if that is the case, stop holding press conferences just to blow hot air. The government is unable to deliver on the promises it made at the time.

That is the danger the Conservative government was facing. That is precisely the trap it fell into and that it set for itself. The government gave the impression that its Canadian victims bill of rights would fix every issue that victims are experiencing, but anyone who reads the document closely will know better.

The minister said that no other government has proposed such a bill of rights. I would like to believe that, but some provinces have moved faster than the federal government. They have already determined, in terms of their dealings with the courts, how this should be handled and how the various players in a criminal trial should work with the victims. The minister may not have stepped foot inside a courthouse in a while, but there are often people there who are specifically tasked with ensuring that victims know exactly where they are going.

As for spouses who could be called on to testify against one another, I am quite aware that this already exists in other legislation. That is what I was trying to point out. Why put this in a victims bill of rights when the Conservatives have already created other laws? Why not place it in the context of specific offences instead of in a victims bill of rights? That is the point I wanted to make.

• (1700)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask my hon. colleague a question.

My question has to do with a specific topic, perhaps one of substance. It is about the fact that all victims have the right to information, upon request. The bill states a few times "only on request". I think my colleague knows that under California's victims bill of rights, victims are given a card, and not just when they ask for it. Why are my colleague's thoughts on that, particularly for enhancing victims' rights?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, the things that can be requested are written down. Asking is one thing; receiving is another.

Let me give you an example. On page 11 of Bill C-32, it states:

10. (1) Subsection 278.7(2) of the Act is replaced by the following:

(2) In determining whether to order the production of the record or part of the record to the accused, the judge shall consider the salutary and deleterious effects of the determination on the accused's right to make a full answer and defence and on the right to privacy, personal security and equality of the complainant or witness, as the case may be, and of any other...

Victims can ask for certain things under the bill of rights, and that is fine. However, there are many qualifications attached. I am not saying this is bad; I am simply telling the government to stop pretending that this solves all the world's problems. That is not true. It should not be raising victims' expectations, for if they were to rely solely on the headlines in the media, they might think this is paradise. This is not the case, and the fall back to earth will be brutal.

That is all I have to say. Perhaps the government needs to change its rhetoric and use a tone that is a little more reserved, to stop making victims believe in things that do not exist.

Government Orders

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, shortly before the bill was introduced, Andrew Swan, the Attorney General of Manitoba, mentioned that Ottawa would do well to create a national program in co-operation with the provinces.

We don't want this to be an exercise where the federal government lays down some regulations, say they've done their job and then wash their hands of it...[I]f the government doesn't create a channel to make the bill enforceable — like Manitoba's support services office — then it is an empty gesture.

As my colleague mentioned several times in her speech, resources are the sinews of war. Without people in the field and without resources, a piece of legislation does not make any sense. I would like the member to comment on the Attorney General of Manitoba's statement.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for Andrew Swan, who is an excellent attorney general.

He identified the problem even before the government introduced its bill, its victims bill of rights. I fully expect that the provinces and territories will be forced to deal with victims requests on a daily basis. People will also ask for all kinds of resources.

In that context, I hope that the Conservative government will be open to the requests. All the parties in the House agree that we should be helping the victims, but we have to do something tangible that will truly change their lives. Writing some things down on paper and indulging in hollow rhetoric is not going to cut it.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was surprised to hear the member say that she did not think the bill contained important new rights for victims. I had occasion to sit on the recently concluded Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women, where we listened to the families of those victims from across Canada. Each and every one of them said that what they really needed was information on the investigation into their missing loved one, information about the prosecution of the person responsible for the murder or harm to their missing loved one.

We hear this from victims time and time again. My office in Mississauga was subject to an arson attack a number of years ago. If it were not for the media, we would not have heard anything about the investigation or the prosecution of the accused in that situation.

I wonder if the member could tell us what she thinks about the right to information in the bill for victims, information about both the investigative part of any crime done to them and the prosecution of a perpetrator after someone is charged with that crime.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to missing or murdered aboriginal women, we need to do more than providing some information to the families, who are desperately waiting. A public inquiry is essential.

A number of these rights, including the one my colleague just mentioned, already exist in some regions. I did not say that is bad. I am saying it has limitations and it must not interfere. The minister himself was clear: this must not interfere. People at the Department of Justice say the same thing: this must not compromise

investigations, trials or the rights of the accused. Altogether, that creates rather weak legislation. That is all I am saying.

[*English*]

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to join this debate and address Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act, which sets out a number of important rights for victims of crime, particularly with respect to information, participation, protection, and restitution.

For victims and their families, navigating the path of justice, from police services to the trial process to incarceration and parole, can be a very difficult ordeal, sometimes frightening and often costly. Victims may have experienced significant emotional or physical trauma as well as material loss, and most painfully, the loss of loved ones.

As such, it is critical that our justice system and related departments and agencies treat victims with respect and sensitivity, appreciate their concerns, and minimize their burden. To that end, the bill before us appears to be in most respects one more step in the right direction, and I commend the minister for this initiative.

I have certain concerns about aspects of the proposed legislation that I will discuss shortly, the substantive critique that the minister himself invited, but I am hopeful that these legislative aspects can be examined and, if need be, amended and refined at committee.

As I said, Bill C-32 is one more step because it builds upon past efforts across party lines, and as the minister mentioned, the initiatives by provinces, to improve the treatment of victims of crime within our justice system.

Indeed, the preamble of the bill references the Canadian statement of basic principles of justice for victims of crime, which was first endorsed by federal, provincial, and territorial ministers of justice in 1988 under a Progressive Conservative government, and updated and endorsed again under a Liberal government in 2003.

Shortly thereafter, as minister of justice, I was proud to introduce the Martin government's very first bill, which increased protections for children and other vulnerable Canadians against exploitation and abuse. In particular, that legislation facilitated the testimony of child victims and other vulnerable witnesses by providing for the more widespread use of testimonial aids and support persons, which the minister referenced in his remarks today. In fact, the legislation before us builds upon many of the very provisions that were enacted or enhanced at that time.

I was also pleased to introduce Canada's first ever legislation to specifically target human trafficking, the contemporary global slave trade with its multiply-affected victims. It is to the credit of this House that the battle to combat human trafficking and exploitation has been a multi-partisan effort. Indeed, the bill I introduced at the time passed unanimously, and in recent years I have been pleased to support efforts by the member for Kildonan—St. Paul and the member for Ahuntsic to build upon that initial legislation.

Government Orders

There was all-party support as well for a 2005 bill that enhanced the national DNA data bank by authorizing judges to order DNA samples from those convicted of a number of serious crimes, including child pornography and offences related to underage prostitution. The national DNA data bank was itself created by the Liberal government in 2000, and has proven to be a valuable crime-fighting tool that has helped to protect vulnerable Canadians and to bring to justice those who would do them harm.

As regards the role of victims within the justice process, as minister of justice, I joined with the hon. Anne McLellan, the then minister of public safety, to establish a national office for victims in order to coordinate federal initiatives for victims of crime and ensure that their perspectives would be considered in the development of policy and legislation, which is a principle and process enhanced by this victims bill of rights act. We also set up a fund to help cover travel and accommodation costs for victims attending parole board hearings.

Moreover, and again with the support of MPs on both sides of the aisle, we enacted important measures to improve the treatment of victims in cases where the accused was found not criminally responsible. Those measures included protecting the identity and privacy of victims, allowing for the oral presentation of victim impact statements, and permitting the adjournment of review board hearings if victims needed more time to prepare.

Therefore, as I have said, I am proud not only of my own party's record when it comes to crime prevention and victims' rights—but also here I reference as well the restorative justice initiatives—but also of the many instances in the past when members of all parties joined together in a spirit of collaboration and good faith to advance these important objectives and ideals.

I note with regret that public safety and victims' rights have sometimes been used as a wedge issue in an attempt to paint opponents of legislation that may have suspect constitutional policy grounds as being soft on crime or uncaring toward victims. Yet, victims are best served when we as parliamentarians focus on their interests rather than our own.

Many of the past bills to which I have referred were subject to thorough scrutiny and amendment at committee, a fact indicative not of the weakness of the legislation but the strength of the parliamentary process. I hope that the debate and study of Bill C-32 will likewise be open-minded and robust, as the minister appeared to invite.

• (1710)

In that vein, I will now turn to the legislation itself and to some of its aspects that merit further examination.

First, the bill would establish a number of victims' rights, divided into the categories of information, protection, participation, and restitution. As I said, I fully support the idea of extending these important rights to victims of crime. Victims must clearly be made aware of the rights and resources at their disposal, and they must, if they so choose, be kept abreast of the justice process from the investigative phase to the potential ultimate release of the offender, and at every point in between.

As well, the security of victims must be a paramount consideration, including the protection of their right to privacy and protection from intimidation and retaliation. Victims themselves should be able to share their views with the appropriate authorities within the justice system and to have, as much as possible, a meaningful role throughout the justice process. Finally, victims should be able to seek restitution where appropriate.

These are important rights contained in the legislation, to which I am pleased to lend my support and my party's support.

My concerns with respect to this section of the bill, and here I again relate to the minister's invitation regarding substantive critiques, are related primarily to the degree to which these rights are, in fact, enforceable. It is one thing to proclaim that victims of crime have this panoply of rights, however important that in itself is, but it is quite another to give them concrete expression by devoting adequate financial and human resources and putting in place an effective organizational infrastructure for recourse and remedy.

For instance, a House of Commons subcommittee studying victims' rights 14 years ago found that victims sometimes had difficulty contacting the right person within a government agency to access information to which they were entitled, and they occasionally received different or conflicting information from various sources within the same agency.

I mention this not to cast blame on any of the individuals who work at the Correctional Service, the Parole Board, or any other agencies that make up our justice system but to underscore the extent to which the resources in this system are already spread quite thin. As such, saying that a victim is entitled to information, protection, restitution, or a role in the process is important, and it cannot be underestimated. However, it is not the same as ensuring that they, in fact, get that.

Moreover, for rights to be meaningful, there must be appropriate recourse available in the event that they are infringed. However, the avenue for recourse as set out in Bill C-32 is merely a requirement that federal departments and agencies establish internal mechanisms to receive and review complaints and recommend remedial action. Again, it is not clear whether additional resources would be allocated to ensure that the complaint mechanisms would be effective, but neither is it clear what recourse, if any, victims would have if such internal complaint mechanisms did not resolve a situation to their satisfaction. This potential lack of recourse risks aggravating, rather than assuaging, the frustration of victims.

In short, having raised the expectations of victims of crime, the government is now responsible for meeting those expectations. I hope to hear more from the government, as the minister himself spoke today, about the concrete ways in which it intends to do so.

Government Orders

I will now move on to the Criminal Code amendments contained in this bill. For the most part, these amendments seek *inter alia* to protect the privacy and security of victims and witnesses, to specify certain information to which victims are entitled, and to enhance the role of victims in the justice process. All of these objectives, as I mentioned earlier, are ones that I share.

