



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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VOLUME 145 • NUMBER 054 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, June 2, 2010**

—  
**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 2, 2010

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1405)

[English]

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

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA

**Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend Catholic Archdiocese of Regina is celebrating its 100th anniversary. For a century now, the Archdiocese has united individuals and families in their spirituality and in their commitment to the community.

The Catholic faithful in Regina offer services to the entire community, including outreach for the poor and homeless, family services, education, and of course spiritual guidance. As its centennial song states, “They toiled and laboured, in field and factory, to work God's creation and make it bear fruit, their joy was unbounded as God blessed their efforts and smiled on their labours, a great faith took root”.

I hope all members of the House will join me in wishing the Catholic Archdiocese of Regina a happy 100th.

[Translation]

I am proud to live in a country that welcomes the contribution of all faith communities. There was a time when belonging to certain religions was grounds for exclusion from public office. As I join in the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the Catholic Archdiocese of Regina, I am grateful that those times are over.

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[English]

### SYDNEY HARBOUR

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to bring attention to a rally for the dredging

of Sydney Harbour. The rally will take place tomorrow evening at 6 p.m. next to the big fiddle on Sydney's waterfront. Cape Bretoners will rally for their harbour to have it dredged one way or another.

Shovels in hand, young and old alike will be there to support the greatest economic opportunity of a generation for Cape Breton, an opportunity that can only occur with the support of the federal and provincial governments, the kind of support that will allow Cape Breton to fly on its own.

The dredging of Sydney Harbour would allow our island to live up to its potential, to provide jobs and opportunities for our young people.

I encourage everyone to come out, shovels in hand, in support of dredging the Sydney Harbour. Let us show Ottawa and Halifax that Cape Bretoners are shovel ready.

I strongly recommend that the members of the government pay attention and if they may, come down and bring us a cheque.

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[Translation]

### DR. RÉJEAN HÉBERT

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight the exceptional career of a doctor in my riding, Dr. Réjean Hébert. Dr. Hébert, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the Université de Sherbrooke, is a man of many accomplishments.

Since he took over the faculty seven years ago, the number of professors and graduates has doubled. The applied cancer research pavilion will soon open, and the faculty is now known around the world as a result of his work in Uruguay, Mali and now Haiti.

In September, Dr. Hébert will leave the Eastern Townships to work for the Caisse nationale de solidarité pour l'autonomie des personnes âgées et des personnes handicapées in France for one year. On behalf of my constituents in Compton—Stanstead, I wish him the best of luck in his new position. My fellow constituents and I know that France can only stand to gain from the remarkable expertise of Dr. Hébert.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' so-called patient wait times guarantee is failing Canadians.

Just last week, in my hometown of Hamilton, we learned that cancer care is failing to meet key targets. Waits for treatment are too long, too few people get radiation therapy, the number of patients in clinical trials is shockingly low, too many die in hospital and not enough are screened for early detection of cancer.

The Conservatives have abdicated responsibility for the problem by recommending that patients take their health care providers to task, but that is passing the buck.

There is a direct link between poor health outcomes and the government's poor record on health care reform. We know that poverty and disease are closely linked, yet the government has done nothing to fight poverty. Research funding is crucial to support clinical trials, but the government is not paying its fair share. There is a serious shortage of oncologists, nurses and technologists, and yet there is insufficient funding. Families want end-of-life care for their loved ones, but palliative care and pain management are not even on the government's radar.

Excellence in health care requires all of us to work together. The federal government must lead by enforcing the Canada Health Act and ensuring that our health care system is universal, accessible, portable, comprehensive and publicly administered.

Cancer patients and their families deserve nothing less.

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[Translation]

**TOUR DE BEAUCE BIKE RACE**

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the 25th annual Tour de Beauce will take place from June 15 to 20. Since 1986, this sporting event has continued to gain recognition and increase in popularity. The Tour de Beauce now attracts top cyclists from the four corners of the globe.

During this event, cycling enthusiasts of all ages will have the opportunity to watch numerous talented Canadian cyclists compete against hundreds of other cyclists from around the world. I am proud that my government has helped fund the Tour de Beauce.

I would also like to thank the Canadian Cycling Association, the organizers and the numerous volunteers who, year after year, work tirelessly to set up this major international race. Thanks to their efforts, Beauce has earned a prominent spot on the international cycling circuit.

I would like to welcome all those who will be coming to visit Beauce and attend the cycling event.

● (1410)

[English]

**ALS AWARENESS MONTH**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, June is ALS Awareness Month, recognizing people living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, often referred to as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, and their supportive families.

ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease affecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord and severely impacting voluntary muscle action. ALS causes difficulty in speaking, increased muscle weakness and total paralysis in its later stages. Approximately 3,000 Canadians currently live with this devastating disease. Sadly there is no cure.

We need a national brain strategy to address not only ALS, but also other chronic brain diseases. We must raise awareness, ensure caregiver support and increase research dollars to improve the quality of life of those living with these diseases and to find new treatments and cures.

Together we can provide hope to individuals who bravely battle brain disease and to their families that lovingly support them.

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**STEEL INDUSTRY**

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the steel industry is critical to Canada's economy and indeed our entire manufacturing sector, given its sheer magnitude and strategic importance.

Steel is a \$14 billion industry in the country, generating some 30,000 direct and 120,000 indirect jobs. It is also essential to our transportation, construction, industrial, natural resources and energy sectors.

As chair of the steel caucus, which is comprised of fellow MPs from all parties, it is my pleasure to recognize representatives of the Canadian Steel Producers Association who are on the Hill this week speaking about new steel. We are using technology to produce steel that is thinner, lighter and stronger, innovations that help make Canada's steel producers more globally competitive.

Another key advantage is a highly skilled workforce. I was pleased to announce a couple of weeks ago in Hamilton that the Government of Canada would provide support for worker retraining and new apprenticeships through the workforce development initiative of the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress: New steel, new jobs, new opportunities and a great economic future.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we were saddened to hear that nine people were killed and more than thirty injured during an Israeli military operation in international waters against a convoy sailing from Cyprus to bring humanitarian aid to distressed residents of Gaza. We wish to convey our sincere condolences to the families of those who died and to their countries, especially Turkey.

The Bloc Québécois condemns the Israeli army's action and is calling for an impartial investigation. We strongly condemn the Conservative government's failure to express clear support for the United Nations Security Council's declaration calling for an impartial and transparent investigation conforming to international standards, particularly given Canada's bid for a seat on the Security Council. Are we to understand that Canada would not have voted in favour of such a declaration had it been a member of the Security Council?

Let us hope that justice will soon be done and that civilian populations in that part of the world will no longer suffer.

\* \* \*

[English]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been strangely quiet when it comes to ensuring Canadians get fair representation in the House of Commons. It turns out they have been working on a secret plan to take seats away from some provinces to give them to others.

The member for Scarborough—Rouge River took time out from his lobbying activities to spill the beans in an email to supporters earlier this week. The Liberal plan is to take seats away from five provinces: one from Newfoundland and Labrador; two from Nova Scotia; three from New Brunswick; three from Manitoba; and four from Saskatchewan.

Contrast this with our government's plan that brings Canada's fast growing provinces closer to representation by population that respects the seat counts of slower growing provinces.

I call on all members of the House to oppose the Liberal plan to diminish the representation of my province and so many others.

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**HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the attacks in Lahore, Pakistan last week against the Ahmadi Muslims in that country. The attacks, which occurred during Friday prayers, show the absolute cruelty and extremism of the Taliban attackers. Members of the Ahmadi Muslim faith have endured more than 30 years of persecution in Pakistan.

[Translation]

In 1973, Ahmadi Muslims were declared non-Muslims in Pakistan and since 1984, the law prohibits them from identifying themselves as Muslims. Ahmadi Muslims have been confronted by angry

crowds and have been attacked many times in the past, but they had never been subjected to such coordinated, malicious attacks as those of last Friday.

• (1415)

[English]

I stand with the Ahmadiyya Muslims in my community and all around the world in condemning this brutal, cruel attack and share their concerns for the safety and well-being of their fellow worshippers. This type of intolerance and extremism has no place in our society and I encourage all—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS**

**Mr. Daniel Petit (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when it is time to stop violent criminals from attacking our families, Bloc Québécois members simply sit on their hands. We have seen proof of this on many occasions.

For the Bloc leader and his colleagues, it is much easier to simply side with criminals than to stand up for victims and their families. The Bloc's laxity when it comes to justice is quite disconcerting and does not serve the interests of victims in Quebec. For the Bloc Québécois, it is much easier to criticize our justice initiatives than to take concrete action for the welfare of victims of crime.

We in the Conservative Party are the only ones who really care about the victims of crime and the future of our children.

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[English]

**CANADA EXCELLENCE RESEARCH CHAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in so many ways, women face inequality in our country today. Nowhere is this more evident than in the recent awarding of the 19 Canada Excellence Research Chairs, a new and prestigious honour given to 19 men and not one woman.

While the minister stated that he was shocked, and certain questions were asked, the answers have been inadequate and the action plan to do better non-existent.

The failure to recognize women as Canada Excellence Research Chairs is the end result of an ideology put forward by the Conservative government to interfere in and sideline broader research. It is also a result of the government's damaging view that gender equality is not important. The glass ceiling is as strong as ever and the government is a fan of the old boys' club.

We need leadership and an innovative agenda when it comes to post-secondary education and the funding for research. A guiding principle for us in the NDP is that both women and men ought to be not just equal participants, but leaders too.

*Oral Questions***ELIMINATING ENTITLEMENTS FOR PRISONERS**

**Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have yet again shown that they care more about criminals than about victims or taxpayers.

Yesterday, the Liberal MP for Ajax—Pickering shamefully defended prisoners getting taxpayer funded old age security benefits. The Liberals should listen to Canadians like the president of Families Against Crime and Trauma, the B.C. government, the chief constable of the Vancouver Police Department and the almost 50,000 Canadians who signed the Canadian Taxpayers Federation petition to end entitlements to prisoners.

He should also listen to Ray King or Sharon Rosenfeldt, both of whose sons were murdered by Clifford Olson. Yesterday, Ms. Rosenfeldt stated:

It's great to see that this government is putting victims and taxpayers first ahead of criminals. The suspension of OAS benefit payments to inmates does just that.

The Liberals should stop listening to prisoners and instead listen to Canadians who want this bill to pass.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**CANADIAN MUSLIM FORUM PARLIAMENTARY DAY**

**Mr. Richard Nadeau (Gatineau, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a number of representatives of the Arab and Muslim communities are here today to take part in this parliamentary day organized by the Canadian Muslim Forum. They again want to express their appreciation for the country that has welcomed them and their deep desire to play an active role in every aspect of society.

This event provided an opportunity to present the findings of a study on Islamophobia in Canada. The representatives wanted to express to us their concerns about Islamophobia and its potential impact on Arab and Muslim groups.

We hope this day will be a stepping stone to a society based on mutual respect.

Arab and Muslim groups can count on the support of the Bloc Québécois in their efforts to participate fully in our society.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

[*English*]

**MARIAN MALONEY**

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, retired senator, Marian Maloney, passed away on Saturday. Born in 1924 and appointed to the Senate in 1998, she served as an inspiration to us all. She was an example of what it meant to be a loyal, passionate and hard-working Liberal. Her dedication to women in politics knew no bounds.

She tirelessly worked to raise funds for women entering federal politics through the Judy LaMarsh Fund and she mentored those already in politics as president of the Ontario Women's Liberal Commission and as chairwoman of the Women's National Liberal Caucus.

A matriarch to our party, she has left her unforgettable mark on women on and off Parliament Hill.

Today, Senator Maloney's funeral will take place in Toronto. Many of us in Ottawa whose lives she touched cannot be there in person but we will be there in spirit.

For all her contributions to the Liberal Party and to Parliament, we thank her and say, "Job well done, Marian".

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**FIREARMS REGISTRY**

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at the public safety committee, the Liberals once again put their arrogance on full display.

Doing the Liberal leader's bidding, the member for Ajax—Pickering introduced a motion to reject Bill C-391 and keep the wasteful, ineffective long gun registry as is.

This House, including eight Liberals and twelve NDP MPs, voted in support of this bill at second reading. For the Liberals to introduce this motion shows their lack of respect and blatant disregard of their members and their constituents.

First, the Liberal leader whips his members' votes. Now, the Liberals introduce a motion that ignores the votes of Liberal MPs who voted in favour of Bill C-391, like the member for Yukon.

When it comes to the long gun registry, we either vote to keep it or vote to scrap it. It is that simple.

When the Liberal leader attempts to ignore the will of his members' constituents, he proves that he is not in it for Canadians. He is only in it for himself.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[*Translation*]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be paying more than \$1 million for every minute of meetings of G8 and G20 heads of state. The Conservatives' convoluted explanations do not hold water.

At the Summit of the Americas, a comparable event with 34 heads of state, 16,000 delegates, and thousands of protesters, held in downtown Quebec City, security costs were \$34 million, according to Treasury Board.

Why do we have to pay 30 times as much for an event organized by the Conservatives?

[*English*]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, regrettably, security costs money. We do not want to spend this money but we need to spend this money. If we compare this to the summit that Japan hosted for just the G8, we see that its security costs were more than \$1.5 billion.

We have an important responsibility to keep people safe and ensure that people and property in the city of Toronto and the great region of Muskoka are safe. We will do everything we can in reasonable terms to do that.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, incompetence also costs money.

The Conservatives say that the Olympics was a smaller event than the summits. That is just laughable. There were over one million tourists in Vancouver for the Olympics. Clearly, they were using the summits as political plums for the ShamWow minister until they realized they had made a big mistake and had to move the G20 to Toronto. That big mistake is costing Canadians \$1 billion to date. It is simply obscene.

Will the government admit that its partisanship and sheer incompetence are responsible for this billion dollar boondoggle?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will point to the security costs for the London Olympics. It will cost London some \$2.5 billion Canadian for these Olympics. There will be more delegates participating in the G8 and G20 summits than there were Olympic athletes in the city of Vancouver.

I will be very clear when I say that these are not costs we want to spend. These are costs we need to spend. We will do our level best to ensure that Canadians and those doing important work at the summits are safe.

• (1425)

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the billion dollars squandered by the Conservatives could have paid for 34,000 hip operations or 17,000 nurses.

It would have covered the cost of the gun registry for 250 years.

The Conservative's incompetence is now absolutely clear: \$1 billion has been sunk into three days of security. The Canadian public is outraged.

Do the Conservatives realize what their incredible incompetence is costing Canadians?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us not look at a partisan response. Let us look at what an officer of this Parliament, the Auditor General, had to say about this issue. She said:

We may think that the meetings only last for a few days, but all the preparations involve extensive planning, extensive coordination for months before that, and I think we have to be very careful.

That is what the independent Auditor General said.

We are spending only what we need to spend. We want to ensure that the leaders and the literally thousands of people who will be accompanying them are safe. We will spend only what is absolutely required.

## Oral Questions

### ETHICS

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1997, taxpayers gave Brian Mulroney a \$2.1 million settlement after he swore under oath that he had no business dealings with Schreiber. Canadians deserve that money back with interest. Compounded over 13 years, it would amount to over \$4 million today. That is enough to fund the Toronto gay pride parade for the next 10 years.

Why will the Conservative government not recover these funds that Mr. Mulroney had no right to in the first place? Why will—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, Chief Justice Oliphant tabled his report. I am sure all members of the House will join me in thanking him for all the work he put into that and all those who worked with him.

The recommendations in that report are currently being reviewed by the appropriate authorities. The government will act on any recommendations from those appropriate authorities.

**Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe the justice minister is not the best person to decide if the government will try to get Canadians their money back. He may be conflicted. He served for over nine years in Mr. Mulroney's caucus and Mr. Mulroney appointed him parliamentary secretary twice.

It is reported that the Justice Department's efforts to explore recovering the settlement paid to Mr. Mulroney were shut down. Who ordered the Justice Department to stop trying to find a way to get Canadians their money back, and why did they do that? Why did they shut down the Justice Department?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Again, Mr. Speaker, just this week we have had a report by Justice Oliphant, looking into a number of matters. I point out to the hon. member that recommendations have been made and that is appropriate for an extensive report like this. The appropriate authorities are having a look at it and the government has already indicated that it will act on any recommendations from the appropriate authorities.

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[Translation]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when asked whether he supported an impartial, transparent investigation conforming to international standards to shed light on the Israeli raid on a humanitarian flotilla, the Prime Minister did not answer. Yet the United Nations Security Council called for such an investigation in an official statement.

Will the Conservative government clearly say it supports the UN's demand?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

As the Prime Minister stated in the House yesterday, Canada deeply regrets the loss of life and the injuries suffered off the coast of Gaza on May 31, and extends sympathies to the families.