There are, however, several clauses in this section of the bill that merit thorough examination at committee so as to ensure that their consequences are fully and accurately understood. To begin with, the bill proposes quite a broad definition of “victim” in the Criminal Code. The minister referenced this definition in his remarks.

The new definition would go so far as to include, in certain circumstances, an individual, and I quote:

...who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as the result of the commission of an offence against any other person.

I certainly understand the impulse to extend the protection and rights of Bill C-32 to as many Canadians as possible, but there may be a point at which a definition becomes so broad that it can be rendered unworkable. For example, if everyone who has suffered emotional harm because of an offence committed against any other person is entitled to make representations during sentencing proceedings or at a review board hearing, as provided for by this bill, might there not be a risk of overburdening the system and slowing down proceedings to the detriment of victims themselves? At the very least, when experts come before committee, this would be a question worth asking and clarifying.

Another element of Bill C-32 that should be carefully considered is the expanded access to publication bans with respect to court proceedings.

● (1715)

The safety and privacy of victims and witnesses are undoubtedly vital concerns. At the same time, requests for publication bans require resources to adjudicate and enforce. It is not evident that our justice system is presently equipped to deal with this change.

Again, to be clear, I do not mean to suggest that the change is problematic in and of itself, but we must investigate its implications and cost consequences and ensure that the government is prepared to make the necessary resource commitment.

Bill C-32 would also remove the protection of spousal privilege such that it would be possible to compel an individual to testify against his or her spouse. As the minister himself mentioned in his remarks, numerous exceptions to this privilege have existed in Canada for many years. This is, nevertheless, a long-standing legal principle, and it will be important to understand its operation and use to fully appreciate the impact, positive or negative, of its removal. Again, this would be a useful issue for committee deliberation.

Another possible area of concern regards the payment of restitution by an offender to a victim. In particular, the legislation would prohibit a court from considering an offender's ability to pay when making a restitution order. This would be a significant concern in cases where the offender is impoverished and no work program is available to him or her while incarcerated, not least because the victim would be unlikely to receive the restitution that he or she has been awarded by the court.

This particular provision echoes the government's unfortunate approach to the victim fine surcharge, whereby offenders are required to pay hundreds of dollars at sentencing, with no allowance made for those who simply do not have the money. Since the mandatory surcharge has come into force, judges across the country have had to find creative ways around it, such as allowing many years for repayment.

Bill C-32 would make an important change to the surcharge, requiring that it be paid either within a period determined by the province or in a reasonable time after its imposition. Yet what is “reasonable” may depend greatly upon the offender's ability to pay. Indeed, to cite certain real-life cases from recent months, it is unclear what would be a reasonable period of time in which to expect a homeless Ottawa teenager or a drug-addicted refugee from Sierra Leone to raise hundreds of dollars.

The wording would likely lead to even more court cases on this front, all of which would cost taxpayers more than any amount they would receive from the payment of the surcharge.

Another aspect of Bill C-32 that must be carefully considered concerns the important changes to sentencing principles proposed in the bill, which the minister referenced in his remarks. For example, Bill C-32 would add the protection of society as a fundamental purpose of sentencing in the Criminal Code. Yet existing sentencing principles already include “the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society”. As such, it is unclear what the government is seeking to achieve with this seemingly redundant provision.

I hope that the justice committee will hear from criminal law experts about any possible effects of this change.

The bill would also add the denunciation of harm done to victims as a purpose of sentencing, an addition that raises similar questions, in particular how this denunciation would be achieved in a manner distinct from the denunciation of the conduct at issue and whether the impact of such a double denunciation would simply be to increase prison sentences across the board, regardless of whether such punishment fit the crime.

Finally, Bill C-32 would change the provision that underpins the Gladue principles of sentencing for aboriginal offenders. These principles currently require the courts to consider “all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances”, particularly with respect to aboriginal offenders, notably in recognition of the serious problem of the overrepresentation of aboriginal people in Canadian prisons.

Importantly, the Gladue principles do not automatically reduce an aboriginal offender's sentence, nor do they permit aboriginal offenders to escape serious punishment for serious crimes. The principles have, however, been upheld by the Supreme Court as recently as 2012.

However, Bill C-32 would appear to limit the application of the Gladue principles by specifying that the sentence must be “consistent with the harm done to victims or to the community”.

Government Orders

At the very least, this raises questions about the extent to which a sentencing principle meant to facilitate rehabilitation should be marginalized in favour of a more punitive approach. It would certainly be appropriate for experts in aboriginal justice to testify at committee on this point.

Nevertheless, in spite of these areas of potential concern, I will support sending the bill to committee for further study.

As I said earlier, I hope that committee members will engage in that study with the seriousness and responsiveness the subject demands and that the government, as it appears to indicate, would be open to amendments.

Before I conclude, I will turn briefly to measures not included in the bill that could be as important, if not more so, when it comes to respecting victims of crime and to preventing Canadians from becoming victims in the first place.

In our focus on domestic victims of crime, we must not forget that there are Canadians impacted in serious ways by crimes that have occurred abroad. In this regard, I remain troubled by the government's stance on state immunity. Thus far, it has acted to limit the number of state entities Canadians can sue for terror.

● (1720)

While I was pleased that the government adopted the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act just a few short years ago, the government has only listed two states Canadians can sue. Even then, it did not initially seem disposed to helping Canadian victims get justice prior to American claimants seeking to enforce foreign judgments regarding Iran in Canada. There must be a more equitable process for victims than the current listing mechanism that places the entirety of its discretionary authority in the hands of the minister. While I will not dwell on this point, I do hope the government will reconsider its position on this issue. As well, I trust that the protection will be expanded to include not only victims of terror but also victims of torture, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, which I have referenced in a private member's bill otherwise before this House.

Earlier I mentioned the importance of keeping Canadians from becoming victims of crime to begin with, the prevention principle. Regrettably, the government has not put sufficient emphasis on prevention in its approach both to victims' rights and to public safety in general.

To reduce the incidence of crime, we must combat factors that we know are linked with crime, such as issues of poverty, addiction, and mental health. Efforts in this regard require significant resource commitments and a conception of public safety that goes beyond punitive measures.

This brings me to the final area of concern. Bill C-32 contains no provisions about data sharing and collection or about developing best practices and guidelines such that victims' rights are understood in a way that is meaningful and consistent. It might be appropriate to require an annual report on the bill so that we know how many complaints are raised with respect to each right and how many are resolved to the victims' satisfaction, while enhancing federal-provincial co-operation in this regard.

In closing, I am glad this legislation is before us. While I have some concerns regarding particular clauses, I will be voting in favour of the bill at second reading, and I encourage others to do the same. We all have a part to play in supporting victims of crime. While Bill C-32 could be stronger and more effective, and I trust that at the end of the process it will be, it is one more important step in the right direction.

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, my friend from Mount Royal, for a very thoughtful, constructive speech. He has raised some very important points.

Embedded in his remarks is the reality that this will be an incremental effort. He has also alluded to the fact that this, like many initiatives, will build on previous efforts and build on existing provincial-territorial infrastructure when it comes to victims. It is the living tree analogy.

The member also embodies my own sentiment, and that is that we should not let the perfect get in the way of the good. What we are attempting to do here for victims is a very important non-partisan effort.

In the brief time I have, I want to respond quickly to a couple of concerns about existing mechanisms.

There are resources. There has been a commitment made in the federal budget with respect to the necessity to improve upon existing mechanisms at the provincial and territorial level. We do not want to duplicate the effort where we do, in fact, have some of those mechanisms in place already.

We have also heard from a lot of victims about the necessity of trying to help them collect, as the member alluded to, with respect to restitution. That dovetails with other efforts we have put in place with respect to mandatory and doubled victim fine surcharges.

As well, with respect to examining, I know that the member himself is very much an internationalist in his view. We have looked outside of the country as well when it came to the enforcement mechanisms. We have looked to the United Kingdom, the United States, of course, Japan, and the European Union as to ways in which we could include the right to information, financial redress, and attendance at court proceedings. We found that very instructive.

We have also benefited from input from the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, who will provide some of the recourse and the redress to which the member alluded. If there are failings within the provincial and territorial system, we will look to that federal ombudsman's office to assist victims in trying to alleviate their concerns.

● (1725)

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his remarks and his contribution to the debate. I indicated that he did make references in his remarks regarding the matter of resources, and as I said, we look forward to the institutionalization of important resource allocation with regard to the four substantive rights and their enforcement, as are set forth in this legislation.

Private Members' Business

In the matter of victim surcharges, I do not want to repeat what I have elsewhere said in this House, or even in my remarks today. However, there remain problems, as I said in my remarks, about that principle of “reasonable”, and particularly the importance of maintaining judicial discretion in that regard.

Finally, the minister mentioned going abroad internationally and the matter of enforcement, and I commend him for that. I just want to mention my particular concerns regarding victims in Canada of crimes perpetrated abroad. While reference has been made to civil remedies for victims of terror, we need to expand this to remedies with regard to victims of torture, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. I hope the minister might consider that as we go forward with this bill, as well as other amendments that will be going before the committee.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will ask my colleague the same question I asked my colleague from Gatineau.

Before Bill C-32 was introduced, the Attorney General of Manitoba, Andrew Swan, said that Ottawa should establish a national program together with the provinces. We know just how much the federal government tries to hand over matters to the provinces. Mr. Swan clearly said that the federal government must not pass laws and then wash its hands of them. If the government does not set up an entity to implement this bill, like the Manitoba Victim Rights Support Service, it is a meaningless bill.

My colleague is a former justice minister. He understands the provinces' situation and I would like him to tell us whether he agrees with the comments made by the Attorney General of Manitoba.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the co-operation of the federal, provincial and territorial governments is a fundamental requirement for this bill and it is the point of the comments made by the Attorney General of Manitoba. I said in my comments that there must be co-operation.

The minister said that this bill was also based on provincial measures. I hope that the federal government will work not just with the provincial governments, but also with the people and witnesses that will appear before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights when we study this bill.

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Mount Royal will have four minutes in questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this matter.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

TRANSPARENCY OF PAYMENTS MADE BY MINING, OIL AND GAS CORPORATIONS TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS ACT

The House resumed from March 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-474, An Act respecting the promotion of financial transparency, improved accountability and long-term economic

sustainability through the public reporting of payments made by mining, oil and gas corporations to foreign governments, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, April 2, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-474 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

• (1810)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 100*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bennett	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brousseau	Byrne
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Gameau	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hyer	Jacob
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Saganash
Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah

Private Members' Business

Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Thibeault
 Trudeau

St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Woodworth— 122

NAYS**Members**

Ablonczy
 Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Ashfield
 Baird
 Benoit
 Bezan
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Bruinoooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Clarke
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeshen
 Dykstra
 Fast
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harper
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Merrifield
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Nicholson
 O'Connor
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Poilievre
 Raitt
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Trost
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong

Adams
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Brown (Barrie)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chong
 Crockett
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Falk
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Miller
 Norlock
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Preston
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Toet
 Trottier
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Yelich

Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer— 145

Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYEES' VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The House resumed from April 8 consideration of Bill C-525, Employees' Voting Rights Act, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motions at report stage of Bill C-525, under private members' business.