In fact, in response to the direct question today, Canada does support a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation into this tragic incident, but at the same time, we call on all states and international bodies not to rush to judgment before all of the information is known.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we got an answer today. We did not get one yesterday. I will therefore press on. The UN Security Council also called for compliance with resolutions 1850 and 1860, which require that humanitarian aid and food flow regularly to Gaza.

Will the Conservative government pressure Israel to comply with the two UN Security Council resolutions?

• (1430)

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

Of course, Canada is concerned about the humanitarian situation facing the people of Gaza, notwithstanding the fact that Gaza is governed by a terrorist entity.

We strongly encourage all parties to work together to ensure that humanitarian aid is delivered to the people of Gaza, but at the same time, Canada understands fully and sympathizes with Israel's legitimate security concerns.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when asked about the fact that Israel still has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the government said we should be more concerned about signatories to the treaty that do not comply with it, practically suggesting that Iran should not have signed this treaty. It is ridiculous.

Will the Prime Minister, who wants a seat on the UN Security Council, promise to demand that countries that have signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty comply with it and that those that have not signed the treaty, like Israel, sign it?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is heartened by the number of states which have indicated they will indeed vote for our candidacy for the non-permanent seat on the Security Council and it is because of the leadership which we will demonstrate at the G8 and G20 conferences.

As my colleague knows, nuclear non-proliferation is one of the three pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by all countries, signatories and otherwise.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, by blindly aligning itself with American and Israeli policies, the Conservative government is tying its own hands and too often is prevented from taking a stand. For example, the government described the Israeli army assault as an "incident".

How can the Conservative government run for a seat on the UN Security Council when it cannot show leadership and demand that all countries comply with international law?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, Canada does call on all parties to the conflict in the Middle East to exercise restraint. As recently as three days ago when the Prime Minister of Israel was visiting, Canada has been calling on Israel and the Palestinian authority to continue to work with the United States to return quickly to negotiations toward a comprehensive, durable and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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**OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the ecological disaster unfolds in the Gulf of Mexico, the House voted unanimously yesterday to make sure that such a catastrophe could not happen here in Canada. The House instructed the government to conduct immediately a thorough review of all of our laws and regulations regarding the development of unconventional sources of oil and gas, including oil sands, deepwater recovery and shale gas.

It has to be a credible review, independent of the NEB. When will the review begin?

[Translation]

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the leader of the New Democratic Party that the National Energy Board has started a review of its regulations pertaining to project management and offshore drilling. That announcement was made on May 11. The whole process will be reviewed by an independent regulator with a 50-year history. Let us be clear: no project will be allowed to go ahead in Canada until the board is satisfied that the safety and security of workers will be ensured and that the environment will be protected.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, members are unanimous. Consultations with all affected stakeholders, both public and private, must be as extensive as possible. The process has to be transparent, and a clear time frame has to be set. The goal is to ensure that Canada has the strongest environmental and safety rules in the world.

When will we get that report? When will consultations begin?



*Oral Questions*

●(1435)

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, acting diligently, the National Energy Board announced on May 11 that it would be reviewing all its offshore drilling requirements. The public, and indeed everyone, will be invited to provide input. This will be done in an open and transparent manner, as we have said repeatedly. So, I suggest that the leader of the New Democratic Party stay tuned to what is going on at the NEB because consultations are forthcoming. The board is in action mode, here and now.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the early 1990s, outgoing Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney got involved with shady deals. Unfortunately, there were brown envelopes stuffed with cash handed over in hotel rooms for services that may or may not have been connected to the Airbus contract.

Revenue Canada gave him a generous tax break on these suspicious payments. Further, to reward him for this unethical behaviour, the Liberal government made a payment of \$2.1 million.

The taxpayers want the Mulroney money back. When will that happen?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we had an extensive report tabled just this week that covers hundreds of pages looking into a number of matters. As is appropriate any time we receive a report like that, it is appropriate that various authorities have a look at that, and have a look at those recommendations. As I indicated, the government is prepared to act on recommendations from the appropriate authorities.

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**INTERNATIONAL AID**

**Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation is being left in limbo by the Conservatives. Awaiting what will likely be the end of its funding, it has begun to lay off workers and put its office space up for sale. The head of Oxfam Canada has called this latest ideological cut by the Conservatives “very, very disturbing”.

What can the government not tolerate about constructive criticism and champions of human rights? What does it say about the character of our Prime Minister when those who watch out for the poor of the world have to watch their own backs?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government is making sure that its international aid is going to make a difference. It is about the best use of taxpayers' dollars. It is about effectively delivering results for those who are living in extreme poverty.

It is about providing \$5.85 billion to UNIFEM, which I announced yesterday, so that it can be out in the field, fighting for the equal rights of women and children. UNIFEM is making sure

they have fair access to property and making sure they are represented properly within legal systems. This is the—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Guelph.

**Mr. Francis Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to the government's smears, CCIC is accountable, transparent and gives world-renowned value for our money. These cuts are from a Prime Minister who silences any group that does not pass the Conservatives' ideological test, and CCIC is his latest victim.

Over 100 aid groups work with CCIC to ensure aid is effective in eliminating poverty in the world, promoting human rights and social justice. CCIC serves the underprivileged and speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves.

How can the government simply cut them off, and who is its next victim?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the proposal from CCIC is under review, but I want to tell the House about the commendations this government is receiving.

In fact, we have an organization that is applauding the federal government's review of how it spends its international aid. It is saying this kind of decision-making is long overdue. We have many NGO organizations and partners that are actually feeding children who are starving, that are actually improving the health of mothers and children in sub-Saharan Africa and protecting the rights of women and children in the Congo. That is—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

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●(1440)

**MATERNAL HEALTH**

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 26 the Minister of International Cooperation misled the status of women committee on Canada's international commitments regarding maternal health. Quoting paragraph 8.25 of the Cairo plan of action, the minister inexplicably skipped a key sentence that calls on all governments to “deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern”.

When will the government stop picking and choosing which of Canada's commitments it will uphold and which it will not?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to the Cairo plan of action, and in fact that is why we are making decisions according to the Paris accord and the Accra plan.

I have read the actual Cairo action plan and that is how I can assure that we are following the internationally accepted practices of helping women and children around the world.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is following it selectively. The Conservative government continues to pick and choose. It turned a blind eye to the 13% of maternal deaths which occur as a result of unsafe abortions, 70,000 women each year, one woman every eight minutes, and to the orphaned children of these mothers who are 10 times more likely to die prematurely.

On what basis does the Conservative government decide which mothers and which children in the developing world shall live and which shall die?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government wants to ensure its international aid is making a difference. In fact, I met with representatives from the Mali government and they told me that when we increased our assistance to them, that represented 20% of their national budget. They put that forward to help the health of women. Now 80% of the women in Mali have birth attendants when they give safe delivery to their children. This is the kind of difference and this is the kind of action we want to see.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SECURITIES**

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in addition to acting against the wishes of the National Assembly, the government is planning to make life more difficult for Quebec businesses, which now comply with the Autorité des marchés financiers.

By destroying the passport system, the government will be splintering and balkanizing a system that functions very well, according to the OECD. The government will force Quebec businesses to join the securities commission in Toronto. It will be a matter of do or die.

Will the government admit that it is eliminating the passport system with its new plan? Eliminating the passport system—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that we are not eliminating anything. We are actually adding to the accountability, the credibility of Canada's financial system through a voluntary system, a Canadian securities regulator.

I know the Bloc has a lot of trouble thinking that something Canadian is good for this country, but most Canadians do. We are protecting the investments of Canadians. We are encouraging foreign investment into this country to help grow our businesses. That is the right thing to do and I would encourage the Bloc to stop preventing that from happening.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we should forgive him because he does not know what he is doing. The voluntary system is just a show, a sham. Eliminating the passport system will create conflict among the securities authorities and will increase fees for companies that want to do business with four or five

commissions. It is shoving the idea of doing business in Toronto down everyone's throats. The government is starting fires everywhere—Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba—and it wants us to call Toronto's firefighters. Is that the deal? Come on, it makes no sense.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, can I tell him what does not make any sense? It is the argument he just gave.

It is a voluntary system. I will say this a little slower: it is a voluntary system.

I would encourage Bloc members to go back to their supporters and remind them what this is all about. It is a voluntary system to help protect against some of the bad things that have happened to those people in Quebec who have been caught in scams. We need to put protection in place for them. We need to encourage investment in all of Canada.

\* \* \*

● (1445)

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Minister of Justice, the same man who agreed to pay the \$2 million to Brian Mulroney, figures that there are enough new facts in the Oliphant report to warrant having the Justice Department look at the possibility of recovering the money paid to Brian Mulroney.

Contrary to what he said in 1997, the former Conservative prime minister did have business dealings with the arms dealer.

My question is clear: will the Minister of Justice try to recover the \$2 million from Brian Mulroney, yes or no?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the dealings of the individuals the hon. member is referring to have been the subject of a report by Justice Oliphant, who tabled his report this week. Again, as I have indicated, the appropriate authorities are going to look at those recommendations very carefully.

I have a question for him. Is he going to be supporting our justice legislation for cracking down on crime in this country: *oui ou non*? I want the answer to that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is already preparing for being in the opposition. He is now asking us questions.

The government is suggesting that recovering the money is not one of the recommendations in the Oliphant report. That does not surprise anyone, since the mandate set by the Conservative government was much too narrow.

In light of the new version from Brian Mulroney, who finally admitted to the business dealings, why does the government refuse to recover—

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Justice

[*English*]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I guess one thing we know for sure is this member will never be part of any government.

That being said—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, order. We know the Minister of Justice's responses are always very welcome in the House, but we have to have some order so we can hear the response.

The Minister of Justice has the floor.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson:** I want to apologize, Mr. Speaker. I made a mistake. I understand there are quite a few discussions going on about a coalition that could in fact involve the Bloc.

That being said, hon. members were looking for a public inquiry. They got what they wanted. The questions were set by an independent individual. That should make the hon. member very, very happy.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**OFFSHORE DRILLING**

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Inuit are calling for public hearings on federal plans to conduct seismic testing in Lancaster Sound, which is a proposed marine conservation area. Exploratory activities are being carried out despite the fact that the minister admitted that he does not even have a budget to study the effects of a spill in the far north.

President Obama suspended activities in the Arctic until an emergency response plan can be implemented. Why are they not doing the same thing?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, marine mapping is being carried out across Canada. Canadians are lucky to have a government that cares about Arctic development and ensuring our sovereignty in the region. My colleague, the Minister of the Environment, announced that he would carry out studies to designate marine areas, which in no way conflicts with comprehensive marine mapping across Canada.

[*English*]

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have asked seven times now for the government to table its plan to deal with a major offshore oil spill.

Instead of a plan, we get half-truths about the activity in the Arctic waters. We get a minister who admits he has no budget to conduct research into the effects of a major spill, a minister who admits he does not have one red cent for oil spill emergency relief.

Why is the federal government not taking the lead on an issue that could have such dire consequences for our environment and our economy?

● (1450)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is providing leadership on this file. As recently as May 11, the National Energy Board, an independent regulator and quasi-judicial tribunal that has been in place for 50 years, said that it would hold hearings to review the regulations as a whole. The public will be invited to make submissions. As of now, no authorization has been granted for any drilling in the Beaufort Sea or for deepwater drilling in the Arctic. No project will be given the go-ahead unless the government is convinced that the environment and the health and safety of workers will be protected.

\* \* \*

**MEDICAL ISOTOPES**

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at a time when the world is turning to nuclear energy to fight global warming and provide personalized medicine, Canada is turning away from it. The Prime Minister has said that Canada will stop producing isotopes and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited has laid off employees at Chalk River. We are failing our researchers and destroying our international leadership in the process.

Can the Minister of Health explain why her government is sacrificing this bastion of research that is so essential to the present and future health of all Canadians?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the priority of this government and of AECL is to get the NRU reactor up and running again as soon as possible. That being said, alternative solutions are being considered. Yesterday, we announced some good news: \$35 million for research. We will be asking for submissions from businesses and agencies that are working on alternative solutions for isotope production based on cyclotrons or linear accelerators.

[*English*]

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have more smoke and mirrors on medical isotopes. The research dollars announced today will do nothing to help the patients waiting for their cancer and heart tests.

Yesterday the Minister of Health said she was working with the international community to find an alternative source of medical isotopes. She did not seem to know that a supply deal had already been negotiated by Lantheus with Israel, but that it was turned down by Health Canada.

The patients are waiting. Will the minister approve the Israeli supply, yes or no?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member should be well aware that we are dealing with a global shortage.

We are doing everything we can to facilitate access to any and all alternatives to TC99. We continue to encourage the medical community to apply through the special access program and seek approval for the use of unapproved TC99.

We have not received an application from the company the member makes reference to.

*Oral Questions***ELIMINATING ENTITLEMENTS FOR PRISONERS**

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was shocked yesterday when I heard the Liberal MP for Ajax—Pickering defend the practice of paying old age security to prisoners.

Even though hard-working taxpayers already foot the bill for prisoners' room and board, the Liberals actually think that prisoners should receive even more benefits, benefits that are intended only for low income seniors.

Can the minister tell us what she is hearing from Canadians who actually care about victims and taxpayers?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite evident, once again, that the Liberals care more about prisoners than they do about taxpayers or Canadian victims of crime.

Instead of listening to prisoners, I would suggest that hon. members listen to people like Sharon Rosenfeldt, the mother of one of Clifford Olson's victims, or the almost 15,000 Canadians who signed the Canadian taxpayers' petition supporting our bill.

The hon. member's comments were offensive to Canadians right across this country, and offensive to victims of crime. I suggest he withdraw them, with shame.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for the first six months of this year, the five major banks are already looking at giving in excess of \$5 billion in bonuses to their executives. Where is that money coming from? Well, there are still no limits on ATM fees and the percentage over the prime rate charged for mortgages and credit cards is higher than ever. In addition, since taking office, the Conservatives have cut taxes on banks by more than \$1.3 billion.

Instead of standing up for the banks all over the place, why do they not start by standing up for Canadians?

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, we do stand up for Canadians. We put forth a budget implementation act that seems to be getting stalled by the Liberals and the NDP members, who seem to vote against everything we put forward.

Speaking of taxes, we have reduced taxes for every Canadian. The average family in this country is paying \$3,000 less in taxes a year, and the NDP votes against that. They have the audacity to stand and criticize our government because we are not doing enough for Canadians. Everything we try to do, they vote against.

• (1455)

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a fundamental question of priorities and fairness. Talking about tax increases, tell people in Ontario and B.C. that the HST the Conservatives have just imposed on them is not a new tax.

During this crisis, our banks have made over \$16 billion in profits, and heavily indebted Canadians are paying higher and higher rates on their record borrowing. How is that balanced? How is that fair? Five billion dollars in bonuses have been paid, and there has been no attempt to regulate credit card rates or ATM fees. They are not financial geniuses, our banks, but quasi-monopolies being given a free ride at the public's expense.

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure why I would answer that question anyway. He would probably stand like he did yesterday and call me a liar.

Let me talk about what this government has done. We heard the announcement that GDP growth in the first quarter was 6.1%. That is good news. All they can do is complain about what this government is doing. This government is doing what Canadians want it to do, and that is leaving more of their money in their own pockets.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FIRST NATIONS**

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, because of the threat of forest fires, 1,300 Atikamekw from Wemotaci are still displaced. It will be difficult for them to return to their reserve as there are serious problems with respect to the safety and supply of food and drinking water, access to electricity and social and psychological resources. It is unacceptable that no senior Indian and Northern Affairs official is yet on site to support this hard-hit community.

What is the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development waiting for to send a senior official to the scene, rather than passively waiting for requests, as he has done so far?

[English]

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true. Not only are we working closely with the Province of Quebec, which has control of the evacuation situation and the moving of people out of harm's way, but early this week, on Monday of this week, my regional director was in the region, meeting with chiefs and the local officials. My senior staff members have been talking to the chief and leaders in the community. We are working hand in hand with the provincial government to ensure that this very desperate situation is handled as best as possible. Hopefully, the rains we had last night will allow us to get those people back in the communities very soon.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Yves Laforest (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the victims need the support of the federal authorities. The community has been displaced and everyone is nervous and unsettled, and the minister is not talking. He must act quickly and support the band chief. That is what they want.

Will the minister promise to support the Wemotaci community and its chief as they move forward, especially by declaring their territory a disaster area?

[English]

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I did see that article in the paper. Of course, declaring an area a disaster area is an American way of dealing with a disaster. We do not do that in Canada.

We work with our provincial partners, who have emergency preparedness plans in place that kicked in the moment this forest fire started. This fire moved 24 kilometres in 24 hours, the plan kicked in, and people were evacuated to safety as they should be. The plan worked perfectly well.

I have already offered through the regional director general, my senior staff, and I will say this again publicly, all the help that we can extend to the chief and council. We will make sure that we do all that is necessary to protect them and the community.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to CGA-Canada, Canadian families are the most indebted families in the world. The report concluded that a 2% rise in interest rates will result in a 10% drop in discretionary spending.

Interest rates rose yesterday and the government still refuses to help families by facilitating access to education and by making seniors' care more affordable.

Why does it continue running up the deficit by lowering taxes for large corporations?

• (1500)

[English]

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there was a study released last week that showed that if we increased corporate taxes, as the Liberals want us to do, it would cost 233,000 jobs.

The other thing they want to do is to raise the GST. That is 162,000 lost jobs.

As I said before, we have reduced taxes to Canadians in over 100 ways. We are leaving more of their money in their pockets to enable them to spend how they want.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those two cases that the member just gave are things we will not do.

Let me tell the House one case that is true. The Conservatives are committed to raising EI premiums. A report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said that it will cost over 200,000 jobs. That is the job number that is right, based on tax increases they are committed to.

Why will the member not acknowledge that instead of talking about fictitious tax increases that we will never do?

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of fiction, the Liberals are on the record as saying they wanted to raise corporate taxes. Everyone knows that. I think they publicized it and put out a press release to that point. We are just explaining how that would impact Canadians.

That would be their burden if they would like to get rid of 233,000 jobs. We have cut taxes to all Canadians to help them grow the economy.

However, we should not talk about the EI fund. That disappeared when the member was in government. It is gone.

\* \* \*

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Indian Army officials attending the G20 summit, Winnie Mandela, George Galloway and the 60 delegates to the Union francophone des aveugles have been given no real information about why they are barred from coming to Canada.

Then there are 200,000 visitors who cannot come to celebrate special occasions such as family weddings. There are no clear criteria, guidelines or standards for entry. That is arbitrary and unacceptable.

When will we have fairness for visa applicants?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly sure what the question is.

I can say that sections 34 and 35 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act outline grounds of inadmissibility for foreign nationals seeking to come to Canada, which involve serious criminality, involvement in organized crime, or terrorism, including raising money for terrorist organizations such as Hamas, for example.

But the government committed last week to reviewing the grounds of inadmissibility to ensure that they are not applied in an unreasonably broad fashion. If the member has submissions to make in that respect, I would be happy to receive them.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, potential visitors are rejected without any explanation of what they need to do to qualify. To make matters worse, there is no right of appeal.

Countries such as Australia and England have a clear appeals process. We lose millions of tourist dollars, and this unfair policy gives Canada a bad reputation.

With summer tourist season upon us, when will the Conservatives fix the problem and give the right of appeal to these visitors?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in point of fact, there is a right of appeal for people who obtain a negative admissibility decision by an officer of the CBSA at the port of entry, which is where the decision is made. They can seek an appeal of that inadmissibility finding at the immigration division of the IRB.

As it relates to visitors' visas, I agree with the member. We would like to be able to have fewer visa impositions than we do on the 145 countries from which we require visas, but that will only be possible if we have sensible and balanced refugee reform. I hope the member will join us in that respect.

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**FIREARMS REGISTRY**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal member for Ajax—Pickering introduced a motion at committee that would circumvent the House of Commons by trying to prevent Bill C-391 from coming to a vote. This is the latest game of that member, who told a newspaper last fall:

I don't think it's the business of parliament to step in and get rid of [the long gun registry].

I wonder if the constituents in the eight Liberal and 12 NDP ridings whose MPs supported the bill at second reading would agree.

Could the parliamentary secretary please update the House on this issue?

• (1505)

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her hard work to scrap the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry.

Yesterday, in a dazzling display of Liberal arrogance, the Liberal leader's spokesman, the member for Ajax—Pickering, introduced a motion at committee to reject the bill that would finally end the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry. In doing so, the message is clear: For the Liberal leader and the member for Ajax—Pickering the voices of constituents do not matter and the votes of Liberal MPs who supported Bill C-391 at second reading do not count.

When it comes to the long gun registry, one either votes to keep it or votes to scrap it. It is that simple.

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**FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after about a dozen enquiries from this side of the House and a tremendous amount of effort on the part of First Nations University, the government is now offering some financial certainty for one coming year. That is welcome, but it is not sufficient.

First Nations University has corrected its situation and has earned the support of the provincial government, the University of Regina, the Regina and District and Saskatchewan Chambers of Commerce, the Canadian Association of University Teachers and others.

When does the minister expect to be in a position to make a long-term financial commitment to First Nations University?

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to make an announcement this morning. I will explain to the member for Wascana that when we make announcements on this side of the House we do not just cut a blank cheque, mail it in, and hope something good happens with it.

We have put conditions on this. There are several milestones that have to be met over the next year. The reason for that is because in 2005, when we inherited this file from the member opposite, it was such a mess that it has taken the hard work of Chief Guy Lonechild and many others to try to dig us out of it.

I think we are on the cusp of a very good time for First Nations University.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we have learned that anthrax was secretly produced during the second world war on Grosse Île in Montmagny. When the project ended, the anthrax produced was dumped into the St. Lawrence River. Since anthrax spores can survive for about a hundred years and because people are worried, biologists would like more information about this disposal in order to investigate.

Can the Minister of the Environment tell us precisely where in the St. Lawrence the leftover anthrax was dumped?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will get back to the member with the specifics on that.

The member well knows that this government is committed to clean water for all Canadians. Our plan includes investments in monitoring science cleanup problems as well as building partnerships for protecting fresh water for all Canadians.

We need the member's support. We need support from all members of this Parliament to clean up the mess created by the previous Liberal government.

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**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Dr. Yahya Mahfoodh Al Manthri, chairman of the State Council of the Sultanate of Oman.

**Some hon. members:** Hear! Hear!

*Points of Order*

[Translation]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, during members' statements, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles once again made comments that are completely inappropriate and unacceptable under our Standing Orders. They are particularly unacceptable in light of your decision of Monday, May 31, barely two days ago. I will explain.

The comments in dispute, made by the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, are as follows, and I quote: “For the Bloc leader and his colleagues, it is much easier to simply side with criminals—”. In your decision of May 31 about the acceptability of the term “token Quebecker”, you said: “It appears to the Chair that it is being used in a provocative manner time and time again in the House.”

I would like to explain my reasoning in order to prove that the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles is repeating comments in a provocative manner. As proof, I will quote the member's comments of April 24, 2009, during members' statements. He said: “—yes, the only ones—in this House to vote against families and, just recently, against children as well”, referring to the Bloc Québécois.

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** It is true.

**An hon. member:** The token Quebeckers.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Token Quebeckers may find that funny, but you will see, I have other, more colourful quotes, Mr. Speaker,

On May 12, 2009, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles said: “the Bloc voted against protecting our children...The Bloc's behaviour is shameful.” Another statement—

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** It is true.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, could you ask the member for Saint Boniface, the Calamity Jane of Saint-Boniface, to quiet down and put away her guns. She should put away her guns. We have names for some of the clowns on the other side.

On April 23, 2009, the same member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles said: “Will the under-18s be sacrificed by the Bloc? Turning their backs on youth protection, that is the Bloc way.” I repeat: “Turning their backs on youth protection, that is the Bloc way.”

On April 22, 2009, the same member told us, during members' statements: “—we have reason to wonder whether it really wants to fight gun crime in Quebec.”

On Thursday, October 1, 2009, the member said: “the Bloc members have ... sided with the rights of criminals.

That is a very serious accusation. If our party and its members are said to side with criminals, does that mean that we are ourselves criminals? That is what one has to gather from what the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles said.

On May 12, 2010, the same member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles said, “Yesterday afternoon, the Bloc leader made his indifference towards victims of serious crime very clear.”

Those are totally unacceptable accusations which are inadmissible under our Standing Orders. I think I have provided sufficient proof of the accumulation of statements, and I have more.

On May 12 again, the same member said, “It is clear that the Bloc leader does not support Quebec... children who have been the victims of sexual assault.”

● (1510)

I think that is outside the scope of the debate. One can oppose ideas, but to accuse the leader and MPs from the Bloc Québécois to side with criminals is totally unacceptable, and you should rule on that, Mr. Speaker.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** I would like to conclude my point of order with one last quote, even though I have many more. On April 20, 2010, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles suggested that “the only thing the Bloc Québécois with its leftist ideology knows how to do is oppose our government's justice and crime initiatives.”

Coming back to your ruling on the token Quebecker issue, Mr. Speaker. That was your ruling. I have noted the criteria you identified to determine whether a term was acceptable or not. I believe I have just clearly demonstrated that the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles has once again, in a provocative manner time and time again in the House, behaved as he has been behaving for several months, if not a few years.

Allow me to read an excerpt from O'Brien-Bosc, at page 618. It reads:

The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members. Thus, the use of offensive, provocative or threatening language in the House is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks—

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** It is true.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, ask Calamity Jane to go polish her guns outside the House.

Personal attacks, insults and obscenities are not in order.

On page 619, we read:

—the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed; the degree of provocation; and, most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, look at the debates and ask yourself whether the statements by the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles created disorder. That was the basis of your ruling on the token Quebecker comments.

My second last point is that the expression was perceived by all colleagues from the Bloc Québécois as an insult to the democratically elected members of the Bloc Québécois and their leader, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, who, for the past 20 years, has always risen above the fray. He is a parliamentarian above reproach.

*Points of Order*

I will close by saying that the 308 hon. members of this House, regardless of their party, including you Mr. Speaker, were legitimately elected to defend ideas and principles. We cannot accept repeated insults like the ones made by the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

We have a legitimate responsibility that has been given to us by the people. The Bloc Québécois MPs have been given a responsibility by the people of Quebec, by the people from the regions of Quebec, to represent them in Ottawa. We do not have to put up with such insults.

• (1515)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Saint Boniface, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising because I think the House of Commons needs to hear the truth. Everything I have said in the House is the truth. The Bloc Québécois voted against a bill that would protect children and women in Canada. It voted against the human trafficking bill.

I heard the point of order raised by the Bloc Québécois member, which was supported by some Liberals who are insulting my career in law enforcement. I listened to the insults being thrown at me based on what I said. All I said was the truth. They voted against our children.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mrs. Shelly Glover:** Mr. Speaker, could you remind them to keep quiet while I am raising my point of order?

These insults referred to my career as a policewoman. I have every right to be in the House of Commons. I do not have a gun, and implying that I am carrying one in the House of Commons is completely unparliamentary.

I demand an apology from the Bloc Québécois member for making completely ignorant comments about my career in law enforcement. I also want him to apologize for suggesting that I carry a gun in the House of Commons. It is absolutely appalling that he would suggest such a thing.

I would also like the Liberal Party to apologize for supporting the Bloc Québécois in this matter.

• (1520)

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling that things have gone way too far. I have fought the Bloc for 20 years, but I would never question its legitimacy because its members were elected by the public.

Are they relevant? We will find out during an election campaign. What I find unacceptable—and it is true of both sides—is that when these types of personal accusations are made, we call into question our own democratic institutions.

I would ask the Conservative Party to focus on thank-yous during S.O. 31 statements instead of making below-the-belt attacks and to stop calling into question the legitimacy of any members here.

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tempers are flaring. In his point of order, the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord used an expression that you deemed unparliamentary. You asked parliamentarians to refrain from using it in the House.

I would ask the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord to withdraw the expression he just used, that is “token Quebecker”. As a parliamentarian, I am asking him to withdraw his comments because we need to respect one another. Of course, his point of order strikes me more as a point of debate because when members oppose a bill that helps victims, it is a matter of interpretation. I will leave it to you.

I would like the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord to apologize to my colleague from Saint-Boniface, who is a woman and a parliamentarian. He should also apologize to her as a francophone outside Quebec and a police officer. It is a lack of basic respect and I call on him to take the high road and apologize so that we can put an end to this unparliamentary behaviour.

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I rise here today as a member of this House, but also as a mother and grandmother. I rise as a citizen and as a woman. I rise in the House because when one took an oath as a police officer, one swore to tell the truth and not to manipulate the truth in any way. One took that oath. When we took the oath to serve our fellow citizens, we swore that we would serve them honestly and ethically. When we took the oath to become members of this House, because we were democratically elected, we did so honestly and legitimately.

Once again today, the member for Saint Boniface repeated this unfair notion that we do not consider our children, that we do not want our children to be protected, that we do not want women to be protected.

On behalf of all children, on behalf of all the women in this House, I rise to say that it is shameful, that such things should not be said and they should never be repeated. Our relevance and right to be here must never be questioned, and neither should the fact that women will always stand up and denounce any abuse of children.

What the member said is false. She used moral manipulation and moral blackmail, and I object to it.

• (1525)

[*English*]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to a number of the interventions on this matter in the House. I found the conduct of the Bloc Québécois, and I think we will probably hear an intervention on this shortly, abhorrent during statements by members today.

However, members in the House often shout and speak loudly, but they speak the loudest when they vote. The fact is what the member for Saint Boniface has put forward is that when Bloc members had an opportunity to stand up for women and children and vote in favour of a bill to put an end to human smuggling, they voted against it and their constituents need to know that. All Canadians deserve to know that.

If those members are not proud of their record, that is a separate issue. They should not be proud of it. What they should do is stand in their place and vote for issues like putting an end to human smuggling, not vote against them. That is the real issue here. They are not proud of their own record.



*Points of Order*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the premise in the House of Commons is members of Parliament, regardless of the party, have a right to vote on legislation before them, whether they think it is right or wrong or whether they think it is severely flawed.

To give an example, recently I introduced a bill in the House on disabled veterans and RCMP officers and the clawback of their pensions. All the Conservatives, except one, voted against it. Do I stand in the House and say that the Conservatives are dead against veterans, that they do not care about veterans and RCMP officers? No. I respect the right of members of the Conservative Party to vote the way they wish. I obviously think they were wrong, but I do not go to their ridings and I do not send ten percenters to their ridings saying that they are against veterans. The Conservatives refuse to admit that this is a democratic House of Commons.

Although I disagree with the Bloc Québécois on its vote, its members have the right to vote the way they want. To accuse them of being something that they are not is simply unconscionable, not democratic and not becoming of the House of Commons.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier on the same point of order.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not often take the floor for this kind of debate. In fact, I believe this is the first time. I listened closely to what the members said. It all began with a statement that a Conservative Party member made before question period. Then several other things were brought into the conversation.

You have already ruled that a certain expression should no longer be used. I supported and applauded the member for Beauport—Limoilou when she raised the matter the first time. I feel that I must support the Bloc members, who say that when they voted against a particular bill, it was not because they were against protecting women and children. There was a legitimate difference of opinion on the value of adding a sentence, which is what the bill set out to do.

I find that people sometimes stray from the truth. I understand that this is political jousting, but members should all demonstrate decency and respect toward their colleagues in the House. That is what Canadians expect of us.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to ensure that members of all parties show greater respect for one another even if they disagree. I often disagree with the member for Saint Boniface, but that is no reason to call her names, as some members did. That is out of line. We all need to do a little better than that.

• (1530)

[English]

**Ms. Martha Hall Findlay (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would just add that many times members in this House vote for or against specific legislation, not necessarily because they do or do not support it but perhaps, in some cases, because they feel that a very just cause can be improved by voting for better legislation.

I echo my colleagues who have said that just because members vote a particular way does not mean they deserve personal insults.

[Translation]

I do not agree with many of the things my Bloc Québécois colleagues say or the reason they are here, but every member of this House was elected by a majority of Canadians and therefore has a right to be here.

[English]

Every member here, no matter how we feel or how we vote, deserves to be treated with respect and civility, which is the only way we can all show respect for this institution.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will add to this discussion by saying one thing. How did we get to this place and time? How did we get to this point where we are attacking each other to this degree of severity, across this floor, showing a lack of respect for both sides and for all members?

I have to calm myself down because I am very concerned with this. This is a watershed moment that we can step back from and move forward to restore some dignity in this place.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. In this country, we are entitled to our opinions. That means that the 308 members of this House can make comments and support positions.

Members may or may not agree with other members. I will never agree with the fact that the member for Saint Boniface wants the Liberal members to apologize because they do not think like the Conservatives. It is not acceptable that members of the House should not be entitled to their own opinions. We do not need to share the Conservative government's views all the time.

We represent four political parties, and we are entitled to be respected as individuals and as parliamentarians. I will never apologize for having opinions and standing up for the people I represent. I will never accept the Conservatives' position. Never!

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as one of the oldest members, I may be one of the calmest. As you know, the crux of the matter is the insults regularly hurled at the Bloc Québécois because, according to those uttering the insults, we vote against protecting children.

Many hon. members would know exactly what the bill was about and might change their mind, as might you Mr. Speaker, if they bothered to read the entire bill and not just the title. It takes two minutes and if they read it, they would see that the bill is not about protecting children. That is never mentioned in the bill. They would see that it is about the exploitation of persons under the age of 18. The Bloc Québécois voted against the bill because it felt that anyone exploiting young people under the age of 18, in one way or another, does not deserve a minimum of five years, which is appropriate for those who exploit children.