The question is on Motion No. 1.

• (1820)

(The House divided on Motion No. 1, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 101*)

YEAS**Members**

Allen (Welland)
 Ashton
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Caron
 Charlton
 Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Day
 Dion
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Freeman
 Gameau
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Groguhé
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hyer
 Jones
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Mulcair
 Nash
 Nunez-Melo

Angus
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Boulerville
 Brahmi
 Byrne
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Choquette
 Cleary
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Fortin
 Fry
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Jacob
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Larose
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 Mathysen
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mourani
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Pacetti

Patry
Perreault
Plamondon
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Thibeault
Trudeau — 121

Péclet
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
St-Denis
Sullivan
Toone

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Clarke
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Trost

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Amblor
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Blaney
Boughen
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chong
Crockatt
Davidson
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Falk
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hoback
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McColeman
Menegakis
Miller
Norlock
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rajotte
Rempel
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Toet
Trottier

Private Members' Business

Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 146

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 defeated.

[*English*]

The next question is on Motion No. 2. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 3 to 6.

● (1830)

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 102)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Ayala
Bennett
Blanchette
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau
Caron
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Comartin
Cotler
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseau
Eyking
Freeman
Gameau
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer
Jones
Kellway
Lapointe
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Patry
Perreault
Plamondon

Angus
Aubin
Bélanger
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Boulerice
Brahmi
Byrne
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Fortin
Fry
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Jacob
Julian
Lamoureux
Larose
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani
Murray
Nicholls
Pacetti
Péclet
Pilon
Quach

Private Members' Business

Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Sullivan
Toone

Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Thibeault
Trudeau — 120

Warawa
Watson
Sky Country
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer — 147

Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 defeated. I therefore declare Motion Nos. 3 to 6 defeated.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC) moved that the bill as amended be concurred in.

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:

● (1835)

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

(Division No. 103)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Clarke
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Komarnicki
Lake
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod
Merrifield
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
O'Connor
Opitz
Paradis
Poilievre
Raitt
Rathgeber
Rempel
Rickford
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Uppal
Van Kesteren
Vellacott

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Blaney
Boughen
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chong
Crockatt
Davidson
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Falk
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hoback
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McColeman
Menegakis
Miller
Norlock
O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole
Payne
Preston
Rajotte
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Schellenberger
Shiple
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Sweet
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Van Loan
Wallace

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Ashfield
Baird
Benoit
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Clarke
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Galipeau
Gill
Goguen
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Blaney
Boughen
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chong
Crockatt
Davidson
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Falk
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goldring
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes

Private Members' Business

Hiebert	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
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	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer— 147	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Fortin
Freeman	Fry
Garneau	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Grogohé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hyer	Jacob
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière

LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
May	McCallum
McGuinty	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Patry	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Trudeau— 120

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Mr. Blaine Calkins** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1845)

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

(Division No. 104)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Blaney

Points of Order

Block	Boughen	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Braid	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Dewar	Dion
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)	Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Bruinooogee	Butt	Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Calandra	Calkins	Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Cannan	Carmichael	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Carrie	Chong	Easter	Eyking
Clarke	Crockatt	Fortin	Freeman
Daniel	Davidson	Fry	Garneau
Dechert	Devolin	Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Giguère	Godin
Falk	Fast	Goodale	Groguhé
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (St. John's East)
Fletcher	Galipeau	Hsu	Hyer
Gallant	Gill	Jacob	Jones
Glover	Goguen	Julian	Kellway
Goldring	Goodyear	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Gosal	Gourde	Larose	Latendresse
Grewal	Harper	Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Hayes	Hiebert	Liu	MacAulay
Hoback	Holder	Mai	Marston
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Martin	Masse
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Mathysen	May
Kerr	Komarnicki	McCallum	McGuinity
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Lauzon	Lebel	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Leef	Leitch	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagog)
Lemieux	Leung	Mourani	Mulcair
Lizon	Lobb	Murray	Nash
Lukiwski	Lunney	Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie	Pacetti	Patry
Maguire	Mayes	Péclet	Perreault
McColeman	McLeod	Pilon	Plamondon
Menegakis	Merrifield	Quach	Rafferty
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	Rankin	Ravignat
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson	Raynault	Regan
Norlock	O'Connor	Rousseau	Saganash
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz	Sandhu	Scarpaleggia
O'Toole	Paradis	Scott	Sellah
Payne	Poilievre	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Preston	Raitt	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Rajotte	Rathgeber	Sitsabaesans	St-Denis
Reid	Rempel	Stewart	Sullivan
Richards	Rickford	Thibeault	Toone
Ritz	Saxton	Trudeau — 119	
Schellenberger	Shea		
Shipley	Shory		
Smith	Sopuck		
Sorenson	Stanton		
Storseth	Strahl		
Sweet	Toet		
Trost	Trottier		
Truppe	Uppal		
Valcourt	Van Kesteren		
Van Loan	Vellacott		
Wallace	Warawa		
Warkentin	Watson		
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	Williamson		
Weston (Saint John)	Woodworth		
Wilks	Young (Oakville)		
Wong	Zimmer — 146		
Yelich			
Young (Vancouver South)			

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Bélangier
Bennett	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.
(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to denounce the deplorable action by some government members this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the member for Scarborough Southwest raised a perfectly legitimate point of order on the issue of an inappropriate gesture made by the Minister of International Trade toward the member for Churchill earlier today. The minister has denied the gesture, but given the screen shot and the video that are currently circulating in the media and social media, he may want to revise his response of earlier today.

It was a highly inappropriate gesture—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster has the floor on a point of order, and I am trying to listen to him.

Government Orders

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, it was a highly inappropriate gesture, and we believe that the Minister of International Trade owes the member for Churchill an apology.

[*Translation*]

After the member for Scarborough Southwest spoke, members on the government side completely overreacted.

[*English*]

The member for Kelowna—Lake Country came in through the opposition lobby and attempted to “get at” the member for Scarborough Southwest, who was sitting in the House at the time. I and the member for Sudbury had to escort him out of the House of Commons and back into the opposition lobby.

I had no sooner returned to my seat when I saw the Minister of International Trade, also standing in front of the member for Scarborough Southwest—he had crossed the floor—making what can only be called threatening and intimidating gestures. I also had to escort him across to the government side.

It is highly inappropriate for that minister and that member of Parliament to attempt to intimidate opposition members.

Sadly, today is International Anti-Bullying Day.

This is not the first time that government members have crossed the floor inappropriately. It has to stop. There is no excuse for this behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read into the record your statement on decorum in the House that you made on Wednesday, December 12, 2012. You said at that time:

My task as Speaker is to ensure that the intensity of feeling expressed around some issues is contained within the bounds of civility without infringing on the freedom of speech that members enjoy. The Chair tries to ensure that our rules are adhered to in a way that encourages mutual respect.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you today: you must ensure that civility.

Therefore, we ask you: how will you ensure that civility and what will you do to stop incidents of this sort from occurring in the House of Commons again?

• (1850)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of International Trade.

Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Earlier this afternoon, it was alleged that I made a gesture in the House that was akin to pointing a gun. In fact, the footage shows, very clearly, that what I did was point to the end of this House. You will notice, Mr. Speaker, there was no cocking motion. There was no trigger motion. In fact, anyone who knows me knows that when I point at people, when I point at objects, that is how I point.

If anyone actually took offence at how I pointed to the end of the House, obviously, I would apologize for that.

Having said that, I would also want to address the issue of my conversing with my colleague across the way. As you may recall, I waited until things had settled down in the House. Obviously, I wanted to clarify for him what the intent of the motion was. I also

expressed my desire that he express an apology for having suggested that I would make a motion that would be akin to pointing a pistol at someone.

Mr. Speaker, that has never been how I have conducted myself in the House.

I believe that we in this House should be conducting ourselves with the highest level of decorum. We should be setting an example for others across the country because they view these proceedings on television.

However, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that on the rare occasions where I have uttered a word or a phrase that was deemed unparliamentary, I have always stood to accept that and to apologize.

Today is a different matter. The gesture I made was a pointing gesture, one I often use. It was obviously misconstrued by the opposition. Obviously, I am going to use great care to make sure that I do not use that motion in the future because of the possibility it will be misinterpreted.

At the same time, I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, there was no intention, at all, at any time during the proceedings this afternoon, for me to suggest that I was aiming a pistol or a gun at anyone else in this House.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, you will have an opportunity to view the video of this particular incident. I believe you will find that it is also an innocent gesture, and I believe I have clarified that here in this House. I thank you for the opportunity to clarify that.

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to also clarify for the record that I did go and speak to the NDP House leader, the member for Burnaby—New Westminister, a fellow British Columbia member of Parliament, whom I know. I told him that the member of Parliament for Scarborough Southwest should apologize to the hon. member or be prepared to make the allegation outside. Members of Parliament, as the member for Scarborough Southwest knows, are protected by parliamentary privilege inside the House of Commons, meaning that we have parliamentary immunity. If anything else is being inferred, it is completely incorrect. I apologize if there were any other inferences from that.

The Speaker: I will endeavour to examine the footage cited by the opposition House leader and the Minister of Trade and come back to the House in due course.

It being 6:54 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

• (1855)

TAX EVASION

The House resumed from February 27 consideration of Motion No. 485.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to address this particular motion. I would suggest that taxes are important to all people. At the end of the day, constituents want taxes that are fair and appropriate and that they get some sort of service in return for those taxes.

It frustrates a great deal of people when they hear stories of tax evasion, the ways in which people quite often take advantage of laws or look for loopholes within government laws and regulations in order to retain money that should go to Revenue Canada. It is important that we recognize there are different ways in which government generates the monies it requires to provide the different types of social programs and other resources for the different departments in order to function as a larger community. Even smaller communities need to feel comfortable in knowing that the services are meeting the needs of society.

When I think of the services that tax dollars fund, I think of social programs such as the pension programs, the guaranteed income supplement, the old age supplement, and the Canada pension plan. When I think of social programs, I think of health care services, something that Canadians are very passionate about and believe is money well spent in providing universal health care. All we need to do is get a better understanding of the Canada Health Act to have a good appreciation for the role that we here in Ottawa, as well as the provinces, play.

When we think of social services, we can look at issues surrounding employment insurance programs. We can talk about the infrastructure from coast to coast to coast that benefits society, whether it is the railways, highways, capital infrastructure of buildings, museums, non-profit housing, and the different types of programs provided by government. I am thinking of housing rehabilitation assistance types of programs, tax programs that encourage individual companies, or the training of individuals for jobs, and for education. The point is that the government spends annually a great deal of money, billions of dollars, and Canadians want value for the money being spent on those programs.

As part of spending, the resources, the taxes, have to be acquired to provide the different types of programs I have alluded to. That is done in many different ways. For example, there are direct taxes, income taxes, corporate taxes, and the monies generated through different fees and tariffs. The government adjusts the bottom line by making minor modifications. The government has a responsibility to ensure that the revenues collected are in the appropriate amounts to ultimately finance the many programs I referred to and to use the many ways in which it generates that revenue in order to justify its ultimate expenditures.

● (1900)

I would suggest that what often gets people emotionally in tune with issues of finances is that they hear examples of abuse or of corporations, individuals through corporations, or individuals alone who use those loopholes or foreign investment or offshore accounts. There is a multitude of different ways in which corporations will look at how they can avoid paying their fair share of taxes. This is what I would have liked to contribute in terms of the debate, that as we focus on one aspect of taxes, we need to recognize that it goes far

beyond just foreign investments or how individuals use different mechanisms to avoid paying those taxes through other countries.

Some may have hard numbers as to the amount of money that is not paid in taxes because of rules or tax avoidance. Obviously, we are talking well into the hundreds of millions of dollars. Most Canadians would be quite surprised at the degree to which money is never collected by Canada Revenue Agency. For that reason, when I look at the motion we are debating here today, I do believe there is more we can do as a legislative body to ensure that, where tax avoidance is taking place, in the many ways it occurs, it is brought to the Department of Finance with the expectation that the Minister of Finance will do what he or she can do to minimize that avoidance.

The government today has not really clamped down on that issue, and there has been a substantial cost to that. As we know, when going through the budgetary process, every dollar is an important dollar. When one overlooks the hundreds of millions of dollars that are not being collected because of avoidance, that is something that has to be addressed. There is a need for us to move forward to get a better understanding and appreciation. I would suggest that any movement in that direction is positive.

I would like to go further than just talking about direct avoidance, by suggesting that there is much more we can do in working with the different finance departments at the provincial level. The tax avoidance issue is very real and tangible, and it occurs at different levels of government also. Therefore even though this afternoon we are focusing on one aspect of tax avoidance, I would suggest that if we take a look at the broader picture, we see there is much more money we should be able to collect. The more money we can collect from those individuals who are trying to cheat the system, the less money we will have to collect overall, or the more money we are going to be able to allocate to the many different services, social programming, and infrastructure that are so critically important. Those are the reasons we ultimately need the funds and have those taxes and fines and other levies coming into government coffers.

● (1905)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand today and speak to Motion No. 485, prepared by my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord, in the spirit of getting the government to take tax havens seriously. The specific motion is, however, narrower than that. It fundamentally asks that the government study and measure Canadian tax losses to international tax havens and tax evasion in order to determine what is called the tax gap, the amount of money we should be collecting but are not.

It is a very timely motion as we are in front of the tax clock. In the next short while Canadians must submit their tax returns, and I am concerned that my fellow Canadians pay their fair share. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Unfortunately, many Canadians—large corporations, trusts, and wealthy Canadians—are sending their money offshore to avoid the incidence of tax in our country.

The motion simply asks the Conservatives to do what our allies in other countries of the world already do; namely, put their hands around the size of the problem. Just what is the tax gap? It has often been said that, if we do not measure something, we will not be able to effectively manage it. That is what we are asking here.

Government Orders

The government will ask why it should bother, since it is not going to give exact information as to how many billions of dollars it is losing every year, but in fact Sweden, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom are all doing that and by now there are fairly good economic measures, fairly good techniques, to do exactly this, which is to measure the tax gap.

That is the first step of getting the government to take the tax havens problem seriously.

In my riding, I was talking someone who own a small coffee shop. He told me his effective tax rate is much higher than the big Starbucks down at the corner. Why is that? It is because Starbucks is able to arrange its affairs by use of international tax havens to really pay an effective very low rate of tax. Indeed it was caught on that in England, where demonstrations led it to make a voluntary tax payment in the tens of millions of pounds, because it recognized it needs a social licence to do business. That is great when they are caught, but what about the small coffee shop owner in my riding who cannot compete because his rate of tax is so much higher than that of a company that can use these tax havens?

We asked the minister to do just that, to measure the tax gap. I wrote to the former minister on March 8, 2013, asking that he please estimate the tax gap the way our allies have done. I got no response. However, apparently tens of trillions of dollars worldwide are being lost to tax havens. It is estimated that somewhere between \$5 billion and \$8 billion a year may be lost to tax havens in this country; and who knows, if the government will not measure it? Think of what we could do with that money if the government were to take this problem seriously. Think about what we could do with hospitals, infrastructure, and the like in our country.

That is why this is not a theoretical issue. It is an intensely practical and immediate issue and one that our allies are doing a lot better on than we are. I think of Mr. Cameron in the United Kingdom who at least appears to be taking action, and certainly in the United States there are new efforts under way as well.

The government is simply taking baby steps to address the issues we are talking about today; but the amount of money, as I said, is enormous. Also enormous is the amount of cuts that the government is making to the Canada Revenue Agency. I hear so many people say they cannot do their jobs because so many of them have been dismissed. The Conservatives have cut their budgets so dramatically and expect Canadians to take them at their word when they say they are getting tough on tax havens, tough on those who evade their taxes. It is simply not so. The number of people I have talked to from that agency, who shake their heads, bear witness to that.

The former parliamentary budget officer was asked to measure the tax gap. Essentially it went like this. Since the government will not do it, since the CRA refuses to do it, why does the parliamentary budget officer not do it? He said he would love to, no problem; all he would need is the data from the government to do the job. He asked and asked, but of course nothing happened.

●(1910)

He was not even given the data to do the work that our allies in other countries are beginning to do so effectively.

Therefore, the government's rhetoric on this issue is not matched by reality. It is not giving the CRA the resources to do the job. It is not hiring the experts required to go after the very sophisticated people who use these tax havens inappropriately. It will not even tell us the size of the problem, which is what this motion is all about.

It is shocking to report that in 2011, 24%—almost a quarter—of Canadian investment overseas went to tax havens, twelve tax havens, the top five of which are Barbados, Cayman Islands, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Bermuda; \$130 billion, in one year alone. At the same time, the government cut the CRA so it cannot even do its job. We think Canadians deserve to know how much taxes are being evaded through the use of these tax havens. The government will not measure it. That is the point of this first step of taking this problem seriously.

The government has no trouble spending \$550 million on advertising—often for programs that have not even been passed—but it has cut \$250 million from the Canada Revenue Agency, obviously hindering the ability of that agency to do what is proposed. We think, instead of cutting employees from the compliance and enforcement divisions of the Canada Revenue Agency, that the Conservatives should begin investing additional resources to recover lost revenue. Maybe the way to get their attention is to use the word “invest”, because the rate of return if they did this would be enormous. We have seen that in many of the countries I have mentioned. I just wish the government would likewise wake up and smell the coffee.

The New Democratic Party made a number of recommendations in the finance committee, of which I am proud to be a member, when studying tax havens, the first of which was once again sadly not accepted by the government. This was in the supplementary report. It states:

That the federal government study and measure, to the greatest accuracy possible, Canadian tax losses to international tax havens and tax evasion, in order to determine the Canadian federal “tax gap”.

That is exactly what this motion would do. It is once again asking that the government get its hands around this very serious problem.

We also asked, among other things, that the government go after those who enable tax evasion, including accountants, lawyers, and other professionals. We have seen egregious examples where people have come from tax havens—Switzerland comes to mind, where bank secrecy has been the rule—to the United States and Canada and demonstrated to people, advised them, how to avoid paying their fair share of taxes, how to cheat the Canadian and American tax systems. It happened in Denmark recently. It is happening in a number of countries.

It seems obvious to me that we should make it harder for those who enable that to occur. We should bring the full force of the law down on those who do not pay their fair share and on those who enable people to not pay their fair share. That is another part of the problem that definitely needs to be addressed.

Government Orders

We believe it is absolutely essential that this motion be passed. We hope the government will see fit to join other countries like, as I have said, the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Australia, all of which have taken this very first step, to get our hands around and measure the problem so we can begin to give it the resources and expertise needed to take this issue seriously.

As we fill out our taxes at this time of year, I hope all Canadians will urge their government to do the right thing and stop this tax haven abuse once and for all.

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hiding income and assets in foreign jurisdictions to evade taxes is a very serious issue that undermines the integrity and fairness of Canada's tax system. I welcome the chance to outline the actions our government has taken to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

In private member's Motion No. 485, the member for Rivière-du-Nord has called on the government to "study and measure Canadian tax losses to international tax havens and tax evasion, in order to determine the Canadian federal 'tax gap'". The motion further states that the Parliamentary Budget Officer should provide an independent estimate of the Canadian federal tax gap arising from tax evasion and tax avoidance through the use of tax havens, based on information that would be supplied by Canada Revenue Agency.

It is important for everyone here to listen to this. Our government believes that there are better and more effective ways to deal with the problems than simply going ahead with another study. Broadly defined, the tax gap is the difference between the taxes that would be paid if all obligations were fully met in all instances, and those that are actually received.

As was mentioned in the first hour of debate, there is ongoing international discussion about the precision, accuracy, and utility of any methodology used to calculate the revenues that may be lost due to international tax non-compliance.

To state the obvious, international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance are all about keeping money out of the tax collector's hands. They often involve undeclared income and assets that are deliberately hidden from the government.

An important point to make, and one that bears repeating, is that estimating the size of the international tax gap is an extremely difficult and unreliable undertaking. In fact, the OECD echoed this thought when it said that the tax gap "is almost impossible to calculate" at a recent appearance before the finance committee. Why the opposition fails to grasp this I am not sure.

International tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance are certainly not new problems, nor are they unique to Canada. Recovering taxes lost to international tax non-compliance has been a significant challenge for most developed countries and a priority for their tax administrations for quite some time. Not only is failure to report income from domestic or foreign sources illegal, but it is also patently unfair to the vast majority of law-abiding Canadians who play by the rules and pay their fair share.

Our government has focused its efforts on discouraging tax evasion and tax avoidance from happening in the first place, and on identifying and dealing with it effectively when it does occur. We

believe that the best use of hard-earned taxpayer dollars is not to spend them on "guesstimating" the international tax gap, but rather to continue to pursue the strategy we laid out in Canada's economic action plan. Only the opposition could think "guesstimating" the tax gap is an effective use of taxpayer dollars.

In economic action plan 2013, we provided the CRA with additional tools to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. Many of the measures we announced, such as the offshore tax informant program, are now coming into effect. They build the CRA's capacity to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance to ensure tax fairness for all Canadians.

The offshore tax informant program was launched on January 15 of this year. Under this program, individuals with credible information about international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance may be eligible for a financial reward if the information they provide leads to the assessment and collection of additional federal taxes owing in cases of major international tax non-compliance.