*Points of Order*

Basing an opinion on the title alone is what misleads hon. members. Having not read the bill, they hurl insults that they would refrain from using if they had read the bill with a modicum of intellectual honesty.

I hope we can deal with this once and for all, Mr. Speaker, because it is very insulting to be told over and over again that we vote against the protection of children, that we are against protecting children, and that when we defend the rights of everyone in a legal system we are defending criminals' rights, and it triggers reactions that can be just as insulting, I agree. However, I have always refrained from reacting that way.

• (1535)

[English]

**Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will keep this extremely brief. I have made this mini-speech many times in the past but I would urge all colleagues from both sides of the House to consider tempering their remarks in the days and weeks ahead. We still have three weeks to go before the House is scheduled for the summer recess.

As House leader for the government, I certainly try to work cooperatively with my colleagues on the other side of the House to accomplish what we have been sent here by our constituents to accomplish, which is to govern our nation. I would suggest that we all take a breath here and consider tempering our remarks over the days and weeks ahead because the summer weather will get hot and I am sure it will get warmed up in this House.

I have always respected the fact that this is a place of lively debate. When I listened to my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois on his question of privilege or point of order about what was said during statements today, I did not hear one thing that, in some people's opinion, would not have been the truth. I did not hear one thing that was unparliamentary, except what he said, in my estimation, when he was hollering out across the way Calamity Jane, personally attacking a colleague by calling her the name "Calamity Jane".

I do not remember anything my colleague said during his comments that personally attacked an individual member. They might dispute what has been said, and that is their right as members of Parliament to dispute in lively debate what is said, but it really does damage to my colleague from the Bloc's argument that he rose about insults when he, in turn, in the middle of his point of order, called my colleague Calamity Jane, a personal insult.

I rise to point out that we want to always remember to temper our remarks because what is viewed as insults by some obviously is viewed as debate by others.

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** I thank all the hon. members who participated in this debate this afternoon.

[English]

I want to say that I have given warnings previously about statements by members.

[Translation]

I suggested that hon. members should avoid making statements about other members, and should certainly refrain from making personal attacks. In my opinion, we have had some that were very close to crossing that line. I can perhaps intervene more often, but I hope that after the discussions in the House today, all hon. members will take note of what has happened.

• (1540)

[English]

I will review the statements made by the member for Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord.

[Translation]

I will review his complaints. If there is a problem, I will come back to the House. Otherwise, as suggested by the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, I hope that we can have fewer personal attacks and fewer attacks against other parties, especially during S.O. 31 statements.

I urge hon. members to discuss topics that are important to them.

[English]

I also have notice of a point of order from the hon. member for Churchill arising out of statements by members.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during my statement earlier today there was an incredible amount of commotion. As a result, even members sitting directly next to me and around me could not hear what I had to say.

My right to be heard by Canadians and members of the House were abridged. I would hope that, in the future, members' ability to be heard, not only in the House but by Canadians, will be respected and ensured.

**The Speaker:** I am sure it will be. I could hear the hon. member and will look at the television version. I suspect it could be heard on television as well, so, in that sense, I think it was probably all right. Had I not been able to hear, I would have stood up and interrupted. There was a lot of noise, I agree, but I could hear the hon. member.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Minister of International Cooperation said that she had read the 1994 Cairo action plan on population and development. I wonder if she could please table it in its entirety so that Canadians can see what in fact she left out in her remarks.

**The Speaker:** She did not refer to the document or read from the document so she is not required to table it, but I am sure the minister will bear in mind the hon. member's comment and, if she wishes to table the document, she is free to do so at any time.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***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)(b) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition.

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**COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT**

**Hon. Jay Hill (for the Minister of Industry)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Copyright Act.

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

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on International Trade in relation to Bill C-2, An Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the Republic of Colombia, the Agreement on the Environment between Canada and the Republic of Colombia and the Agreement on Labour Cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Colombia.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

*[Translation]*

## INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, concerning its study of Bill C-309, An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario. The committee requests an extension of 30 days to be able to properly study the bill.

• (1545)

*[English]*

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, in relation to its study of Bill C-393, An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes) and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

The committee requests a 30-day extension in order to give the bill proper consideration and to hear all witnesses who wish to appear.

**The Speaker:** With respect to both reports tabled by the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills, pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a) a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred until Wednesday, June 9, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

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**CANADA TRANSPORTATION ACT**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-523, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act (accessibility in transportation).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell members how proud and honoured I am to introduce this bill.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague, the member Western Arctic, who is the NDP transportation critic.

In introducing this bill, I also wish to recognize and pay tribute to Winnipeg High School student, Sam Unrau, who was the winner of the Winnipeg Centre "Create your Canada" contest. This contest invited Winnipeg High School students to submit their ideas for a private member's bill to make Canada a better place to live.

Sam's thoughtful proposal comes from his personal experience as a person with spina bifida, confined to a wheelchair, and those of his friends and colleagues with disabilities, so that people with all levels of physical ability can travel in Canada with more dignity.

The bill itself requires the Minister of Transport to direct the Canadian Transportation Agency to conduct an accessibility audit of all forms of transportation under federal jurisdiction in order to remove any undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities and to improve their ability to travel in this country.

This bill coincides with Manitoba's week for persons with disabilities access issues. It also, I note, coincides with the recent move of Canada to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All of these things combine together to make this a very worthy initiative.

Congratulations to my student from Winnipeg, Sam Unrau.

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

\* \* \*

**SURVIVOR'S ANNUAL ALLOWANCE ACT**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-524, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, the Judges Act, the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act, the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first, I wish to thank Helen Rapp, a veteran of our country who unfortunately had lost a loved one and now has been blessed to remarry.

Can members imagine if any of us lost our loved ones and we remarried, for example, at age 58 and lived for 20 years, our second spouse would be entitled to our superannuation pension, but if we had the audacity to remarry after age 60 and lived for 20 years and passed on, our second spouse would receive no pension or health benefits?

*Routine Proceedings*

Those days are now over. It should not matter that the heroes of our country, our veterans, our military personnel, and many of those who serve our country in the public service, should be restricted this way. When they get married or when they find someone to share a life with, they should not be restricted when they pass on as to whether their surviving spouse should be able to be entitled to pension and health benefits. This is a bill that would end that discrimination immediately.

We encourage all members of Parliament, especially in the government, to adopt this resolution as soon as possible so that all those people out there who find love a second time and remarry or have a permanent partner would know that when they pass on their second spouse is not immediately put into poverty but has financial dignity, as well as health benefits.

That is why I have introduced this legislation and would encourage fast resolution of this bill.

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

• (1550)

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, last Friday, May 28, in Lahore, Pakistan, as members of the Ahmadiyya community gathered for Friday prayers, they came under a deadly coordinated attack at two of their mosques: the Baitul Nur mosque in Model Town and the Darul Zikr mosque in Gharishaw.

Peace, security and the ability to practice one's faith are basic human rights.

Therefore, I am seeking unanimous consent to the following motion, which is seconded by the member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor. I move that the House condemn the violent attacks on Ahmadiyya Muslim worshippers who were attending Friday prayers in Lahore, Pakistan, urge the government of Pakistan to bring to justice all those involved in perpetrating these barbaric acts, and work to ensure that all Pakistanis can worship in peace and safety.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Scarborough—Agingcourt have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Speaker:** There is no consent.

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## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the first report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, presented on Wednesday, May 26, 2010, be concurred in.

Changing gears a little bit, I am pleased to rise to move the concurrence motion on the report emanating from the international trade committee from just about a week ago.

I should mention that all members of the trade committee worked very thoroughly to examine the provisions of the buy American act

and the government's response to this that is contained within the Canada-United States agreement on government procurement.

This is a little bit different from generally how the trade committee is involved, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, looking back at precedents, for example, the softwood lumber agreement; the EFTA agreement, sometimes referred to as the shipbuilding sellout; and the Canada-Colombia agreement that many people consider very controversial as a human rights sellout.

In all these cases the committee has had the opportunity, at least in part, to have hearings and hear witnesses before the implementation of these agreements. That is the important role that the trade committee plays.

It does not necessarily mean that all parties around the committee table follow the advice that witnesses clearly give them. If that were the case, the softwood lumber agreement or the softwood lumber sellout would never have been implemented in the first place.

However in this case, with the Canada-U.S. agreement on government procurement we, as a committee, were examining, after the implementation of the agreement, the benefits and certainly any of the potential negative impacts as well of that agreement.

Therefore, this is an important role that the committee has played. The committee members worked diligently to recover from witnesses exactly to what extent this agreement might have been beneficial or not beneficial for Canadians. It is important to note that the report that is produced and the recommendations that I will enumerate in a few moments are something that has been subject to a dissenting opinion of the Conservative Party.

Very clearly, I think it is fair to say that the findings that the international trade committee found, the evidence that was given by witnesses, is something that the Conservative Party and the Conservative members of the committee have found difficult.

Understandably, the government has already signed and implemented the agreement. I can understand that the Conservative members found themselves in a very difficult position because the witnesses presented evidence that might clearly show that there were concerns around the agreement. The initial news and initial information made available by the government, let us just say this, once we delve into the heart of the agreement, was not necessarily the facts in the case.

I will start of by speaking a bit about the background. Initially, we had buy American provisions in the American reinvestment and recovery act of 2009. This was an act that was presented in the U.S. Congress, which followed the election that took place in 2008 and the inauguration of a new administration in 2009. During that election campaign in 2008 there was much issue of the loss of jobs that had taken place in the United States under NAFTA.

Most Americans are earning less and what has happened is a funnelling up of income to the wealthiest 5% according to *Foreign Affairs* magazine. These are Bush administration officials who actually spoke to this issue. We have actually seen a redistribution of income upwards.

*Routine Proceedings*

Because of that, Americans found that they wanted to have another look at NAFTA, voted for Barack Obama and a new administration that would take a different approach.

Therefore, this is not a surprise to Canadians who followed the American election. Very clearly, there has been a shift away from what many consider to be the right wing rhetoric of the past Bush administration.

Of course, in Canada we have had the same funnelling up of income. Most Canadians are earning less over the last 20 years. That is a policy issue, an economic issue, that all members of the House have to contend with. Most Canadians have actually seen their incomes fall over the last 20 years.

•(1555)

We hear figures cited in the House that simply do not take into account the devalued purchasing power of a dollar over time. We can try to say that in current dollars income has grown, or in current dollars exports have grown, but we have to compare apples to apples. In that case, it means dealing with constant dollars, and as I will come to in a moment, that means exports have fallen in a number of areas. It also means, when we compare constant dollars, that most Canadians earn less. That is a fundamental issue.

The buy American program was brought forward by the administration and new members of Congress. It was debated during the United States election. This is not the first time this has happened. The buy American act came into force back in 1933. It was the buy American provisions that helped lift the United States out of the depression.

In an ideological vent people will say that it was not that, that it was a variety of other things. Very prominent economists have been clear that the buy American provisions and the provisions of the new deal helped to lift the United States out of the depression. That has been a fundamental part of policy for some time. That has led to other acts, such as the Jones act, which protected the shipbuilding industry in the United States.

As the buy American act worked its way through Congress, some Canadians spoke out about it. This issue continues to be a constant problem. In this corner of the House we have addressed it by bringing forward solid legislation, but we have had nothing with which to bargain. There are no similar buy Canadian acts in place.

Subsequent to that the Conservative government entered into negotiations and the result was the Canada-United States agreement on government procurement. The questions the committee was examining what Canada gave up and what Canada obtained.

In the first case, we managed to obtain, on a temporary basis, access to a number of programs administered by the American recovery and new investment act of 2009 in seven key areas. As mentioned in the report, those programs are the United States department of agriculture, the USDA rural housing service, the United States department of energy, both the office of energy efficiency and conservation block grants and also the state energy program, the U.S. department of housing and urban development, the office of community, planning and development, both the community development block grants recovery and the public

housing capital fund, and the U.S. environmental protection agency, clean water and drinking water state revolving funds.

Ironically, it turned out that these projects had already been allocated funding out of the ARRA funds, but the government managed to obtain the reallocation of those funds. Subject to contracts signed after February 17, Canadians could access those funds. We are talking about seven program areas. In a number of cases the allocation of funding had already taken place.

What did we give up? We gave up agreeing to provide U.S. companies with enhanced access to procurement of construction services by numerous provincial and territorial government agencies, crown corporations and municipalities until September 2011. As with Canada's permanent commitments outlined earlier, specific government bodies to which these temporary commitments apply vary from one province or territory to the next. The threshold of \$8.5 million in Canada's WTO TPA commitments also applies to these enhanced access commitments.

•(1600)

We have a situation where we have gained access in some areas, some of which had their funds already allocated. On the other hand, we gave up fairly substantial access, temporarily until September 2011, but substantial nonetheless.

The question then is what the witnesses had to say, the people who brought forward by the committee to examine the benefits and disadvantages of this agreement.

I will read a couple of pages from the report. It is important that members of the House understand, after the committee members sat through these hearings.

We heard from several witnesses that the expected gains from Canada's partial exemption, the U.S. domestic content requirements in the ARRA, the American recovery and reinvestment act, are likely to be small. Not only have the vast majority of ARRA procurement funds already been dispersed, but the Canada-U.S. AGP opens to Canadian companies only a small fraction of what remains. I think that becomes obvious when we look at the small number of programs to which we actually gained access.

The committee heard numerous and differing estimates concerning the value of contract opportunities available to Canadian businesses as a consequence of the temporary commitments in the AGP.

A noted trade analyst, Scott Sinclair noted that of the United States \$275 billion in procurement funds contained in the recovery act, the total budget for the seven programs to which Canada had secured an exemption was U.S. \$18 billion. We are talking about considerably less than 10%. He also went on to say that, as of December 31, 2009, two-thirds of those funds had already been allocated.

This was his comment:

Canadian suppliers will therefore have an opportunity to compete for no more than an estimated \$6 billion U.S. of federally funded stimulus projects, representing just 2% of the procurement funded under the recovery act. The rest falls outside the scope of this agreement.

*Routine Proceedings*

We gained access to 2% of the procurement funding under the recovery act. That is a fundamental issue that I will come back to later.

Another witness, who is a trade lawyer with a very strong reputation in the community, is Steven Shrybman. He stated that even this figure was a generous estimate because it did not take into account all of the other carve-outs and exclusions in U.S. procurement rules to which Canada did not receive an exemption.

In his submission to the committee, Mr. Shrybman observed that under the Canada-U.S. AGP, the United States offsets, set-asides and local preferences remained in place. In other words, provisions were made to help support American industries, provisions that Canada does not have, and I will come back to that as I had mentioned, most of which were established at the state and local levels.

Mr. Shrybman noted that this meant that while the U.S. had agreed to remove domestic purchasing requirements as a condition under those seven federal programs, which I mentioned, it did not commit to have state and local governments remove their own barriers to Canadian bids on the very projects funding the seven listed programs.

This was a concern that was raised. As a result of that, the committee also heard that officials from Quebec department of economic development had estimated the total value of unallocated funds under the seven programs listed above to be \$1.3 billion.

We have gone from the \$275 billion of the total program to an exemption on a budget envelope of \$18 billion of which two-thirds had already been allocated. That leaves \$6 billion, but then when the offsets, set-asides and local preferences that remain in place are included, we come down to \$1.3 billion. In other words, the government spin about this being access to a \$275 billion project turns out to be less than 0.3% of that overall figure. It is outrageous.

• (1605)

There have been a lot of comments about the billion dollar boondoggle around the G8 and the G20, but we have a situation where we went in to try to negotiate \$275 billion and came out with \$1 billion. That is just access, it is not even contracts. This means Canadian companies, if possible, can bid on 0.3% of the overall American reinvestment and recovery act. Any Canadian would say that this is bad negotiating.

Carl Grenier said that this was the second worst agreement he had ever seen Canada sign. Carl Grenier, being the expert on the trade and softwood lumber file, said that the worst we had ever signed was the softwood lumber sellout. We all know in this case, following committee hearings, that the Conservative government knew it would cause a complete meltdown of the softwood lumber agreement. Tragically, in this case we are finding out after the fact that it was not \$275 billion we access, but a potential in contracts of \$1.3 billion and that is only if the system works.

Opponents of the AGP also argued that Canada's modest improvement in access to this procurement came at a great cost, and this is a key issue. We gained access to a \$1 billion procurement market, possibly. How much did we give up?

Guy Caron of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union suggested that Canada gave U.S. firms the opportunity to bid until September 2011 on provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure and construction procurement worth an estimated \$25 billion compared to the 2% of procurement funds still available. We have had other sources estimating the value of procurement to be closer to \$33 billion.

What did we give up? Some \$25 to \$33 billion. The government is not quite sure how much because unfortunately it did not do its homework and the due diligence prior to signing this agreement. How much did we obtain? Access to about \$1 billion.

In my province of British Columbia we are the "show me" province. That is why folks have reacted so strongly to the HST. It is not in the report, but we can only just put this out that this is crummy negotiating. This negotiating is embarrassingly bad when we give up that much in procurement and gain that little.

• (1610)

**Mr. Claude Gravelle:** We've been there.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Yes, we have certainly seen this as the member for Nickel Belt comments. We have seen this in a variety of other areas.

We have seen the problems that exist in this. We have very clear comments from witnesses saying that what we have done is given up so much and obtained very little. We also had testimony from the B.C. building trades, Wayne Peppard, who noted:

Many municipal procurement policies contain procurement provisions on quality, qualifications, training, safety, employment standards and, in some instances, fair wage and living wage policies. These social and legal commitments now stand to be challenged.

Union agreements that provide for local hiring or contracting-out language may be at risk.

There is no doubt about the fact that we have a fundamentally flawed agreement when we look at how much we have given up and how much we have obtained. It is obvious that the work of the trade committee has helped to expose how unbalanced things are.

There is a series of recommendations that talk about the due diligence, doing that work beforehand, that we have to continue to monitor this agreement right through to see whether even that \$1 billion market is accessed. How much we end up giving up, how many jobs are cost, we need to do that ongoing procurement.

*Routine Proceedings*

What is mentioned in the recommendations is also the issue that we need to have data collection. That data simply was not available. Witnesses were able to finally bring it together through their own knowledge, but we did not receive any real information from the ministry or from the government. We should also be looking to seek exemptions in such sectors as steel and other highly integrated sectors of the Canadian economy.

Finally, what we have said in our supplementary opinion to this report is that we need a buy Canadian plan. This helps give us leverage to negotiate the agreements that actually do bring jobs to Canada.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly the government gives away the store in its negotiating. This is the same government that negotiated the Canada-Colombia free trade deal. It seems that every negotiation it gets involved with it ends up on the losing end of it.

I believe this program is largely over, and there was not a huge amount left while the negotiations were progressing. Would the member explain to us once again how much was given up in this process?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Elmwood—Transcona is the leading speaker in this House of Commons, and it is because he is raising intelligent questions like that on a constant and ongoing basis. He ably fills the shoes of another member for Elmwood—Transcona, the hon. Bill Blaikie, who left this House last year. Mr. Blaikie was always front and centre in this House of Commons, and the member for Elmwood—Transcona is carrying on that heritage.

The question of what has been given up is a very good one. As I mentioned earlier, the dollar figure of what we obtained access to is only theoretical, because there is no enforcement mechanism within this agreement. Theoretically we have gained access to \$1 billion, and in a very real sense, because the United States has enforcement mechanisms on the other side, which is another reason why this agreement is so imbalanced, we are giving up access to, depending on how we estimate the total figures, somewhere between \$25 billion and \$33 billion. There is a very clear inequity.

To add to that, we have given up the ability to have procurement policies at the municipal and provincial levels that help to stimulate Canadian jobs. That is a fundamental problem.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a sentence here and have the hon. member comment on it:

In acknowledgement of the concerns raised by Canada and others, the ARRA also states that its "Buy American" conditions must be consistent with the commitments made in international trade agreements signed by the United States. However, as Jean-Michel Laurin (Vice President, Global Business Policy, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters) observed, the promise to abide by international trade agreements was of little comfort to Canadian businesses....

I would like the hon. member to comment on this statement, please.

• (1615)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Nickel Belt is another member whom we have on the floor who contributes vastly to the debate. We have a pretty phenomenal team in this corner of the

House, the hard-working New Democrats who are working to really advance Canadian jobs and ensure that Canada has the negotiating clout to negotiate effective agreements.

Unfortunately, we have not yet seen from the government the ability to negotiate effectively. As Carl Grenier, a trade expert, said, when we go to negotiate at any cost, essentially what that results in is the type of agreement where we give up a lot more than we get, and this is very clearly the case here.

We had witnesses who spoke very clearly about a buy Canadian policy. They referenced Toronto and its Canadian content requirement, which allowed, in a significant public purchase, a sizable share of economic benefits to come back to Canadians.

We also had a number of comments about the fact that the United States believes in using public money, money that belongs to taxpayers, to stimulate jobs in its own domestic economy. Steven Shrybman, a public interest lawyer who is well-known in Toronto, said the following:

I think the United States understands that spending public money to create public goods is also a reasonable way to make jobs. I don't think U.S. states are going to give up that prerogative.

That indeed is the issue.

Getting back to the member's question, the issue is simply that the buy American program of the United States under the Jones Act is actually something that is allowable under WTO rules. So it is simply false to pretend that a buy Canadian program would not be within that framework of the WTO.

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Thunder Bay—Rainy River and I know very well the value of procuring things from people in the area who make them. I have always been of the belief that if Ontario taxpayers, for example, are going to be paying for a product to be used in Ontario and it can be built in Ontario, it seems to me that there should be a procurement policy to make sure that happens. I am thinking in particular right now of Bombardier streetcars, which are made right in Thunder Bay. If they are intended to go to Toronto, it seems to me that we should be doing everything in our power to make that happen. This is far from being protectionist.

I would like to ask the hon. member this. In light of Spain's comments today that procurement is one of the problems it is having now with the Canada-EU trade agreement, I wonder if our member would be interested in commenting on why it is so difficult to convince people that we need to procure things that are going to help the most people in the most communities.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I was in Thunder Bay just last Friday night. I know how hard the member works in the House of Commons. He is a real workhorse. Being in Thunder Bay, I was aware how hard working and visible he is for his constituents in his riding, speaking on their behalf and presenting legislation. He is another phenomenal member, along with the members for Elmwood—Transcona and Nickel Belt who do a tremendous job in the House.

*Routine Proceedings*

The point that he raises is a very valid one. Every other industrialized economy has domestic procurement programs. It is only Canada that is caught in this old-time, 20-year-old rhetoric that attacks the idea of procurement and the use of taxpayers' money to stimulate domestic and community economies. It is only here that we do not have a domestic procurement program that makes sense and actually stimulates jobs.

Thunder Bay is one area where it has worked. Toronto is another. Where municipal and procurement programs exist, there has been an enormous benefit from using taxpayers' dollars to stimulate the economic development of the communities. It is something that is permissible under WTO rules; other countries use it. There is no doubt that it provides that benefit.

In this corner of the House, we have been the foremost advocates of buy-Canadian policies that would also allow us the leverage to negotiate the kinds of exemptions that would have been more effective than what the government was able to come up with. We have been the foremost advocates of those. We are still working on convincing members of other parties, but the reality is that if we had that leverage, we would have had a better agreement than what we were seized with in the international trade committee.

The trade committee report very clearly indicates there were real shortcomings in both the negotiating strategy and the results obtained through this agreement. That is why the majority of the committee members submitted the report with strong recommendations and looked very carefully at the due diligence aspect, in particular, ensuring that government actually works on the data; assesses the agreement's impact; ensures that information is collected; and ensures, depending on the estimates, as the Quebec ministry officials said, that there is real access to the \$1.3 billion in contracts. That is something we will have to see.

Those five recommendations very clearly say there needs to be more consultation, more exchange of information, and due diligence to collect the data and monitor this agreement on an ongoing basis.

• (1620)

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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 nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

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

• (1655)

*Before the taking of the vote:*

**The Speaker:** 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 Don Valley West, Public Service; the hon. member for Madawaska—Restigouche, Economic Development.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 54*)

## YEAS

## Members

Ablonczy	Aglukkaq
Albrecht	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Baird	Benoit
Bernier	Bezan
Blackburn	Blaney
Block	Boucher
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Cadman
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)	Carrie
Chong	Clarke
Cummins	Davidson
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Fast
Finley	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Généreux	Glover
Goodyear	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hiebert	Hill
Hoback	Hoeppner
Holder	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunn	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mark	Mayes
McLeod	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill-Gordon	Oda
Paradis	Payne
Petit	Poillievre
Preston	Raïtt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scheer	Schellenberger
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Thompson	Tilson
Trost	Tweed



*Routine Proceedings*

Uppal  
Vellacott  
Wallace  
Warkentin  
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)  
Weston (Saint John)  
Wong  
Yelich

Van Kesteren  
Verner  
Warawa  
Watson  
Woodworth  
Young— 124

**NAYS**

## Members

Allen (Welland)	André
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Asselin
Atamanenko	Bagnell
Bains	Beaudin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Bevington
Bigras	Blais
Bonsant	Bouchard
Brison	Brunelle
Byrne	Cannis
Cardin	Carrier
Charlton	Chow
Christopherson	Coady
Comartin	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	D'Amours
Davies (Vancouver East)	Demers
Deschamps	Desnoyers
Dhaliwal	Dhalla
Dion	Donnelly
Dorion	Duceppe
Dufour	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Easter
Eyking	Faille
Folco	Foote
Gagnon	Gaudet
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Guay
Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)	
Holland	Hyer
Hughes	Julian
Jennings	Karygiannis
Kania	Laforest
Kennedy	Lalonde
Laframboise	Layton
Lavallée	Leslie
Lemay	Lévesque
Lessard	Malhi
MacAulay	Maloway
Malo	Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca)
Marston	Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
Martin (Winnipeg Centre)	Mathysen
Masse	McGuinty
McCallum	Ménard
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Minna
Mendes	Mulcair
Mourani	Murphy (Charlottetown)
Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)	Nadeau
Murray	Oliphant
Neville	Pacetti
Ouellet	Paquette
Paillé (Hochelaga)	Pearson
Patry	Pomerleau
Plamondon	Rafferty
Proulx	Regan
Ratansi	Rota
Rodriguez	Savoie
Savage	Sgro
Scarpaleggia	Silva
Siksay	St-Cyr
Simms	Szabo
Stoffer	Valeriote
Tonks	Volpe
Vincent	
Zarac— 129	

**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

[English]

Order, please. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader had the floor before the vote and there are 10 minutes allotted for questions and comments. However, since the parliamentary secretary is not in his place, we will not have questions and comments.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kings—Hants.

● (1705)

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the report of the Standing Committee on International Trade on the deal signed between the Conservative government here in Canada and the Obama administration on buy American that ostensibly was to deal with the risk that U.S. protectionism and protectionist policies represent to Canadian industry.

In terms of some historical perspective, I heard my colleague from the NDP earlier today credit U.S. protectionism in the 1930s with helping the U.S. emerge from the economic downturn. I have never heard that argument before. I am always curious to hear new arguments and I always find NDP economic arguments curious and not necessarily thought provoking, but from time to time illustrative of what happens when absolutely no time is spent ever studying economics in the real world.

Earlier today when I heard the NDP say that the policy that the Americans implemented in the 1930s that was principally responsible for the U.S. recovery from the Great Depression was a protectionist policy, I really thought I was going to fall out of my chair.

In fact, there is a global consensus that crosses party lines that trade is good, that trade is important, that trade creates jobs and prosperity, that trade helps create goods and services that are affordable for all citizens and consumers. Social democratic parties around the world, the British Labour Party and the U.S. Democratic Party, by and large, have embraced this. The only social democratic party in the world that is still tied to the past, still filled with global-phobic socialist Luddites, is the New Democratic Party of Canada when it comes to trade policy.

The fact is that during the 1930s what turned a regionalized recession into a global depression was U.S. protectionism. The U.S. protectionism in the 1930s that led to reciprocal protectionist action around the world deepened and broadened that depression and that downturn.

One of the things we have learned from that is not to repeat the mistakes of the past. If anything, in this current economic downturn that we have seen over the last couple of years, there is a global consensus that we ought not repeat those errors.

*Routine Proceedings*

It is particularly important from a Canadian perspective that we do not respond to U.S. protectionism with our own reciprocal protectionist measures, because we depend disproportionately more on U.S. markets than American companies depend on our markets. Anything we do ostensibly to protect our companies through Canadian domestic protectionist policies will have the unintended consequence of denying our companies access to the big prize, and that is the U.S. market and other international markets.

The provinces have shown great leadership on this issue. Premier Charest was very engaged in the discussion. He helped lead discussions with provincial governments and provincial premiers across Canada to reduce protectionist and interprovincial trade barriers that existed. Getting the provinces to agree on a consensus on subnational government procurement was a big step forward. It enabled the federal government to do more than it was able to do previously.

• (1710)

The U.S.-led global downturn teaches us the important lesson that we have to not only do a better job defending Canadian interests in the U.S., but we also have to significantly diversify our trade interests. That is something that the Conservative government, in my opinion, has not done enough of.

The Conservative government spent its first three years attacking and provoking China, and then a year sucking up to China, trying to make up for the damage that it wrought on the Canada-China relationship, a profoundly positive relationship going back to not just Pierre Trudeau, who helped open up China, but in fact, Richard Nixon, who was the first leader of a developed nation to establish diplomatic ties with post-revolution China. Also, to be non-partisan, former Progressive Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker was also instrumental in deepening ties with China.

The Conservative government's denial of the importance of China for the first three years of its government did not reflect what has been a bi-partisan commitment to deepen Canada-China ties, a commitment that established great social and political ties over the years, but today, now that China is leading the global recovery in terms of economic growth and opportunity, creates a huge economic opportunity for Canada.

Therefore, first of all, I do not believe the Conservative government has done a good enough job in defending Canadian interests in our biggest market, the U.S.; and I do not believe it has had a sensible, forward-thinking policy to diversify our trade relations with countries such as China, India and Brazil as examples.

Protectionism is popular. Protectionism, particularly during times of economic downturn, can be very good politics. That is why we are seeing increasingly in the U.S., in Congress and in government at the state level, a lot of protectionist policies. We are seeing it here in Canada.

The fact is, when people lose their jobs, obviously the first instinct is to protect themselves and protect their jobs. The first instinct is to try to put up barriers and try to do what they can to ensure that things do not get worse.

We are particularly vulnerable to the politics of protectionism in the U.S. right now. In the U.S., there is a statistical recovery but a

human recession. One in five Americans between the ages of 25 and 55 are out of work and it is not clear where the jobs of tomorrow are going to come from.

It is also important to realize that there is fear not just from unemployment in the U.S., but the fear of people losing their homes. As we see upward pressure on interest rates and the cost of borrowing and over-leveraging, we have had 15 years of over-leveraging in many ways, both in Canada and in the U.S., and now, particularly in the U.S., we are going to see a period where there is going to be a reversal of that policy. The over-leveraging that led to unsustainable economic growth is now going to be countered by a period of time where we are going to see a retraction of credit and we are going to see a pullback that will create a significant challenge both in terms of sovereign debt and in domestic or consumer debt for people to be able to continue to grow the economy in the U.S.

So I think protectionist sentiment in the U.S. is going to be something that we have to be vigilant on and defend ourselves from, and we are going to see the politics of protectionism in the U.S. continue to be popular. The political pressure on U.S. legislators to implement protectionist measures is not going to be reduced, it is going to continue to grow.

We have a Democrat-controlled Congress, at least until November. We will see what happens in November, but the fact is that within the Democratic Party in the U.S. there is a lot of protectionist sentiment. It is unintended in many cases, as we are not necessarily targeted by that protectionism and those protectionist measures, but we do get hit by the crossfire and the results of that protectionism.

• (1715)

When the Conservatives signed the buy American agreement earlier this year, it was largely too little, too late. Last year, many Canadians lost their jobs as Canadian companies were forced to move to the U.S. and relocate distribution and manufacturing because of the buy American clause that was in the 2009 U.S. recovery act.

The buy American clause, which went into effect in February 2009, requires that only American-made iron, steel and manufactured goods be used in U.S. stimulus projects. As a result, Canadian manufacturers were shut out of tens of billions of dollars in U.S. contracts. In the midst of a recession, this was a tough pill for Canadians to swallow, tougher still because the Conservative government had failed to live up to its promise to defend Canadian economic interests in the U.S.

One year later, the Conservatives signed a deal with the U.S. to open up a small number of 2009 U.S. stimulus packages to Canadian firms. This "temporary agreement", and it is referred to in the agreement as a temporary agreement, for local projects runs only until September 2011 when the last of the 2009 U.S. recovery act is set to expire. However, the vast majority of the U.S. stimulus money from 2009 was spent before the agreement even went into place.

According to media reports, less than \$5 billion in local U.S. projects, just to put this into context, 2% of U.S. recovery act funding would be open to Canadian bids under this agreement. Effectively, we were not at the table. We did not defend our interests. If we are not at the table, we are typically on the menu when we are dealing with the Americans on issues like this. American companies had the big meal and we were left with the crumbs. Our Canadian companies were just left with the crumbs because the stimulus package was largely spent.

Even these estimates may be high. An internal Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters briefing notes that. "All funds under the recovery act must be 'under contract by February 2010'".

This suggests that the window had already closed for most Canadian companies even before the buy American agreement had been signed.

In exchange, Canada gave the U.S. unprecedented access to a wide range of local and municipal construction projects until September 2011. What we learned during the committee hearings is that there have been no quantitative analyses of what we were giving up for what we were achieving.