In economic action plan 2013, we also streamlined the legal process by which the CRA obtains information concerning unnamed persons from third parties, such as banks. "Unnamed persons", in layman's terms, are those unidentified parties with whom the taxpayer, under audit or investigation, may have had dealings. These persons can include individuals as well as lists of clients or persons to whom the taxpayer has paid money.

The CRA may issue a requirement to obtain information or documents for any purpose relating to the legislation it administers. For example, it may issue a requirement to a financial intermediary to identify unnamed persons who hold foreign assets or who are involved in foreign financial transactions.

●(1915)

The measures we introduced in economic action plan 2013 will make it much faster to obtain information in cases of suspected tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

In economic action plan 2013, we also changed the reporting requirements for international electronic funds transfers of \$10,000 or more. As of January 2015, certain financial intermediaries will have to report these transactions to the CRA, just as they do now to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, FINTRAC.

With this new measure in place, the CRA will be better able to verify the accuracy of information provided by taxpayers who engage in foreign financial transactions.

Government Orders

In addition, we brought in changes to the reporting requirements for Canadians with foreign income or property worth more than \$100,000. These Canadians must now provide more detailed information about their offshore holdings to the CRA, including the names of specific foreign institutions and countries where offshore assets are located and the associated income earned on the offshore assets.

Also, the normal reassessment period has been extended to allow the CRA time to properly assess tax in cases where taxpayers have failed to report offshore income on their annual tax returns, and their offshore asset reporting forms have either been filed late or incorrectly.

To address the problem of non-compliance effectively, it is absolutely crucial to have good information at one's disposal. These new tools will strengthen the CRA's ability to identify and deal effectively with tax cheats.

Our government has invested \$30 million over five years to ensure that the CRA is in a position to take full advantage of the new measures we have introduced. This includes new resources of \$15 million through economic action plan 2013 and an additional \$15 million in reallocated CRA funds.

Half of the investment, or \$15 million, will be used to develop and implement the electronic systems the CRA will require to receive reports from banks and other financial intermediaries on international electronic funds transfers. The other half, that is the other \$15 million, will be used over the next five years to establish dedicated resources to address offshore non-compliance.

These resources will enhance the CRA's existing internationally focused audit and compliance programs. The CRA has established a new offshore compliance division to ensure a focused approach in implementing the measures contained in economic action plan 2013.

Here is another important point. The CRA has already made significant progress in identifying and pursuing taxpayers who attempt to hide their money in offshore jurisdictions. Since 2006, over 7,700 cases of offshore aggressive tax planning have been audited, which have been worth about \$4.6 billion in unpaid taxes.

Since 2007, the CRA has conducted audits of over 389 cases of high-net-worth individuals who were using sophisticated business structures and offshore arrangements to avoid taxes. It identified over \$305 million in unpaid taxes.

Our government's tough stance on international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance is having a ripple effect. We can point not only to the number of cases of international tax non-compliance we have identified but also to the number of taxpayers with previously undeclared income who have chosen to correct their tax affairs voluntarily.

The CRA's voluntary disclosures program has seen a significant increase in the number of disclosures received involving offshore accounts or assets. This number has grown from a little over 1,200 in 2006-07 to more than 4,000 in 2011-12. Voluntary disclosures accepted and completed revealed just under \$1.5 billion in unreported income and an estimated \$416 million in federal taxes owing.

I just want to conclude by saying that our government's targeted actions to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance are finding their mark. We will continue to pursue those individuals and businesses that attempt to shirk their tax obligations at the expense of hard-working Canadians who pay their fair share. That is why our government is taking action.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the debate on Motion No. 485, moved by my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord, which deals with tax evasion through the use of tax havens.

The use of tax havens robs the Canadian tax base of billions of dollars every year. The direct impact of tax evasion is felt by all Canadians, because the government has to do without significant income that could be used to improve services and social programs provided to all Canadians.

OXFAM International's 2013 estimates illustrate how very serious the problem is. According to that organization, at least \$18,500 billion is hidden by individuals who shelter their money in tax havens around the world. That represents a loss of more than \$156 billion in tax revenue for governments.

In Canada, independent estimates have indicated that the tax revenue lost to offshore tax havens might be somewhere between \$5 billion and \$7.8 billion a year. Obviously, it is a known problem. Nonetheless, observers note that the problem keeps growing.

A lobby group by the name of Canadians for Tax Fairness indicates that Canadians have now invested \$59 billion in Barbados, some \$30 billion in the Cayman Islands and \$20 billion in Luxembourg. Those are the top three tax havens that harbour Canadian capital. This topic is very relevant, especially given that we are debating this motion as Canadians are in the process of filing their income tax returns for 2013.

Canadians contribute honestly, as do small and medium-sized businesses. Canadian middle-class taxpayers and small and medium-sized businesses are carrying the majority of the tax burden in Canada. They are the ones who will pay the most taxes, while others hide their money in tax havens. Again, it is a question of justice and fairness for all Canadian taxpayers.

However, the fight against tax evasion is definitely not a priority for the Conservative government. It has demonstrated that on a number of occasions. In fact, since the Conservatives came to power, the number of investigators assigned to combatting tax evasion has dropped. Anything for a balanced budget, no matter what the cost or the consequences. The Conservatives have slashed the Canada Revenue Agency's budget by about \$250 million, which hinders the agency's ability to effectively hunt down tax evaders.

Government Orders

The government will try to convince us that their tactical anti-tax evasion squad is the answer. However, what they are not saying is that their squad is actually the result of a reallocation of previously announced funding to create a team of just 10 to 12 people tasked with finding tax cheats. That will not fix the problem.

I think that we need to determine the scope of the problem and then implement the measures required to effectively address this significant issue. That will take a certain amount of dedication, which our Conservative colleagues do not seem to have.

Given the scope of the problem, my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord moved this motion, which calls on the federal government to thoroughly study and assess the amount of tax revenues lost to tax havens.

This motion builds on the official opposition's recommendations during the Standing Committee on Finance's study on tax fraud and the use of tax havens. Unfortunately, as usual, the Conservatives flat out rejected our recommendations. I believe the NDP is the only party that truly has the will and the determination to win the fight against the use of tax havens.

Unfortunately, Canadians cannot count on the current government, just as they could not count on its predecessors. Every one of them has allowed the situation to degenerate. As I said, the problem is getting worse.

● (1925)

Why have they not done anything? The losses are tremendous, and taxpayers are the ones paying the price.

Taxpayers will have to pay a bigger share of the cost of government programs and services. Because of the loss of revenue, the government is cutting departmental budgets. That additional revenue could have maintained or saved many programs and services. This is terribly irresponsible of the government.

Billions of dollars are being lost every year, and sadly, the government does not seem to think this is a priority. We do not want an estimate that fails to acknowledge the full extent of the problem. We want the government to measure, as precisely as possible, how much tax revenue Canada is losing because of the use of tax havens. That is the only way to determine the extent of tax evasion in Canada. The government's failure to do anything about this problem is appalling.

The United Kingdom, the United States and even Australia, to name just these three allied countries, published official estimates of how much these tax havens are costing them. Why does the government not conduct a similarly thorough study in order to effectively address the problem? This shows that the government is doing absolutely nothing to assess or combat the use of tax havens. Unfortunately, the government has no intention of carrying out such a study. How can we seriously address a problem if the government refuses to properly assess it?

In order to determine how much tax evasion is going on, the motion calls on the Canada Revenue Agency to provide the Parliamentary Budget Officer with the information necessary to prepare an estimate.

The motion also calls on the Auditor General or the Parliamentary Budget Officer to provide estimates of the marginal revenue of additional Canada Revenue Agency resources in the area of tax evasion.

Finally, the motion requires the Auditor General to evaluate, on a regular basis, the success of the Canada Revenue Agency in prosecuting and settling cases of tax evasion.

The NDP believes that the Government of Canada is responsible for protecting its tax base. This is a matter of fairness and justice for all taxpayers. Everyone has to do their fair share, and those who use tax havens should not be allowed to avoid paying taxes on the money they are diverting through such means.

The motion is just the first step in the pressure the official opposition is going to put on the Conservatives so that they truly address this problem and work to combat tax evasion.

The government should be doing the opposite of what it is doing now. It should be ensuring that the Canada Revenue Agency has all the resources it needs to prevent tax evasion and, if necessary, investigate and prosecute cases of tax evasion. Ultimately, the government needs to take responsibility and ensure that the tax system is fair and equitable for all Canadian taxpayers.

The NDP will hound the government until it properly represents the interests of all Canadians and gives the Canada Revenue Agency the resources it needs to effectively combat the use of tax havens. That is this government's duty. Unfortunately, we cannot help but notice that it is failing in that duty.

● (1930)

[English]

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this chance to set the record straight and to assure members of our government's determination to protect the integrity of the Canadian tax system.

While I am sure that the member for Rivière-du-Nord is well intentioned in bringing his motion forward, I can assure him that it is both misinformed and misguided. Not surprisingly, the opposition is unaware of the tremendous amount of work under way to address international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance as part of our effort to aggressively combat offshore tax non-compliance.

Our government is very active on this file, both here at home and internationally. My colleagues have already highlighted the work being undertaken by the Canada Revenue Agency on the domestic front. They have underscored the many important measures this government has taken to address international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

Tonight I would like to focus my remarks on the success of our government's efforts to work with our international partners when it comes to responding to similar challenges. Before I do, however, I need to offer this primer to the opposition about the mechanics of measuring the tax gap and to explain why deriving such an estimate would be overly complex, inefficient, and a total waste of time.

Government Orders

It is naive to think that any jurisdiction can simply institute some new rules and that there would be instant compliance by those who purposely attempt to skirt a country's tax laws. Unfortunately, that is not how it works.

On that note, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, has concluded that attempting to measure the international tax gap would be impractical at best. To state the obvious, how can we accurately measure what we cannot see? How can we reliably estimate elements subject to taxation that have deliberately and, in some cases, through complex arrangements, been concealed outside our domestic borders? That is what this motion entails. It is nonsensical.

By their very nature, international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance are virtually impossible to quantify. At the risk of repeating myself, they involve undeclared income and assets that are deliberately and aggressively hidden from the view of tax authorities. So it is entirely understandable that Canada, like most OECD countries, does not waste time, effort, or taxpayers' money attempting to estimate the revenues lost to international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

That said, this does not prevent us from pursuing those who try to hide their money from the CRA in offshore jurisdictions of concern. On the contrary, working with our global colleagues, we are making measurable progress in identifying and addressing those who think they can get away without paying their fair share.

Lest there be any confusion, Canadians are required to pay tax on their worldwide income. Not reporting income from foreign sources is illegal. Individuals who attempt to avoid taxes by participating in schemes using offshore jurisdictions will find themselves liable for taxes, interest, and stiff penalties, and they could even be prosecuted for tax evasion.