Earlier tonight I credited the Canadian provinces for their leadership on this and for their proactive leadership in eliminating sub-national government protectionism, which I believe that is important, but I also believe it is important to recognize what we were giving up and compare it to what we were gaining. I think that is where the Conservative government failed Canadians during those negotiations.

From February 2010, when the deal was signed, until it expires in September 2011, Canadian municipalities covered under this deal are expected to spend \$25 billion on construction services. In the Conservative government's haste to declare a victory over buy American, the Conservatives signed a largely one-sided agreement. There is no reciprocal access to local U.S. infrastructure programs during the same time. For this time period, the Conservatives signed a one-sided deal that is disproportionately beneficial to U.S. manufacturers as opposed to Canadian manufacturers.

There is a number of spending bills before the U.S. Congress with buy American provisions that are not even covered under this deal and there are more to come. The government ought to have negotiated an approach to prevent these kinds of measures applying to Canada on a go-forward basis. Instead, we have to repeat this process. Every time we see a piece of U.S. legislation, stimulus or otherwise, that has protectionist measures that hurt Canadian interests, we have to go through this whole process again. Based on the last model, we will see once again that it will take the Conservatives almost a year to get any action and then, whatever package, stimulus proposal or government legislation in the U.S. that is introduced, by the time it expires we will have already missed out.

It is clear that Canada needs a better deal, but with Canada's local procurement markets already open to the U.S. until September 2011, what is left for Canada to negotiate away?

• (1720)

We need a fair, permanent and comprehensive agreement that would give Canada a meaningful exemption from buy American-

### *Routine Proceedings*

type protectionism. We need an agreement with lower thresholds that allows small and medium-sized enterprises, the backbone of our Canadian economy, to sell their goods in the U.S. while keeping jobs here in Canada.

Instead of playing shortsighted domestic politics, the Conservative government should have focused on building the necessarily relationships with the U.S. to achieve a long-term solution for Canada. However, with four Conservative ministers in four years, the Conservatives simply have not been able to build the kinds of relationships on the international scene, on trade matters particularly, to defend Canadian interests effectively.

Trade relations are simply human relations. With the Conservatives changing trade ministers four time in four years, that has denied any individual trade minister the opportunity to develop the kinds of deep relationships that can defend our interests.

Compare that with any other OECD country. No other competitor and no other country that I am aware of changes their trade ministers every year. The Conservative government, however, has gone through four trade ministers in four years and that has had a deleterious effect on any one of those trade ministers' capacity to defend Canadian interests abroad.

Canada cannot afford to let the U.S. off the hook by pretending that the buy American problem has been solved by this agreement.

I hope that my colleagues across the aisle will join us in an honest, open and constructive discussion about the buy American barriers that are still in place. Canadian firms and workers who rely on access to the U.S. market deserve nothing less.

It is also important to recognize that as the largest energy supplier to the U.S., we have an opportunity to reframe our trade discussions with the U.S. When we go to the U.S. and we say that buy American policies are bad, that automatically puts the American legislators on the defensive. There is a more constructive way to approach this.

First, the threat to jobs in the U.S. will not come as much from Canadian companies as some of the emerging economies, such as China, India and those areas of growth and opportunity. Any artificial barriers between the Canadian economy and the U.S. economy will cost jobs on both sides.

In terms of the energy side, being the biggest energy provider to the U.S. and recognizing the importance of energy security to the Americans, we have the capacity to leverage on that power, more broadly, to deepen our ties with the Americans and to deepen our economic relationship with the Americans to the extent that it would be self-evident to American legislators that it would be counter-productive, dangerous and damaging to the American economy to put any trade protectionist measures in place that would artificially divide the Canadian and the U.S. economy.

*Routine Proceedings*

Buy American is one of the protectionist measures we face as Canadians, and one which the Conservative government has not done enough to defend us against. Country of origin labelling is another one. I would argue that the western hemisphere travel initiative is a measure that the Americans introduced that does lead to a thickening of the Canada-U.S. border. I do not believe the Conservatives have done enough to defend ourselves on that.

However, when we focus on the power that the energy relationship gives us, I believe we should be deepening our discussions with the Americans in three critical areas. The first one is on carbon pricing. When we are the American's biggest energy provider, we should not be sitting back as a bystander as they develop a price for carbon, a price mechanism that will have a border mechanism, a carbon tariff that will apply to our exports to the U.S. We should be working with the Americans to develop an approach on that.

We should also be working with the Americans to deepen our relationship around the modernization of energy grids. Some of the provincial and state governments are engaged in that, but there is a area of national leadership and investment. The Obama administration is putting \$7 billion into grid modernization and I think we should be working with them on that.

We should also be deepening our relationship with the Americans on the research and development of clean energy technology. The fact is that when it comes to things like carbon capture and storage, Canada has been a global leader. Forty percent of the world's carbon that is sequestered is stored in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and yet when the Americans signed a deal with China a few months ago to deepen their relationship on carbon capture and storage and on the research and development of those solutions, Canada was not at the table.

• (1725)

We need to be at the table. We need to deepen our trade relations and our energy relations with the Americans. That is the best way for us to defend ourselves against American protectionism.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the member many times before on this particular topic. He and I went on a trip to Washington and met with various senators on this and other issues of interest to both sides.

He was absolutely right when he explained how the government was late getting into negotiations with the Americans. When the agreement was signed, we ended up getting the short end of the stick because, as he explained, by the time we signed the agreement, almost all of the available business was already spoken for. Potentially, only 2% of the U.S. recovery act money will even be open to Canadian bids at the end of the day.

Why was the government not aggressive earlier on this file and what was its intention in negotiating a one-sided deal, which gives us very little opportunities in the U.S., but, in turn, provides the U.S. a lot of opportunities in our market?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, as part of the Canada-U.S. parliamentary association, the member and I travelled to the U.S., along with members from all parties.

What I really appreciated about the member's participation in that mission to Washington a few months ago, regardless of the

differences we may have in the House on various trade issues, is that he was not focused on defending partisan interests or fighting the partisan battles at home but in defending Canadian interests. I would say that about my Bloc colleagues and the Conservatives. When we were in Washington, we worked together to defend Canadian interests.

The Canada-U.S. parliamentary association in some ways creates or provides the model that Parliament ought to have when we are defending our interests internationally, putting away some of the ideological differences and seeking a common cause as we go forward.

I agree with him that this particular deal was based more on the Conservatives' desire to have a photo op and some sort of political announcement domestically prior to the one year anniversary of the buy American deal than it was in developing a long-term approach. That being the case, I want to see this debate go from what the Conservatives failed to get to what we as a Parliament, all parties working together, ought to try to get for the future.

To make this more constructive, we should change the channels and move away from the narrow partisan advantage I could score focusing on the Conservative failures to a more constructive approach in terms of what we all could do working together and sharing ideas on how to deepen the relationship between Canada and the U.S. and ensuring we are better able to defend our interests next time.

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was surprised that the hon. member would feel so comfortable with the philosophy of the NDP considering his exemplary and outstanding contributions to the trade committee on free trade and enterprise.

I want to correct a couple of things. First, this deal was not overt in terms of buy American and, second, subcontracts were readily available. Tens of millions of dollars worth of contracts were available to Canadian companies, which I would like the member to confirm. However, he did support it so I presume he thought the deal we had was better than no deal.

There was also the concern about what we gave up. Canadian municipalities already were allowing bids from American suppliers, so it is not that we really gave up anything at all but we did gain a considerable amount.

•(1730)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, as chair of the trade committee, always operates that committee with an even hand and is fair to members from all parties in terms of his deliberations and judgment as chair of that committee.

I can disagree without being disagreeable with the hon. member, but I do disagree with him in terms of this agreement. I think it was a one-sided agreement. I think the Americans knew that the Canadian government was very keen on getting a domestic political announcement in place and was operating against the time clock and effectively forced our hand and dragged the puck until most of the stimulus was gone, forcing Canadian companies to live with the crumbs.

However, we need to get this debate focused on the future and how we can deepen our trade relationship with the U.S. while we diversify our relations elsewhere and improve our capacity to defend ourselves against protectionism.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### LAKE OF THE WOODS AND RAINY RIVER BASINS

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC)** moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, in order to ensure the long-term ecological and economic vitality of the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River Basin, the governments of Canada and the United States should continue to foster trans-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration on science and management activities to enhance and restore water quality in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River Basin, by referring the matter of Lake of the Woods water quality to the International Joint Commission for examination, reporting, and recommendations regarding the binational management of the international waters of the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River system and the International Joint Commission's potential role in this watershed, in line with the International Watersheds Initiative.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today and introduce my first piece of private member's business, Motion No. 519. As the member of Parliament for the great Kenora riding, I am privileged to represent a region of this country that is renowned for its rugged beauty, the Canadian Shield landscape, thousands of pristine lakes, and frankly, a pulchritude second to none in Canada.

As a result, it should be no surprise that water is of paramount importance for our communities, our livelihoods, and our lifestyle. While many of our lakes remain pristine, others have become polluted with far-reaching consequences. It is imperative that we protect the health of our watersheds and this is why I am introducing this motion in the House this evening.

My motion aims to protect and sustain the vitality of Lake of the Woods and the surrounding region by calling for a joint reference to the International Joint Commission on the issue of water quality governance.

For anyone who has visited Lake of the Woods, they will say it is one of North America's natural wonders. I live on Lake of the Woods and I have the distinct privilege of waking up every morning to its beauty.

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With over 14,000 islands, 105,000 kilometres of expansive shoreline, its deep clear water and rugged shield landscape at the north end, surrounded by then shallow waters and sandy bottoms to the south, Lake of the Woods represents what most Canadians and in fact what people from around the world think about when they think about Canada and its natural diversity. Lake of the Woods and its tributaries are used as a source of drinking water, electricity, recreation, agriculture and fisheries in Ontario, Manitoba and Minnesota.

[Translation]

Like a number of lakes and rivers across the country, Lake of the Woods is enjoyed by the Canadians that live on its shores and those who come from far and wide to swim in its waters, explore its islands by boat, fish and enjoy the region's natural beauty.

[English]

Lake of the Woods is a major tourist destination as well. It is in keeping with other major destinations such as Mont Tremblant, the Muskoka region, Banff and Whistler. It is home to many cottage owners who vacation on the lake in the spring and summer from all over North America, in fact the world.

Recent data reports that tourism in the Lake of the Woods region contributed nearly \$92 million in gross domestic product to the province of Ontario, \$63 million, or 68%, of which was retained in the local area. Tourism supports roughly \$37 million in total taxes distributed to federal, provincial and municipal governments. Lake of the Woods supports over 2,900 equivalent year-round jobs to the region's economy.

As the walleye capital of the world, Lake of the Woods is host to a multitude of fish species on the lake, including muskie, walleye, bass, lake trout, northern pike and crappie. Indeed, Kenora's most prominent ornament is Husky the Muskie, which symbolizes our economic, recreational and traditional ties to fishing and time well spent on Lake of the Woods.

The lake is also a source of drinking water for three-quarters of a million people who live in communities on or near the lake and as far away as the city of Winnipeg. In more recent years, there have been concerns about the water quality of Lake of the Woods. The presence of blue-green algae has many people concerned about the quality of the water in the lake and its sustainability, as well as its effects on the health of humans and the ecosystem at large.

High phosphorus levels are one of the key agents causing extensive growth of blue-green algae blooms, which can be toxic. Wide swaths of algae impair water quality, recreational use, drinking water and fish habitat. High phosphorus levels are predominantly caused by fertilizers, and other sources of phosphorus include household dishwashing and laundry detergents, and other cleaning products.

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The good news is that local citizen groups and organizations in and around the Lake of the Woods are taking action. Longbow Lake Residents Association, Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association and Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation have been important partners in an effort to improve the sustainability of the lake and a shining example of how Canadians can make differences in their communities. They also demonstrate the importance of building partnerships between governments and local communities, so that we can work together to solve problems that are of concern to us all.

I would now like to take some time to talk about one group in particular, the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, who have shown instrumental leadership moving the issue of Lake of the Woods water quality forward in a meaningful way. It has driven or participated in important research, meetings and forums to successfully bring its concerns to the attention of elected representatives, both in Canada and the United States. It has been advocating for a reference to the International Joint Commission about water quality in Lake of the Woods for more than five years.

I have had numerous meetings with Todd Sellers and his extraordinary team, and I am compelled to play a part in a role in advancing the issue of the lake's sustainability, and in fact that is what led me to move this motion today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation for its hard work, dedication and commitment.

Dealing with the sustainability of the Lake of the Woods water quality involves working with different levels of government, including first nations, municipal, provincial, federal and state governments. I am pleased to report that quite recently, our friends and my legislative colleagues in Minnesota have taken similar action with a motion to refer the issue to the International Joint Commission for examination and report.

The Government of Ontario has also been proactive on this matter, commissioning studies, convening a variety of stakeholders and co-organizing the Lake of the Woods water quality forum. All of these efforts deserve our thanks and recognition.

The motion we are discussing today calls for the Government of Canada, along with the United States, to refer the question of governance of water quality on Lake of the Woods to the IJC for consideration and recommendations.

● (1735)

[*Translation*]

I have no doubt that when this issue is referred to the commission, it will make concrete recommendations to the governments, as it has for so many other issues throughout its long history.

In fact, the Government of Canada has already discussed this important referral with the United States.

● (1740)

[*English*]

I would like to take a few moments to explain the work of the International Joint Commission and its role in this matter, since it

may be a body that many Canadians are unaware of. Because water does not respect international boundaries, the United States is an important partner in protecting our transboundary water resources. Our long history of co-operation on water resources dates back to the Boundary Waters Treaty, which was signed over 100 years ago.

[*Translation*]

The Boundary Waters Treaty also led to the creation of the International Joint Commission, a key partner in managing transboundary waters shared by the United States and Canada.

The IJC has balanced binational representation and was created to deal with situations such as that of Lake of the Woods.

The IJC already coordinates other boundary waters, such as Baie Missisquoi in Lake Champlain, which is shared by Quebec and Vermont.

[*English*]

The IJC has a long history in our region of the country, including a 1912 reference for water levels and a 1959 reference to study water pollution in Lake of the Woods and Rainy River. This led to the establishment of the International Rainy River Water Pollution Board in 1966, which is responsible for supervising pollution in the Rainy River basin and making necessary recommendations.

One of the possible recommendations that could arise from an IJC examination of the current Lake of the Woods situation could be that the Rainy River board be extended to include Lake of the Woods. This is what the Rainy River Water Pollution Board itself has recommended, since Rainy River provides over 70% of the inflow into Lake of the Woods and about 55% of the phosphorous loads.

I am confident in the ability of the IJC to coordinate monitoring, research and recommendations across multiple jurisdictions of Lake of the Woods. I am not alone in that confidence.

There is strong local support for an IJC reference for Lake of the Woods, with resolutions passed and sent to federal, provincial and state legislatures by the city of Kenora, the municipality of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls, the North Western Ontario Tourism Association, the Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association and Rainy River First Nations, and in the United States by Buffalo Point First Nation, Koochiching County, Lake of the Woods County, Roseau County and the Lake of the Woods Soil and Water Conservation Board.

[*Translation*]

Before I conclude my speech, I would like to touch on the federal government's commitment to water issues.

Water quality is a problem that affects lakes and rivers across the country, and it is particularly important because approximately 7% of the world's fresh water is in Canada.

The Government of Canada is taking its responsibility as guardian of this precious resource seriously and is working with the provinces, territories and communities in order to ensure that it is properly maintained.

[*English*]

The question is, what steps has our government already taken?

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First, the Government of Canada introduced our action plan for clean water in 2008. Under the action plan, Environment Canada has committed \$96 million to clean up Lake Simcoe, the Great Lakes and the Lake Winnipeg basin.

The Lake Winnipeg basin initiative provides \$18 million over five years to clean up the lake and surrounding watersheds, in partnership with provincial actions. Lake of the Woods is included in this initiative. In fact, \$135,000 has been allocated for the development of a preliminary total phosphorous budget and water quality modeling for Lake of the Woods.

Similar to what is needed in Lake of the Woods, the goal of the Lake Winnipeg basin initiative is to reduce blue-green algae blooms, ensure fewer beach closings, keep in place a sustainable fishery, provide a clean lake for recreation and restore ecological integrity to the lake. The initiative aims to achieve these goals through science-based research and monitoring, watershed governance and a stewardship fund. This initiative will provide an innovative new model for integrated basin-wide watershed management.

Second, through Canada's economic action plan, we have also invested in water and wastewater infrastructure, with \$3.25 billion dedicated to construction updates and renovations.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Third, we are also committed to protecting Canadians and their environment from chemical products with the chemicals management plan.

[*English*]

This \$300 million plan is making Canada a world leader in assessing and regulating chemicals that are used in thousands of industrial and consumer products. Improved regulation of chemicals will contribute to improve water quality.

Fourth, new federal legislation will significantly reduce phosphorous entering our precious lakes and rivers. As of July 1, we are banning the use of phosphorous in household dishwashing detergents, laundry detergents and other cleaning products.