To leave no doubt about it, Canada participates in international initiatives that tackle tax evasion around the globe. These include the elimination of banking secrecy and setting global standards for information exchange for tax compliance purposes. For instance, we are part of a worldwide force addressing international tax evasion through our participation in the OECD. We constantly exchange information with other nations through the OECD's task force on tax crime and other crimes. Apart from this important work, we have an extensive network of bilateral income tax treaties with many of our international partners, as well as bilateral tax information exchange agreements. The latter are referred to as TIEAs.

● (1935)

Canada has one of the most extensive tax treaty networks in the world. At the moment, there are 92 treaties and 18 tax information exchange agreements in force that provide for exchange of information. These 110 agreements give Canada a very broad exchange of information network.

As well, in late November of last year Canada ratified the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. The convention is the most comprehensive multilateral instrument available for all forms of tax co-operation to tackle tax evasion and avoidance, a top priority for all countries. The G20 has consistently encouraged countries to sign the convention, and most recently did

so at the G20 leaders summit in September 2013. Currently over 60 countries have signed the convention, and it has been extended to over 10 jurisdictions, including all G20 countries, all BRICs, almost all OECD countries, major financial centres, and a growing number of developing countries.

I also want to point out that in 2013, G8 and G20 countries committed to the automatic exchange of information as the new global standard. The technical work to develop this multilateral standard is currently being led by the OECD. This commitment was reinforced in the 2013 G20 Leaders' Declaration. The G20 members pledged to begin exchanging information on tax matters automatically among themselves by the end of 2015.

Therefore, for the opposition to erroneously suggest we are somehow failing to respond to these issues does a disservice to the collective efforts of not only our government but also to this country's important partners. There can be no debate about our joint commitment to resolve this matter.

Each year the CRA's understanding of international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance grows, and we have ensured that the CRA has the tools it needs to put this knowledge to work. The CRA's resources to audit aggressive international tax planning have increased steadily since 2006. This infusion of funding has enabled CRA auditors to gather intelligence and identify new ways to detect offshore tax avoidance arrangements.

These efforts are producing significant results. Since 2006, the CRA has audited over 7,700 cases of aggressive international tax planning. This has allowed it to identify nearly \$4.6 billion in additional taxes.

Equally impressive, over the same time period it has completed compliance actions on some 340 audit cases of high-net-worth groups that were using sophisticated business structures and offshore arrangements to avoid taxes. This led to the identification of more than \$195 million in unpaid federal taxes.

As one example, the agency identified 106 taxpayers with links to accounts in Liechtenstein with potential unreported income. All of them have since been subject to compliance action, and the CRA has reassessed over \$24 million in unpaid federal taxes, interest, and penalties.

The intelligence gathered from the compliance actions on these cases was especially beneficial, as it enabled the CRA to utilize tools such as unnamed persons' requirements on domestic financial institutions. This tool helped it to identify other participants in similar offshore activities. Intelligence gathered from the Liechtenstein files also permitted the CRA to learn the value of offshore holdings and the methods used to set up them up, along with the identity of promoters and representatives facilitating these arrangements.

Government Orders

Our government is active now in bringing these cases to conclusion and in finding more cases every day. The number of disclosures received involving offshore accounts or assets has increased from a little over 1,200 in 2006-07 to more than 4,000 in 2011-12.

This track record makes it clear that Motion No. 485 is not the best way to respond to the concerns it raises. While I salute the opposition for recognizing the importance of protecting Canada's tax system, I encourage all parties to defeat this unnecessary motion.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are always talking about tax havens as though they are illegal, but sometimes they are legal. What is certain is that this is always amoral for a society that is a victim of tax havens.

When a business or individual uses tax havens, the public purse is shortchanged, taxpayers are cheated and businesses that pay their taxes honestly are duped. It is unacceptable. Indeed, taxation is at the core of the sovereignty of a state or a nation like Canada. We are seeing the globalization of economic activity, and yet our laws and regulations are still fragmented, which is problematic. Of course, people are starting to talk about this here and there, but we have yet to see any real harmonization or cohesive measures among nations to avoid these things.

I would remind the House of the OECD criteria for identifying a tax haven: very low or no taxes; lack of transparency regarding its tax system; no exchange of tax information with other nations; and no substantial activities of the taxpayer in the country in question. This creates all kinds of internal and external problems. Tax competition among nations is one example. Economic competition among businesses from various countries is another example. Money laundering is yet another illustration of the problems created by tax havens. Basically, they destabilize the entire international financial system.

My colleagues spoke at length about the various problems this can cause and how much money could be involved. There was a lot of talk about Barbados. Barbados has a population of 300,000. That is fewer people than Quebec City. However, there is \$60 billion there. Does Barbados have \$60 billion worth of economic activity from Canada alone? I do not think so.

Now and again we must vote on a bill that seeks to prevent double taxation. On the surface, that is noble, but some people take advantage through the back door. When individuals or businesses are taxed in one place and not another, I have no problem with that.

However, we cannot allow this to become a back-door opportunity for tax evasion. If one of the two countries has a tax system that is close to zero, this will lead to tax evasion and it means that we are not achieving our goal of fairly distributing a country's and a province's financial burden among all taxpayers, regardless of whether they are individuals or businesses.

Taxes are not meant to be fun. They are meant to help administer the common good and to fund important activities. We can think of all of the federal jurisdictions we are responsible for in Ottawa, such as the environment, the army, defence, international relations, and so

on. This costs around \$275 billion. We have a lot of things to do, in addition to supporting our provinces when it comes to health care, post-secondary education and social transfers. We need fairness. We need to ensure that everyone who benefits from this country also contributes their fair share of the costs of running this society. Companies are able to hire educated people because someone somewhere helped pay for their education. That is just one example.

That is why I think that the motion moved by my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord is a good start.

• (1945)

To manage and evaluate a problem, we need to start by assessing the scope of it. We have implemented measures internationally. However, how can we assess how much needs to be done if we do not have a good idea of the task at hand?

Quite simply, we need to be responsible. It is a matter of being fair to all taxpayers.

• (1950)

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking all my NDP colleagues who were more than happy to speak to this motion and support it strongly.

In 2009, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, referred to a building in the Cayman Islands that housed 18,857 duly registered corporations. At the time he said, "That's either the biggest building in the world or the biggest tax scam in the world".

I listened closely to the comments by the members from the governing party and their objections to supporting this exercise, which urges the federal government to take serious measures to assess the federal tax gap arising from the use of tax havens and to accurately measure the Canadian tax revenues lost to tax havens.

In order to obtain reliable figures on the tax gap, the motion calls on the Canada Revenue Agency to provide the Parliamentary Budget Officer with the information necessary to prepare an estimate. We know full well that the Conservatives are at loggerheads with the Parliamentary Budget Officer and that they are not going to support this transfer of information.

I would like to start by saying that I completely object to the arguments put forward by members of the government about how difficult it would be to assess tax losses. Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, have done it. There is no reason that Canada cannot do the same.

To help government members reflect on the approach that could be taken, I would suggest that we need to look at the many tax treaties that Canada has signed with countries of convenience. Then we could assess the impact on the tax system for Canadians and Canadian businesses.

I am not just talking about the 92 treaties on double taxation that Canada has signed, notably with a number of countries that are considered tax havens, but I am also talking about the tax information exchange agreements that the government has signed since 2009 with 29 countries, 19 of which are considered countries of convenience.

There are gaps in our tax system and plenty of tax experts of all kinds are taking it upon themselves to guide our businesses towards tax havens.

According to some experts, Canada is losing up \$7.8 billion in taxes every year because wealthy individuals and big Canadian businesses are making use of tax havens.

A study by the socio-economic studies lab at the Université du Québec indicated that in 2009 and 2011, about 30 of the 100 largest Canadian companies had an effective tax rate of less than 10%. What is worse, 14 of them paid no tax, not one cent. When we take a closer look, a very high number of these companies have subsidiaries or affiliates in tax havens.

The statutory tax, that is, the combined federal and provincial tax rate for this kind of company in Canada, is 26.1%. Therefore, we have to wonder what portion of the CRA's tax loss is due to the use of tax havens by these major companies. We have to go over agreements with a fine-tooth comb to determine how they fail to prevent tax evasion and avoidance, and to find and close the loopholes that are eroding the Canadian tax base.

Another component of my motion calls on the Auditor General to evaluate, on a regular basis, the number of cases prosecuted by the CRA and the success of these prosecutions. It seems to me that this is also a priority.

The government boasts about having implemented 75 measures to fight tax havens. However, in the past six years in power, only eight people have been convicted of using tax havens.

• (1955)

Only eight people have been convicted out of the 4,000 people known to the CRA as a result of international disclosures concerning the use of tax havens.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 30, 2014, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

Adjournment Proceedings

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about a question I asked on February 4, 2014, if I remember correctly, about a report showing that air pollution related to oil sands development had been grossly underestimated in terms of its effects on health and the environment.

It is very important to take a close look at this factor. As everyone probably knows, oil sands development entails its share of risks for health and the environment. That is why we have to pay attention.

The report I mentioned was written by University of Toronto researchers. According to the researchers, air pollution related to oil sands development projects has been grossly underestimated. The effects on the environment and health have also been grossly underestimated.

To better understand the situation, I asked the Conservatives why they systematically oppose any attempt to conduct serious impact studies on health and the environment. We see that science is not being considered when it comes to the oil sands.

Hon. members may already be aware that the oil sands review committee did not appoint a scientific expert in environmental technologies. The person who was appointed to head this committee is a pioneer in the development of the oil sands industry, Eric Newell. For 14 years, Mr. Newell was the CEO of Syncrude, the world's largest producer of crude oil from oil sands. We thought we were going to get someone reliable to monitor the oil sands, but this appointment seems somewhat controversial to me.

What is more, a recent survey by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada shows that most federal government scientists believe that the cuts to their research and monitoring activities are weakening the government's ability to serve the public interest and that this is a step backward for environmental science. Once again, that is far from reassuring when it comes to the science that applies to protecting the environment and health in relation to the oil sands.

In fact, last September, hundreds of scientists demonstrated in Ottawa to express their dissatisfaction, calling on the Conservatives to stop muzzling them. When we see scientists taking to the streets to demonstrate—we do not see this often—that means the situation is critical. As we know, the omnibus budgets have slashed several environmental science measures. That will not help matters.

In short, the Conservative government likes to brag about its responsible development of our resources, but it takes scientists to be able to do the work properly. However, I realize that what I just said does not demonstrate that.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (2000)

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, I reject the very premise of the member's question because no government in Canadian history has done more in terms of the scientific monitoring of our resource sector than this Conservative government.

Second, I would like to thank the member for giving me the opportunity to share some of the great things our government is doing to protect the health of Canadians, along with our environment, when it comes to resource extraction.

The fact is that our government has been and will continue to be committed to the responsible development of Canada's oil. That is why, together with the Government of Alberta, we have implemented significant monitoring enhancements through the joint Canada-Alberta implementation plan for oil sands monitoring. This scientifically rigorous, comprehensive, integrated, and transparent undertaking monitors the environmental and cumulative impacts of oil sands extraction activities over an area covering roughly 140,000 square kilometres.