Fifth, we have tabled a new legislation, Bill C-26, to expand the prohibition against bulk water exports from boundary waters, which are already protected, to transboundary waters.

Clearly the government has taken many impressive steps and this motion is another important step.

Motion No. 519 provides a role for legislators on both sides of the border, and particularly in the House, to ensure the long-term sustainability of Lake of the Woods and the watersheds that it affects and by which it is affected.

Once again, I thank those individuals and organizations that have been instrumental in informing and supporting this motion. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and their respective departments for paying careful attention to the complexities of this issue and for supporting the important work we are doing here.

It is always a great opportunity to speak on behalf of the great Kenora riding and especially our special lake, Lake of the Woods.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for bringing forward this very important motion. It is an excellent initiative, and I will be supporting it. I do have to take a little umbrage when he said, "a riding of unparalleled beauty". I know he realizes Yukon is the most beautiful riding in the country.

Should the hon. member be fighting against the changes in Bill C-9, which would reduce the environmental assessment rigour? If a project with these relaxed regulations would get through, it could affect Lake of the Woods negatively and no one on any side of the House would want that.

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, so far, as I have said in my speech, I am very confident that our government is taking responsible steps to address the issues with respect to Lake of the Woods.

I am very confident in both ministers with respect to transboundary waters and their treatment of important and complex jurisdictional environmental matters with respect to rivers, watersheds and lakes.

I have full confidence moving forward, as do our constituents in our riding particularly on Lake of the Woods, that we are proceeding in a responsible manner and nothing is being overlooked.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to congratulate the hon. member on his bill. I would like him to elaborate on the problems with regard to his beloved lake. Are there any industries or cities located around the lake, or is it just used for recreational purposes?

Pardon my ignorance, but to better discuss this later, I would like the hon. member to talk about these problems.

[*English*]

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, I will address this in English. Unfortunately, my French may not be well enough spontaneously to give some of the technical answers, but it is an important question.

The algae blooms can be found anywhere in the lake. As I pointed out in my speech, more than 55% of the phosphorous load, which leads to these blooms, comes in from the Rainy River Basin.

It is important the hon. member know that Lake of the Woods is in an interesting geographical location. It is actually an intersection, in water terms, for another important basin that I spoke of earlier, which feeds into Lake Winnipeg. As we know, they have had some serious problems over time with that, with the exact same problem of high phosphorous levels and corresponding algae blooms.

I hope that addresses the member's question.

*Private Members' Business*

●(1750)

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member may recall that in the mid-1960s mercury was being dumped from a plant on the English-Wabigoon River system. I believe it was in Kenora or probably Dryden. We had to close the fishery down for a number of years because of Minamata disease.

What was the final resolution of that experience?

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, I would have to refer to two things, the history books and the fact that I worked on this in my legal practice. I was not around in the mid-1960s.

He raises an important question. I want to assure the member that I have dealt with the dimensions of this problem substantively I am pleased to report that settlements were made with Grassy Narrows First Nation. In fact, that river has gone under a tremendous transformation with the cleanup from all levels of government.

As part of the arrangements, the first nation now presides over some new territory on that beautiful river with one of the most amazing, if I can make my plug, fish camps there. There is great fishing there now and people are eating that fish. It is a wonderful place.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in this debate on the motion put forward by the MP for Kenora, which deals with the incredibly important issue around the Lake of the Woods. He has well described the challenge at play, but I want to debunk a few of the comments he has made so it is clear on the record for Canadians.

The government has taken some important measures like water and waste water effluent regulations, but unfortunately it is not funding our municipalities to allow them to move forward to comply with those regulations over time. Something it refused to do when it was asked by the official opposition was to bring in clean green conditions and attach those conditions to its stimulus spending.

It is also fair to point out in the case of the motion and the history that the MP for Kenora has omitted to give considerable credit to the work of other parties. I am sure he would agree that it is important to recognize a decade a good work that has led to the backstopping of this motion, and not just the non-governmental organizations at play, the tourism groups, the chambers of commerce, first nations, businesses and so on. This has been strongly supported by the Premier of Ontario, my brother Dalton McGuinty, who for years has been deeply concerned about the Lake of the Woods challenge, and its local MPP Howard Hampton, who has been considerably interested in this issue for some time.

I also give some credit, and I hope the member would agree, to his predecessor Roger Valley, who was instrumental in helping to launch this in a significant way in 2004. After all, it was Mr. Valley who brought the Right Hon. Herb Gray, former deputy prime minister of Canada and then the IJC Commissioner for Canada, along with the Right Hon. John Turner, former prime minister of Canada, together in 2004 to facilitate a tour of the area to raise awareness of our Canadian commissioner to deal with this issue in the context of the International Joint Commission. It is important to reflect that Mr. Valley is still considerably concerned about this as is our Liberal candidate in the very same riding.

The motion deserves support because presently the International Joint Commission only deals with the question of water levels in the Lake of the Woods. It is a problem that transcends water levels by far. It is an idea whose has come. Increasingly we now know if we are to manage our watersheds properly, we have to approach management of waterways and freshwater lakes in a watershed context. We have seen that, for example, with some success in the Fraser River Basin in British Columbia.

There is work right in the backyard of the House of Commons, the mighty Ottawa River, which on a daily basis has five times the flow of every western European tributary combined. It is a massive and mighty river upon which most of this region and country has been built. The Ottawa River now is subject to all kinds of layers of complex governance, different provinces, the federal government, aboriginal peoples, users of that waterway, industrial concerns, ecotourism and beyond. In terms of the Ottawa River, which I am convinced is similar to the situation in the Lake of the Woods and its watershed, we now know that we have to progress in the 21st century to a new form of management, which is management by watershed.

The time has come to take this up with the United States. Canada must approach its binational partner in this context. What we are targeting here, what the member is trying to put forward and what so many good interests and good faith people are trying to see, is some kind of Great Lakes water quality agreement parallel applied to this watershed. The damage is now at the back end. We see the net effects of years of improper management and years of delay. It is good to see that six years later, after this was launched more politically by Mr. Valley, this is now the basis of a motion.

●(1755)

I also understand that the International Joint Commission has been helping informally in the region with water quality conferences, for example, and that it is more than seized with the immediate need to see this matter dealt with more comprehensively.

As I said earlier, it really is a question of asking our governments to partner with the United States to refer the matter formally to the International Joint Commission. It is a formal step, a legal step, that must be taken. Of course, that would presuppose the following, and it is something that I am sure the mover of the motion understands.

It means that not only would a reference be required, but funding for a reference would also have to be attached. We cannot ask the IJC, which has no programmatic funding of its own. I assume that the member is working through his own government, particularly with his minister of finance, to at least put a marker down that if this is going to pass through the House of Commons, there will be funding for this reference so that it can be dealt with appropriately at the International Joint Commission.



I say this because a reference to the IJC compels and implies public hearings. Public hearings would have to be conducted. It is quite a lengthy and arduous process. It is also a comprehensive one. I think the member understands that. Again, I would ask him to make sure, and I would of course be here to lend him support in his efforts, that the requisite funding for this reference actually is earmarked by the government's minister of finance.

A lot of folks are concerned about the state of water in Canada. The government has taken some steps. I commend the government, and always have, for its environmental enforcement measures brought to committee some time ago. It was a good piece of work that pre-dated the government and pre-dated my arrival in Parliament. A lot of folks deserve the credit for ratcheting up our standards around enforcement in the environmental area.

I would also hope that the member has in some respects spoken to the International Joint Commission. We have discussed this motion between ourselves and amongst our own caucuses. I would hope that he has spoken to the commission to ascertain its immediate and potential receptivity to receiving this reference, so that it is ready to hit the ground running should this motion pass the House and should it be properly resourced by the government in due course.

Going forward, the question of fresh water is unbelievably important, not just for Canada but also for the planet. We know that the amount of fresh water the planet now provides is presently being oversubscribed in 2010 by almost 40%. Almost 40% more fresh water is being used than the planet is capable of regenerating.

One of the things I hope would help inform this motion is that government would make a commitment to reinvesting seriously. It has talked about a national water strategy. The member has raised some elements of how they want to move forward. What we do not have is the kind of policy capacity left at Environment Canada or at Natural Resources Canada to perform the kind of hydrogeological studies that we need. We need more data and better evidence to be able to arrest these kinds of problems that we are seeing in the Lake of the Woods area before we see them get to a point where carrying capacity is compromised.

If there is anything that the Gulf of Mexico crisis is teaching us, it is that it is reminiscent of the old Fram oil filter from television, where a mechanic would stand in the mechanic's bay and say, "You can pay me now for the Fram oil filter, or you can pay me much later", when the car is being towed in on the back of a tow truck, because they did not properly service the vehicle.

It is the same when it comes to our ecosystems and our eco services. What we are seeing, in the context of this motion, is a region and a watershed whose natural capital, as I describe it, has been drawn down so deeply, so aggressively and so quickly that we are now seeing problems with carrying capacity. Cottage owners, landowners, speculators and business owners are seeing their investments decline. The municipalities are seeing their tax revenues decline, because the net worth of those properties is being compromised.

The sports fisheries and the ecotourism operations, all of those things, begin to add up seriously. It is that integration of the environment and the economy that is fundamental to the 21st

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century. I think the mover of the motion, the member for Kenora, understands that. I am quite convinced it is implicit and part of the motion that he put forward.

• (1800)

On that note, I am pleased to support this motion and I look forward to further debate in due course.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of working on amending the 1909 treaty, and of taking part in the International Joint Commission when it was working on its new proposed order. I know that the International Joint Commission is doing extremely important work. When I saw the member for Kenora's motion, I thought it was both interesting and important. Because it is well-written, clear, precise and in French, I would like to read part of it. I will then comment on the proposal therein. As everyone can tell from my remarks, we support this motion.

The motion says:

—in order to ensure the long-term ecological and economic vitality of the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River Basin—

With respect to the words "ecological and economic", the vitality of fresh water in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, water that we share with the United States, is under threat, to say the least. That threat can affect the economic assets these waters currently represent. The same is likely true of the Lake of the Woods, which is why we should take care of it. It is an indispensable resource for life and pleasure, as well as for economic development.

One factor is not mentioned, but it will come into play more and more. We see it with the St. Lawrence River, which is not a lake but is fed by the Great Lakes. I am talking about climate change. This spring, the St. Lawrence did not rise to record levels. On the contrary, it showed its banks much earlier than usual, because of the effects of climate change.

The motion states that:

...the governments of Canada and the United States should continue to foster trans-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration on science and management activities...

We need to engage in science and management activities if we want to preserve water quality, and I would add water quantity and use as well.

The motion goes on:

...to enhance and restore water quality...

The motion refers to enhancing and restoring. Enhancing, because there has been a deterioration in water quality, which the member links to phosphate pollution, often from fertilizers, but also to economic activity, likely by industries. The motion says that the governments must:

...enhance and restore water quality in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River Basin, by referring the matter of Lake of the Woods water quality to the International Joint Commission...

Why the International Joint Commission? Because the lake sits between Ontario and the state of Minnesota. I will read on:

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...by referring the matter of Lake of the Woods water quality to the International Joint Commission for examination, reporting, and recommendations regarding the binational management of the international waters of the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River system...

● (1805)

My colleague said earlier that we unfortunately do not talk often enough about binational management of international waters by the U.S. and Canada—through the provinces first and foremost—and it is true. I thank him for giving us the opportunity to do so. He talked about the commission's potential role, but he said it would be in line with the International Watersheds Initiative.

I have here a January 2009 report from the International Watersheds Initiative, which was created by the International Joint Commission. My colleague let me read this interesting report. This international initiative suggests that local ways of addressing current and future problems be developed before those problems become international issues. I will read the quote in English, because I do not have the French copy:

● (1810)

[English]

The underlying premise is that water resource and environmental problems can be anticipated, prevented or resolved at the local level before developing into international issues.

[Translation]

Of course this means an integrated, ecosystem approach that takes into account how all watersheds are connected to one another. My colleague mentioned that there was a link, an intersection with a basin that feeds into Lake Winnipeg. Perhaps there is more pollution in one place than another, and we need to know how to manage that. We think that in order to study this issue, we must look further, that is, take into account the people around the basin who use those waters, new species of fish that may enter the waters, and the climate changes I mentioned earlier.

I would like to take a couple of minutes to say that last fall in Quebec, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement, or BAPE, studied a report entitled "L'eau, ressource à protéger, à partager et à mettre en valeur". This report was the result of 15 months of study and examination of 400 briefs, in other words, an incredible amount of work. It confirms what we already knew: Quebec has vast quantities of freshwater. With nearly a million bodies of water, approximately 135,000 cubic meters of water is available per person per year, which is eight times the global average. But that does not mean we can allow large amounts of water to be removed without any environmental impact. Generally speaking, lake water is non renewable; only overflow feeds into rivers and irrigates the land. Basically, we can never have too much water.

The only known study on water renewal rates was conducted by the International Joint Commission and deals with the Great Lakes. The report's conclusions are unequivocal:

The waters of the Great Lakes are, for the most part, a nonrenewable resource... Although the total volume in the lakes is vast, on average less than 1 percent of the waters of the Great Lakes is renewed annually—

Thus, removing any water at all would reduce the amount of water in the entire water system, most important of all, the St. Lawrence River.

When we consider all of the basin's areas of activity, there can never be too much water in the Great Lakes system or in the Lake of the Woods system and I—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Unfortunately, time is up.

The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

[English]

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today to Motion No. 519 on the issue of water quality management in Lake of the Woods.

As a member of the Boreal West round table in the 1990s myself, I spearheaded land use planning protection for Lake of the Woods and its wilderness values. It is a very special and spectacular lake.

It is Canada's sixth largest lake on the border between Canada and the U.S. About two-thirds of the lake is in Ontario, one-third is in Minnesota and just a bit of it is in Manitoba.

Lake of the Woods plays a vital role for sport fishing, tourism, culture and the economy of northwestern Ontario, just like Lake Nipigon in Thunder Bay—Superior North. They are very similar lakes. It is also an important headwater for Lake Winnipeg.

While water quantity in the Lake of the Woods is largely governed by a Canadian board, which is the Lake of the Woods Water Control Board, and sometimes the International Lake of the Woods Water Control Board if levels are too high or too low, this motion is about the lake's water quality for which there has been relatively little governance compared to other transboundary waters between Canada and the U.S.

Currently, Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources samples the lake annually and Ontario's Ministry of the Environment has also been involved in water quality monitoring and enforcement, but there has been a growing concern over contaminants over the years with nutrient loading and erosion introducing phosphorous into the lake, especially on the southern shore, creating eutrophication. The state of Minnesota recently designated the lake as "impaired water".

A June 2009 report released by the IJC examined links between human health and water-related issues in the Lake of the Woods and the Rainy River basins. The report noted that Environment Canada had identified 15 ongoing threats related to source water and aquatic ecosystem health, including the following: nutrient loadings; industrial wastewater discharges; municipal wastewater effluents; algal toxins and taste and odour problems; pesticides; agricultural and forestry land use impacts; natural sources of trace element contaminants; impacts of dams, diversions and climate change; and acidification.

With many of these water quality issues to deal with, there have been some moves toward tackling the issues in Lake of the Woods. A multi-agency working arrangement was established in 2009 to co-ordinate and collaborate on water quality issues in the Lake of the Woods watershed. The focus is on factors influencing algal blooms, nutrient loadings, shoreline erosion and the science behind the Lake of the Woods water sustainability plan.

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Members of the working group include: Manitoba Water Stewardship, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.

In any discussion of Lake of the Woods, the work of an IJC board formed in 1966 called the International Rainy River Water Pollution Board must be mentioned. This board reports to the IJC on progress to address pollution in the Rainy River, which is the main source of water flowing into the lake. The Rainy River is very important to this whole equation because an estimated 560 tonnes of phosphates flow into the Lake of the Woods every year via the Rainy River, stimulating eutrophication and algal blooms.

There has been some groundwork and activity around this issue in recent years leading up to where we are now. The Ontario government as well as the governments of Manitoba and Minnesota all agree that a binational body should oversee actions to protect the watershed through the IJC. This consensus did not happen overnight. Residents and cottagers around Lake of the Woods have been suspecting increasing levels of contaminants for many years. They started to see much more eutrophication, including, for example, more blue-green algal blooms caused by phosphates.

● (1815)

The Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association started looking into this early in this decade. Soon a non-profit organization was formed, the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, to explore the issue of water quality. It started looking into the science of the lakes, deteriorating water quality, doing more regular water sampling, and working on nutrient budgets for the lake. It consulted local stakeholders like the Lake of the Woods communities, first nations, businesses and others. They began to see that there is a significant issue with water quality on Lake of the Woods. The science was showing it and so the question soon turned to matters of governance. What should be done? Who should oversee this?