The joint Canada-Alberta implementation plan for oil sands monitoring has done the following: first, increased sampling frequency of air, aquatic life, and water; second, broadened monitoring for contaminants specific to the oil sands; third, introduced new monitoring sites for air, aquatic life, and water; and fourth, created an integrated sampling program to better understand the industry's impact on the regional environment.

The member opposite will be happy to hear that under joint oil sands monitoring, the actual levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, from all sources, including air, water, sediments, and organisms, are being measured. This enhanced monitoring began in the winter of 2010 and continues today.

The joint plan provides publicly available data in a timely standardized manner that is transparent and freely accessible to allow for independent scientific analysis and conclusions.

The fact that the University of Toronto used some data from the Canada-Alberta joint oil sands monitoring for its study shows that this objective of supporting independent scientific analysis is being achieved. The study contributes to an improved understanding of the sources of PAH emissions from the oil sands region.

With regard to this report, despite what the opposition may lead Canadians to believe, the study actually concluded that the measured levels are within acceptable regulatory levels.

Let us be clear. It is our Conservative government that has been beefing up environmental laws by setting higher safety standards and creating mandatory minimum sentences for individuals who violate environmental laws.

Environment Canada administers and enforces a number of acts and regulations that apply to the oil sands, including the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Fisheries Act, the Species at Risk Act, and the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

To facilitate the enforcement of federal laws and regulations our government opened an Environment Canada enforcement office in Fort McMurray in March 2012. This office constantly monitors the compliance of the regulated industry by inspections and has taken required enforcement action when necessary.

Our record speaks for itself. When it comes to responsible resource development, our Conservative government is on the right track.

• (2005)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, in 2011, the then environment commissioner, Scott Vaughan, criticized the “incomplete, mediocre or non-existent” data on the environmental impact of oil sands development.

Those are not my words. Another report by the Pembina Institute also underscored the need for better expertise on the risks of oil sands development and the need to conduct more comprehensive studies on the repercussions of that industry.

With three groups of scientists saying that the expertise is lacking, what will it take for the Conservative government to better protect the environment and the health of Canadians?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, again, I think it is necessary to provide clarity to the member opposite and the rest of Canadians.

The University of Toronto study examined the differences between industry-reported emission levels and the actual monitored emission levels. Let us be clear, this was not a study on public health. With regard to emissions, the study actually concluded that they are within acceptable regulatory levels.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to revisit my question on Bill C-23, the so-called fair elections act. I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for being here tonight to answer the question. I invite him to deviate from the prepared script and we will have a nice debate here this evening.

My question is about the fact that under this bill, the central poll supervisor would be chosen from a list provided by the candidate or the party that won the previous election in that riding. The problem is that there is no particular reason for making the central poll supervisor another partisan person. I know that there are already officers at each poll who are selected from lists provided by the party that finished first and the party that finished second. They are the deputy returning officers and the poll clerks. The idea is to make sure that at each poll there is someone representing each side of the fight so that at least there is someone from each side to make sure that things are fair. However, we do not need to make the situation more partisan.

Adjournment Proceedings

Let me explain a little bit about what the central poll supervisor does. In my riding of Kingston and the Islands, there are a couple of places I can mention, Portsmouth Olympic Harbour and Winston Churchill Public School. They have a large room with a number of poll stations. When that is the case, there is a central poll supervisor, who is selected by Elections Canada at the moment. That supervisor's job is to interpret rules, to make calls, and to adjudicate. In short, the supervisor is something like an umpire. If the umpire is partisan or is perceived to be partisan, I think that can hurt public faith in the elections process. It can erode trust and reduce the legitimacy of the government.

I know that the current government likes to talk about how it won the last election, so I think it should be interested in the legitimacy of its own election. If people are feeling that the political system is going to become more stacked against them, people who are already under stress economically, who are wondering if the economy is stacked against them, if the systems and the institutions we have in this country that make it a strong country are stacked against them, I think that is not good for the country. It is not good for the economy and the long-term health of this country.

Let me close with another analogy. Imagine a hockey playoff series, and the team that wins one game in the match gets to appoint the referee for the next game. This is kind of like what is happening.

What is even worse in this case is that the referee has no whistle. The reason for that, of course, in this analogy, is that under Bill C-23, another reason it is a bad bill, Elections Canada and the people who work to make sure elections are fair do not have the power to compel witnesses to testify. For example, in Kingston and the Islands, when someone impersonated my campaign manager, something that was documented, Elections Canada could not compel a witness to testify. When someone told a voter to go from one part of the city to a totally different part of the city to vote, we got some documentation, but Elections Canada could not compel people to testify.

This is like a referee with no whistle. That is why I think Bill C-23 is a bad bill.

• (2010)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands for his kind comments, inviting me to participate in the debate without talking points.

I noticed with interest, however, that the member opposite who was asking me to try to participate in a lively debate without any prepared talking points from the government was himself speaking from prepared notes. If he, at any time, wants to engage in a lively debate on an extemporaneous basis, I would be more than willing to accommodate him.

In fact, members in this place know, if they have been here any length of time, that I have never made a speech from a prepared text in my 10 years in this place, nor will I ever. I am a firm believer that if one cannot make a speech without prepared notes, whether it be 4 minutes, as in this case, or 20 minutes or even 30 minutes, one is probably in the wrong business.

That aside, let us deal with the issue at hand. The member opposite was saying that there is really no need to have a central poll supervisor recommended by any particular party. It has been a long-standing practice in elections over the last number of years that officials, whether they be deputy returning officers or poll clerks, are appointed from a recommended list of candidates from respective political parties.

The member opposite is quite right, the deputy returning officer is usually appointed from a recommended list from the party that finished first in that particular riding. The poll clerk in that riding is usually appointed from a recommended list from the second place party, and so forth.

Making another appointment of the central poll supervisor really does nothing more than extend the practice we have seen for literally decades in Canada.

I would also point out that, even though the member opposite feels this would be perhaps open to abuse, there are many checks and balances that we already have in place during elections. Not only do the poll clerk and the deputy returning officer tend to balance one another, but each party and each candidate has scrutineers throughout all polls. If there are any disputes, obviously the scrutineers would be the first ones on site to be able to challenge the ruling of any official on site.

I would also point out, with respect to both deputy returning officers and poll clerks, that even though they are normally appointed from a recommended list from various political parties, the returning officer has the ability to remove those officials if the returning officer feels there is just cause. The returning officer, as we all know, is appointed by Elections Canada.

The ultimate check and balance is the fact that Elections Canada and its appointee can remove even the central poll supervisor if they feel there is just cause. What would just cause be? Well, perhaps it would be if the central poll supervisor was trying to influence the outcome in any way, shape, or form.

That is why I suggest that there is simply no need to change the provisions we have contained in Bill C-23.

Finally, I point out that I am sure the situation is the same in Kingston and the Islands as it is in my riding back in Saskatchewan. Almost every single candidate I know of and every single riding I am aware of is usually contacted by Elections Canada towards the latter part of the election to see if there are additional names that could be supplied. Quite frankly, over the last 20 or 30 years, Elections Canada has had great difficulty in filling all of the positions, so it asks for additional names to come from parties.

That is the status of Bill C-23. That is why it makes sense. I ask my hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands to please consider that in his response.

• (2015)

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, I feel very fortunate to have a parliamentary secretary from the government who can actually debate without notes here. I want to thank him very much.

Adjournment Proceedings

I think the parliamentary secretary just gave me the best argument to counter his own arguments. He just said that Elections Canada goes and asks all the parties for additional names, so why not ask all the parties for potential central poll supervisors?

That is the perfect answer to my colleague's argument. There is no reason and nothing in anything that the parliamentary secretary said that argues against the idea of letting all the recognized parties in the House of Commons recommend central poll supervisors in all the ridings, and not having the simply limited to the incumbent party or the incumbent candidate.

That would be my answer, and I cannot believe that my hon. colleague from the government side has an answer to that argument.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, if my friend from Kingston and the Islands knew me better, he would know I have an answer for just about anything.

Let me again say that there is absolutely nothing unusual in the provisions contained in Bill C-23. It has been common practice for the party that finishes first in a particular riding to be able to appoint, or at least recommend, appointees to do election service on election day.

This is just a continuation of a practice that has been carried on for many decades. I think if my colleague went back in time, he would find out that this practice started when there was a Liberal government in place. Liberals were the ones that first determined or recommended and put provisions in their own Elections Act that the first place party should be the one with the ability to recommend candidates for election official positions.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems to be the order of the day that we speak extemporaneously, and I will do my best to do so.

I want to first express sympathy to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, who will have to leave his notes now and actually enter into debate. The debate is on the question I asked a few days ago, which has to do with two trends: the trend of greenhouse gases going up and the trend in the government's budgetary capacity to deal with greenhouse gases going down.

The government's own documents, which I will read from, shows that the trend line on greenhouse gases as of 2014 is on the way up. Most people focus on the fact that at the end of the trend line, the government is short by about 120-odd megatonnes of greenhouse gases in terms of its 2020 commitment, when it is supposed to have reduced it by 17%. If we apply it to 2014, the government is already 40 megatonnes behind the eight ball. Some may say that if the government were actually hitting the 2020 targets at this point, it would be 100 megatonnes behind the eight ball. For argument's sake, let us just leave it as 40 megatonnes behind the eight ball.

The other trend is again taken from the government's own documents, and it has to do with budgetary planned spending. This is the implementation of the budget. In 2014–15, the planned spending of the government on the climate change and clean air file is about \$254 million. In two years' time—in other words, two years down

that greenhouse gas megatonne line—the planned spending is \$54 million. That is a \$180-million reduction.

That is a \$180-million reduction when the trend line on greenhouse gases is going up and the government's capacity to deal with those gases is going down. What does that actually mean? Eighty per cent of Environment Canada's budget is personnel. The effect of that is that this year, it will have 699 people dealing with it. In the other two years, it will have 338, less than half, and 361 full-time person years will be lost. That capacity will be lost.

We have two trends. The trend is that greenhouse gases are taking off, the government is 40 megatonnes behind, and, simultaneously, it is hobbling itself and destroying its capacity to actually address this very serious issue.

I will be interested to hear how the parliamentary secretary, without his speaking notes, responds to this particular issue.

● (2020)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too want to start by expressing sympathy for any Liberal who asks a question about the environment here. We remember his past leader, Mr. Ignatieff. It is going to be historic because I am going to agree with a Liberal leader, although not the current one. Mr. Ignatieff actually said, "We didn't get it done".

My colleague asked how we engaged the department in real mitigation and adaptation activities. I spent some time on this speech, so I am going to be working from my notes, because there are so many good things and I do not want to miss anything.

Our government is committed to addressing the challenge of climate change and has followed through on that commitment with concrete action on both mitigation and adaptation. Our government is implementing a sector-by-sector regulatory approach and has started by addressing greenhouse gas emissions in two of the sectors of the Canadian economy with the largest emissions: transportation and electricity. Our government will build on these actions by working with provinces to reduce emissions from the oil and gas sectors while ensuring Canadian companies remain competitive.