The consensus that the foundation and others helped to achieve was the following: that the International Joint Commission, which is very well respected for the work it does with the Great Lakes and other transboundary waters, should look into options, including whether it should play a role in Lake of the Woods water quality governance. All the city councils and towns around Lake of the Woods passed resolutions in support of referring the matter to the IJC.

We have residents and local stakeholders calling for a reference to the IJC for many, many years, with municipal, provincial and state governments echoing that call. It is an incredible consensus that has taken many years of hard work to get to this stage. It is rare that so many groups and interests are all pulling in the same direction on an international issue. The parties involved all deserve to be congratulated for this, especially residents and Lake of the Woods Sustainability Foundation. Without their work for the better part of a decade we would not be in this good position now. This is a real example of how to do it right.

Over the last year or two, because of the groundwork that was done by volunteers over the past many years, our Department of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. State Department have been working on a written IJC reference for Lake of the Woods water quality. These things are taking time to get agreement on the wording, but they are at this moment at the very final stages of crossing the *t*'s and dotting the *i*'s on the reference. It is likely to be presented within days or weeks.

I know that some people might say that this imminent referral makes this motion we are discussing today a bit of a moot point and perhaps last minute window dressing, but I tend to look at it as a welcome show of support. As I have mentioned, the provinces are on board. Ontario has shown a willingness to expand the mandate of the existing IJC board that deals with water quality in the Rainy River and the International Rainy River Water Pollution Board as one possible solution.

I do not want to presuppose what the IJC may decide on that reference, whether it will recommend that it agrees to take over governance of water quality in the lake and if yes, whether that might be under an existing board or by striking a new one. But either way, or with a different outcome, it is entirely possible that referring the issue of the lake's water quality to the IJC could improve the long-term environmental health and sustainability of Lake of the Woods.

This is especially true under the new Canadian IJC chair Joe Comuzzi, who held my seat for the 20 years before me. I know that Mr. Comuzzi will work hard to protect all of our border waters. Given the transboundary nature of the lake and the rapid migration of pollutants in Lake of the Woods, the federal government does have a role to play in ensuring the long-term health and sustainability of these waters.

Although there could be minor implications changing from a situation where Canada largely has de facto control already over Lake of the Woods waters now, to one of more of a sharing responsibility through the IJC if it assumes more of a governance role, it is certainly something worth looking at carefully. But if the governance of the lake is ultimately taken on by the IJC, we must ensure that it is given the appropriate support and resources to do the job.

Lake of the Woods is a very special lake. It deserves our best management, our best attention, and our best efforts.

● (1820)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking and congratulating one of the hardest working members of Parliament in the House, the member for Kenora, who has brought this motion before us.

I am so often pleased to praise the government, the Prime Minister and the Environment Minister on the good work on the environment, but again we have another member who is shining in the House. We have received glowing accolades from every party in the House. It does not happen often but it has happened today. Again, it is with great thanks to the member for Kenora.

*Private Members' Business*

Fresh water is a very important resource to us all. Not only is it vital to the health of Canadians and the economy but also to the ecosystem that supports it.

Lake of the Woods, a vital source of drinking water and a cherished home to thousands of Canadians, is experiencing a deep and deteriorating water quality. The Government of Canada is taking steps to do something about that.

The motion that we are discussing today, thanks to the member for Kenora, calls for a reference to the International Joint Commission to consider the question of governance in the Lake of the Woods.

We support this motion, as we all do in the House, as a reference of this nature is an important first step in addressing the water quality problems in this boundary of water.

The Government of Canada takes the problem of degraded water quality very seriously in the Lake of the Woods and across this great country. In 2007 the government announced the action plan for clean water. Under this plan we are investing a total of \$96 million in cleanup funding to restore the Lake Winnipeg basin, which includes the Lake of the Woods as well as Lake Simcoe and several other areas of concern in the Great Lakes such as Hamilton harbour, Niagara River, St. Clair River, Detroit River, in addition to the St. Lawrence River.

The unfortunate news is many of the members across the way did not support that good funding.

However, our action plan for clean water includes investments in regulating and enforcing laws and in monitoring our water resources. It includes research into the science that gives us a better understanding of the factors that threaten water quality, everything from pathogens, chemicals and nutrients, to invasive species and acid rain. We are also investing in the science that provides information on the quality of our water, including the impact of climate change.

Again, members across the way unfortunately have had a history for a long time of voting against these good programs. I am glad they are on board today.

Lake Winnipeg is Canada's fifth largest lake and an important resource for local communities. The watershed covers one million square kilometres encompassing Lake of the Woods and several other sub-basins, and is a vital economic and freshwater resource and recreational attraction for three provinces and two U.S. states.

Governments, scientists and environmental groups have become concerned about issues in the lake including invasive species, blue-green algal blooms, e-coli, and other symptoms of water quality deterioration.

The Lake Winnipeg initiative launched in 2007, as part of the action plan for clean water, is a \$17.7 million four-year program that uses a science-based approach to restore the health of the lake and the basin. One would wonder, did the opposition members support that \$17.7 million. Unfortunately not, but the government did and we are moving forward. There is always good news. There is always light.

The overall objective of the Lake Winnipeg basin initiative is to help improve the water quality of Lake Winnipeg by identifying, assessing, and addressing key water quality issues within the lake and its contributing watershed including Lake of the Woods.

As part of the initiative a number of research and monitoring activities are being conducted to study a variety of factors that affect water quality including the toxin content of harmful blooms of blue-green algal.

Environment Canada researchers are working with scientists, stakeholders, universities and governments to develop the science that will aid decision-makers in cleaning up the Lake Winnipeg basin.

In the Great Lakes basin, the world's largest system of fresh surface water, we invest \$54 million per year on science, governance and action to address water quality. This includes money to remediate contaminated sediment, to conserve habitat for fish and wildlife, and to combat invasive species.

• (1825)

Surely somebody over there would have supported the \$54 million per year on science and governance. Unfortunately, there is a terrible trend over there and they again did not support that. However, this government did and it is currently engaged in negotiations with the United States to update and renew the Great Lakes water quality agreement. We are getting it done.

First signed in 1972, this agreement has led to the increased co-operation and coordination in addressing water quality issues but, because of the new threats, such as climate change, emerging chemicals and invasive species, the agreement is in need of renewal.

We are working, not only with the United States, but also with the provinces, municipalities, first nations, environmental organizations and all other stakeholders to ensure that the renewed agreement will result in concrete actions that will address the issues facing the lakes now and in the future for this generation and future generations.

The Government of Canada has recently taken into account an action to address a long-standing threat of the quality of our water resources. We announced the introduction of new municipal waste water regulations to provide national performance standards that will help keep our water safe and clean so that Canadians can continue enjoying the social, economic and environmental benefits of this precious resource.

Dumping of raw sewage needs to end and our government is taking that action. Unfortunately, again the opposition opposes that and wants to see that continue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary will have three minutes left to conclude his remarks the next time the bill is before the House.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of order of precedence on the order paper.

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

### PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 19, I had the privilege to ask a question of the President of the Treasury Board regarding regulations that were to be changed to ensure that widows and widowers of fallen Canadian soldiers would be allowed to participate fully with some priority in public service jobs.

The President of the Treasury Board assured me that those regulations would come through and I am very pleased today to say that the regulations were gazetted on May 12. I am hoping that will encourage government departments to seek out for employment the widows and spouses of fallen soldiers.

However, I am concerned about that because, since 2005, medically released Canadian Forces veterans have been eligible for priority employment themselves in the federal public service. I am talking about people who have been medically released and have returned home. These provisions have created important future career opportunities for veterans but, along with my colleague, Senator Percy Downe in the other house, we are concerned about the low participation levels of most federal government departments in the program, participation that is vital in making these opportunities a reality for our veterans.

Information provided by the Public Service Commission shows that, in 2007-08, 245 former Canadian Forces members registered with the Public Service Commission for referral to positions in the public service. The majority of the appointments were made by only one department, which was the Department of National Defence.

DND made 69% of all appointments. It was followed by the Correctional Service of Canada with 7%, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada with 6%, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with 3% and Public Works and Government Services Canada with 3%. Veterans Affairs Canada hired only 2%. The remaining 10% were through a variety of departments. Sixty-seven veterans had their priority appointment status expire without finding a position in the public service. One left voluntarily before placement.

All of those statistics show that despite the 2005 initiative that tried to ensure that medically released soldiers had access to jobs, it is not happening. We need a more proactive understanding of this.

My concern is that, although the regulations have been changed to allow widows and widowers of fallen soldiers to get jobs, I have not seen an indication that the government will have a proactive program to support that employment practice.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to respond to two questions. First, what are the government's plans to promote the employment of the widows and widowers of fallen soldiers in the public service? Second, what plans are being undertaken to ensure that medically released Canadian Forces veterans are given jobs, can

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find employment and have make meaning in their lives as they continue to contribute to Canada?

Our veterans are those who have contributed greatly to Canada's success to date and they want to participate in the future as well. They want to participate in the economic building of Canada and the public service is part of the way that they may express that concern for the building of Canada.

Now that the government has been made aware of this problem, I am hoping there will be some set of instructions to deputy ministers to follow the spirit and intent of those regulations that were done in 2005 with respect to medically released soldiers and also to widows and widowers of fallen soldiers.

● (1830)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments from the hon. member opposite and I thank him for providing me with the opportunity to speak to this issue.

As the member will no doubt recall, in April the President of the Treasury Board responded his initial question on that matter very clearly. He told members of this House that within a number of weeks they could expect to see regulations in place allowing survivors of fallen Canadian heroes to access jobs in the public service on a preferential basis.

We are talking about the families of Canadian soldiers who have given the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country. We on this side of the House are proud to support initiatives that honour the families of these brave Canadians.

That is why I am so pleased to note that on May 12, the Public Service Commission published regulations establishing a new priority right for surviving spouses or common-law partners of employees, members of the Canadian Forces and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police whose death is attributable to the performance of their duties.

These regulations are retroactive to October 7, 2001, the date on which the Canadian Forces first began service in Afghanistan so that veterans' families are not left out.

As of May 12 of this year, spouses can add their names to the Public Service Commission's priority list, where they can remain for up to two years, alongside military and RCMP members who are discharged for medical reasons.

Canada's armed forces are fighting a war. We have sent our men and women in uniform into harm's way. For every soldier, there is a mother, a father, a spouse, a child or a friend back home. I will not stand here today and claim that this assistance will erase the suffering of a lost loved one, but it is my sincere belief that the government must support these families where we can and we will continue to do so.

● (1835)

**Mr. Robert Oliphant:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the regulations have been gazetted, which is a very important part, but we do remind the House that they were actually promised in December 2008. It took a considerable amount of time to make some relatively small changes.

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My concern continues, though, that the experience of the other program with respect to veterans seeking employment showed that only 245 people actually registered and 67 of them fell away and withdrew before they even got a job.

While the intent might be there and the spirit may be willing, the flesh may be weak in the government. The problem is that it takes a proactive government to seek out people to ensure those positions are being filled. Veterans Affairs Canada itself does not have veterans working there to any degree, as it does in the United States and other countries.

I would now like to hear a little bit less of a commercial and a little bit more of what the government plans to do to fulfill this responsibility—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member complains about the length of time it took. Well, the Liberals had 13 years while they were in power and they never did anything about it. So, it is about time.

The hon. member is likely aware that the Public Service Commission is an independent organization at arm's length from the government. When the Public Service Commission announced its intention to bring in preferential hiring for widows and widowers of Canadian heroes, we on this side of the House supported them 100%.

Officials across the government, including the Department of Justice, provided the PSC with any and all assistance in preparing the draft regulations and in moving them through the system as quickly as possible.

As I noted previously, the job got done.

[*Translation*]

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House this evening to discuss a question that I asked the minister of ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, on May 5. We know that, with respect to economic development, agencies are very important to businesses for development and for community projects.

A few days before rising in the House on this issue, I was reading an article in which the minister responsible for ACOA boasted that there would not be cuts at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. He guaranteed that the money allocated in the budget would be there.

I was not surprised when, a few days after his comments, the President of the Treasury Board rose and stated that he would cut \$1.7 billion from 13 departments and agencies. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is on the list of agencies subject to the \$1.7 billion in cuts. What a surprise!

It seems that the minister responsible for ACOA knew that cuts were coming and was trying to make the people believe, through the media, that he would do everything possible and that ACOA would never be subject to cuts. But what happened? Surprise cuts of \$1.7

billion were announced. We will certainly be able to see what the real impact of these cuts will be on the agency.

When I asked my question in the House on May 5, the minister, rather than speaking of the future impact of these cuts, spoke instead of the money and services provided by the agency in past years. He did not answer my question, which was a simple one: what will be the future impact of these cuts on the agency? What will be the direct impact on the agency of the \$1.7 billion in cuts to these 13 agencies and departments? How much money will no longer be provided to businesses? How much money will no longer be provided to community-based projects? That was the question and it was not a difficult one to answer.

The minister said that in the four years since 2006, the government invested \$105 million in Atlantic Canada. The minister needs to understand one thing. The government invested \$105 million, some of that in New Brunswick, which is roughly equivalent to what it is spending on eight hours of the G20 summit—less than eight hours, in fact. And the Conservative government is increasing that amount day by day. First it was \$193 million, which grew to \$800 million, then \$900 million, then \$1 billion, and now \$1.1 billion. Clearly, the sky is the limit. The government will spend the same amount of money in less than eight hours at the G20 as it invested in New Brunswick over four years.

Perhaps the government should have thought this over a little more, and instead of spending over \$1 billion on the G20, it should not have cut \$1.7 billion from the budget for economic development agencies that are working on economic recovery, helping our communities and our non-profit organizations, and helping businesses create jobs. Unfortunately, the opposite is happening.

I hope that the parliamentary secretary—I have no doubt that he is the one who will answer me—will be able to explain the negative effect that \$1.7 billion cut will have on ACOA. Maybe the government will see that the amount of money it is spending on less than eight hours at the G20 will be the same as what it invested over four years.

• (1840)

[*English*]

**Mr. Greg Kerr (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the way the member for Madawaska—Restigouche put this forward. I fully appreciate the fact that his party's credibility is suffering badly right now in the eyes of the public, but to deliberately mislead the public as he has just done this evening and the question he asked the minister is unacceptable.

**An hon. member:** It's your credibility.

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker. Accidentally misleading the public.

I guess the point is, and I appreciate that correction, it is frustrating when the member fully knows that this is the first time in the history of ACOA that multi-year funding has been put in place. All through the time and tenure of the Liberal government, it did not do that. It was a year-by-year thing.

Also this year, the budget has been increased for ACOA by an additional \$19 million to the Atlantic innovation fund and \$11 million per year to the community futures program.

There is no question that, because it is now secure multi-year funding, the programs are stabilized, the programs are going to be protected, and again I say it is misleading to suggest that somehow the department is going to lose its investment and lose its opportunity to support the Atlantic region.

Yes, the minister did point out about the money being spent in northern New Brunswick, to show that in fact the department does cover all parts of the Atlantic provinces, and the member is well aware that it was \$105 million spent since 2006 in the northern area, and that leveraged more than \$158 million for the region. I think that is good investment and it is good expenditure on behalf of the government.

Also through the economic action we know there have been additional investments. Because of the adjustment funds, because of Canada's action plan, additional money was spent over the last year or year and a half, and I think that has probably left a lasting legacy up there as well.

So I just want to point out that it does not help the cause to suggest that somehow ACOA is going to be minimized or reduced. There is certainly a review across a number of departments and agencies. No decision has been made as to how that is going to be implemented or what it is going to have, but I want to assure the member that programs certainly are a top priority of this government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours:** Mr. Speaker, that is the concern. In fact, we are totally worried right now.

We are unable to get even a simple answer. I raised the matter on May 5. This is June 2, and we cannot even get a simple answer

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regarding the impact of this \$1.7 billion cut on ACOA. What impact will this have on ACOA's operations? What will the impact be on business loans, and on community-based projects carried out by not-for-profit organizations or municipalities?

We are unable to get even that information. This clearly shows that the Conservative government is navigating in troubled waters. It is navigating with sunglasses on, or perhaps not sunglasses, but glasses that do not allow it to see where it is going, completely dark glasses. It is moving ahead, hoping not to make a mistake, when the mistakes have already been made.

As I said, just the amount that will be spent on less than eight hours at the G20 summit at the end of June is more than was invested over the past four years.

● (1845)

[*English*]

**Mr. Greg Kerr:** Mr. Speaker, I notice the member missed the point, so I will repeat it, because I am sure it will be of great comfort for him to know that this is the first time in the history of ACOA that multi-year funding has indeed been secured and there have been additional dollars put in the budget.

I want to assure the member once again that the great programs and services provided by the department are not in jeopardy and certainly are being protected. I think the minister tried to reassure him of that. In spite of the worries that the member likes to put up, I am sure we will even continue to put money into his particular riding, which I am sure he will be very pleased about.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:46 p.m.)





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