Our government has also made significant investments to transition Canada to a clean energy economy and advance this country's climate change objectives. Since 2006, and I want to be very clear, we have invested over \$10 billion in green infrastructure, energy efficiency, clean energy technologies, and the production of cleaner energy and fuels.

Our approach is getting results. It is estimated that as a result of the combined actions of provincial, territorial, and federal governments as well as consumers and businesses, greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 will be 737 megatonnes. This is roughly 130 megatonnes lower than what they would have been under the Liberals.

Adaptation is complementary to our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, so we have taken actions to better understand climate change and to help Canadians prepare for climate-related impacts by making investments in priority areas. Since 2006, our government has invested \$235 million in domestic adaptation initiatives that support decision-making in key priority areas, including human health, the north and vulnerable communities, and economic competitiveness.

I would like to take this opportunity to provide some concrete examples of these activities.

To start, through Environment Canada's climate change prediction and scenarios program, the government continues to provide updated information about observed and projected changes in climate. This foundational work will allow the government to provide credible, scientifically sound information on climate change to support adaptation planning and decision-making in Canada. Through the Standards Council of Canada and with support from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, we are providing funding to adapt critical codes and standards in the north to address the effects of climate change on new and existing infrastructure.

We are also providing \$35 million to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada to support climate change and atmospheric research at Canadian post-secondary institutions. This funding will ensure that new knowledge is produced to address current and future climate change issues. By equipping Canadians with the information, knowledge, and tools they need in order to make informed decisions, we will be better able to manage risk associated with climate change and be better positioned to take advantage of new economic opportunities that emerge along the way.

Our record speaks for itself. We will never take lessons from the Liberals, whose climate change policy was international rhetoric followed by domestic inaction.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, indeed the record of the government does speak for itself. On the Conservatives' own numbers and trend lines, they are at least 40 megatonnes behind where they need to be in order to meet their own targets.

The default position of the current government and particularly of this minister is "whenever in trouble, blame the Liberals". I would

Adjournment Proceedings

just take note that the Liberals have not been in government for the last eight years, which has been a regrettable situation and contributes to the fact that we are in the mess that we are in, given the trend lines that are evident for anyone to read on greenhouse gases.

The other thing that I did not disaggregate was the inaction with respect to the oil and gas industry, and the fact that there are no negotiations going on and the fact that the Conservatives are budgeting for no negotiations.

● (2025)

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, our sector-by-sector regulatory approach is getting results.

Let us compare that to the Liberals. When they were in government, greenhouse gases—

Hon. John McKay: How many years ago was that?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, it was a long, long time ago.

When the Liberals were in government, they signed something called the Kyoto accord, and greenhouse gases under the Liberals actually went up 130 megatonnes. Therefore, they did worse than doing nothing: they actually increased greenhouse gases by 130 megatonnes.

Our approach is allowing the economy to grow 8.4%, and greenhouse gases are actually going down 4.8%. The only success that the Liberals actually had is naming a dog Kyoto.

When we look at the comparison between the Liberals and our government, it is obvious that we are getting results, and we are getting them without the \$20 billion carbon tax that the Liberals and the New Democrats would like to impose.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:25 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

SMILE Canada	
Mr. Butt	4465
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. Chicoine	4465
Pete McGarvey	
Mr. Stanton	4465
Daffodil Month	
Ms. Fry	4466
Halvor Moorshead	
Mr. Calandra	4466
Michel Picard	
Ms. Boivin	4466
The Environment	
Mr. Chong	4466
Kraft Hockeyville 2014	
Mr. Calkins	4466
Quebec City Cable Co-operative	
Ms. Michaud	4467
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. O'Toole	4467
Abortion	
Ms. Ayala	4467
St. Elias the Prophet Ukrainian Catholic Church	
Mr. Seeback	4467
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. Trudeau	4468
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. Gourde	4468
Democratic Reform	
Mr. Martin	4468
Battle of Vimy Ridge	
Mr. Gill	4468

ORAL QUESTIONS

Democratic Reform	
Mr. Mulcair	4468
Mr. Harper	4468
Mr. Mulcair	4469
Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Mulcair	4469
Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Mulcair	4469
Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Trudeau	4469

Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Trudeau	4469
Mr. Harper	4469
Mr. Trudeau	4469
Mr. Harper	4470
Mr. Mulcair	4470
Mr. Poilievre	4470
Mr. Mulcair	4470
Mr. Poilievre	4470
Mr. Mulcair	4470
Mr. Poilievre	4470
Mr. Mulcair	4470
Mr. Poilievre	4470
Mr. Mulcair	4471
Mr. Poilievre	4471
Mr. Mulcair	4471
Mr. Poilievre	4471
Mr. Mulcair	4471
Mr. Poilievre	4471
Mr. Mulcair	4471
Mr. Poilievre	4471
Ms. Ashton	4471
Mrs. Aglukkaq	4471
Mr. Dion	4471
Mr. Poilievre	4472
Mr. Lamoureux	4472
Mr. Poilievre	4472
Mr. Easter	4472
Mr. Poilievre	4472
Canada Revenue Agency	
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	4472
Ms. Findlay	4472
Mr. Rankin	4472
Ms. Findlay	4472
Mr. Angus	4473
Ms. Findlay	4473
Port of Montreal	
Mr. Boulerice	4473
Mr. Calandra	4473
International Development	
Mr. Lizon	4473
Mr. Paradis	4473
Employment	
Ms. Sims	4473
Mr. Kenney	4473
Mrs. Groguhé	4474
Mr. Kenney	4474
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	
Mr. Nantel	4474
Mrs. Glover	4474
Ms. Mathysen	4474

Mrs. Glover	4474	Canada Pension Plan	
Infrastructure		Mr. Van Kesteren	4479
Ms. Sgro	4474	Bill C-591. Introduction and first reading	4479
Mr. Lebel	4474	(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4479
Ms. Murray	4474	Criminal Code	
Mr. Lebel	4475	Ms. Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	4479
Veterans Affairs		Bill C-592. Introduction and first reading	4479
Mr. Chicoine	4475	(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4479
Mr. Gill	4475	Canadian Forces and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Former Members Personal Information Act	
Mr. Harris (St. John's East)	4475	Mr. Hawn	4479
Mr. Nicholson	4475	Bill C-593. Introduction and first reading	4479
Regional Development		(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4479
Mr. Toet	4475	Petitions	
Ms. Rempel	4475	Impaired Driving	
Fisheries and Oceans		Mr. Warawa	4479
Mr. Simms	4475	Rail Transportation	
Mrs. Shea	4476	Mr. Rafferty	4479
Air Transportation		International Development	
Ms. Freeman	4476	Mr. MacAulay	4480
Ms. Raitt	4476	Rail Transportation	
Industry		Mr. Angus	4480
Mr. Adler	4476	Agriculture	
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	4476	Mr. Aspin	4480
Canada Post		VIA Rail	
Mr. Benskin	4476	Mr. Godin	4480
Ms. Raitt	4476	Canada Post	
Intergovernmental Affairs		Mr. Godin	4480
Mr. Fortin	4476	Agriculture	
Mr. MacKay	4476	Mr. Hsu	4480
Points of Order		The Environment	
Oral Questions		Ms. May	4480
Mr. Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	4477	Tibet	
Mr. Fast	4477	Ms. Nash	4480
Corrections and Conditional Release Act		Rail Safety	
Mr. Easter	4477	Ms. Nash	4480
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Canada Post	
Global Centre for Pluralism		Mr. Simms	4481
Mr. Uppal	4478	Sex Tourism	
Government Response to Petitions		Mr. Albrecht	4481
Mr. Lukiwski	4478	Corporate Social Responsibility	
Committees of the House		Ms. Charlton	4481
Public Accounts		Mining Industry	
Mr. Christopherson	4478	Mr. Plamondon	4481
Government Operations and Estimates		Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Dusseault	4478	Ms. Mathysen	4481
Criminal Code		Canada Post	
Mr. Hoback	4478	Mr. Sullivan	4481
Bill C-590. Introduction and first reading	4478	Asbestos	
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	4479	Mr. Martin	4481
		Shark Finning	
		Mr. Donnelly	4482
		Mining Industry	
		Mrs. Groguhé	4482

VIA Rail	
Mrs. Groguhé.....	4482
Durham Region Federal Lands	
Mr. Kellway.....	4482
Agriculture and Agri-Food	
Mr. Kellway.....	4482
Public Transit Operators	
Mr. Mai.....	4482
The Environment	
Mr. Hyer.....	4482
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	4482
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lukiwski.....	4483

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Ways and Means	
Motion No. 12	
Mr. Valcourt.....	4483
Motion for concurrence.....	4483
(Motion agreed to).....	4483
Privilege	
Remarks by Minister of State for Finance—Speaker's Ruling	
The Speaker.....	4483
Message from the Senate	
The Speaker.....	4484
Points of Order	
Corrections and Conditional Release Act	
Mr. Easter.....	4484
Mr. Van Loan.....	4485
Mr. Julian.....	4486

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Victims Bill of Rights Act	
Mr. MacKay.....	4487
Bill C-32. Second reading.....	4487
Ms. Boivin.....	4490
Mr. Lamoureux.....	4490
Ms. May.....	4491
Mr. Dechert.....	4491
Ms. Boivin.....	4491
Mr. MacKay.....	4494
Ms. May.....	4494
Ms. Péclet.....	4495

Mr. Dechert.....	4495
Mr. Cotler.....	4495
Mr. MacKay.....	4498
Ms. Péclet.....	4499

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Transparency of Payments Made by Mining, Oil and Gas Corporations to Foreign Governments Act	
Bill C-474. Second reading.....	4499
Motion negatived.....	4500
Employees' Voting Rights Act	
Bill C-525. Report stage.....	4500
Motion No. 1 negatived on division.....	4501
Motion Nos. 2 to 6 negatived.....	4502
Mr. Calkins.....	4502
Motion for concurrence.....	4502
Motion agreed to.....	4503
Bill C-525. Third reading.....	4503
Motion agreed to.....	4504
(Bill read the third time and passed).....	4504

Points of Order

Oral Questions	
Mr. Julian.....	4504
Mr. Fast.....	4505
Mr. Cannan.....	4505

Tax Evasion

Motion.....	4505
Mr. Lamoureux.....	4506
Mr. Rankin.....	4506
Mr. Adler.....	4508
Mr. Chicoine.....	4509
Mr. Carmichael.....	4510
Mr. Blanchette.....	4512
Mr. Dionne Labelle.....	4512
Division on motion deferred.....	4513

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Environment	
Mr. Choquette.....	4513
Mr. Carrie.....	4514
Democratic Reform	
Mr. Hsu.....	4514
Mr. Lukiwski.....	4515
The Environment	
Mr. McKay.....	4516
Mr. Carrie.....	4516

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>