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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our friends in Alberta have the oil sands, but Quebec has a renewable resource that is worth even more: forest biomass, Quebec's green gold.

This was made quite clear at the second edition of the Symposium Énergie 2010 in Lac-Etchemin last May, which was attended by more than 150 people. Produced locally, this bioenergy stimulates the local economy and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We have abundant quantities of this resource, we have the equipment, there is a demand for energy from our institutions and homes, and we have the technical expertise.

Our Minister of State for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and the member for Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean announced in April that the federal government would provide \$100 million to support Quebec communities affected by the forestry crisis and to strengthen its forest economies.

The time has come for our institutions to switch to biomass and to contribute to sustainable development.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all my colleagues, to salute all those across the country who earn a living from the forest and its many by-products. Their work benefits us all, and they do us proud.

[*English*]

WOUND PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark June as Canadian Wound Prevention and Management Awareness Month.

This month promotes awareness of the importance of evidence-based wound prevention and management for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to highlight the excellent work of Dr. Gary Sibbald at the wound care centre of the Women's College Hospital in Toronto.

[*English*]

More than five million Canadians are at high risk of pressure ulcers, leg ulcers and diabetic foot ulcers. Of these, 26% suffer from a preventable wound and 3,750 Canadians with diabetes had a limb amputated as a result of foot ulcers in 2008, and 51% of those have a high risk of a second limb amputated in the next five years.

A new self-management tool, called “Diabetes, Healthy Feet and You”, was recently developed by the Canadian Association of Wound Care. It is already published in French and English, and will be soon available in at least a dozen more languages to ensure that all Canadians can learn about the importance of foot care in the maintenance of their health.

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[*Translation*]

AGRI-FOOD

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in April the Agri-Food Export Gala was held in Montreal as part of the international food trade show. During this event, Veg Pro International, a company in my riding, won the Canadian Export Business Award.

Established in 1952, this family-run business in Sherrington employs more than 500 people annually and is a Quebec leader in market gardening. Its produce is grown in Quebec from May to November and in Florida during the winter.

Along with this prestigious award, Veg Pro also won the 2010 Best New Product award at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association's convention and trade show in Vancouver in May. It won this award for its “Fresh Attitude” ready-to-eat salads.

Statements by Members

This industry recognition highlights the innovation and export approach of a market gardening company that has distinguished itself in a highly competitive market. Given my ongoing interest over the past years in Quebec market gardening companies, it is understandable that I am immensely proud of Veg Pro International's success.

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[English]

HI NEIGHBOUR FESTIVAL

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, June 5, it was my pleasure to participate in the annual Hi Neighbour Festival and parade in Transcona and to celebrate its 45th anniversary. It was also an opportunity to celebrate the new home of the festival's committee mascot, Hi Neighbour Sam.

Hi Neighbour Sam is an 11-foot statue that was commissioned in 1968 and built by local artist, Giorgio Barone, one of the many workers who helped build the national railway system and moved here to establish the historic Canadian Railway settlement of Transcona.

Hi Neighbour Sam now commands the center boulevard of Regent Avenue, greeting citizens as they cross the traditional boundary of Plessis Road into what was once the official town of Transcona.

Congratulations to the people of Transcona and to the members of the Transcona Business Improvement Zone who led the search for Hi Neighbour Sam's new home and for their good work in organizing a wonderful Hi Neighbour Festival.

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NATURAL DISASTERS

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the early morning of Sunday, June 6, a category F2 tornado ripped through the community of Leamington, Ontario, leaving behind structural damage and a cleanup estimated in the millions of dollars. Thankfully, not a single loss of life nor injury was reported.

What has transpired in the days following is a community pulling together, neighbours helping neighbours, municipal employees and volunteers working around the clock, churches and organizations preparing meals and places to sleep.

I am also proud to say that our government has taken swift action to offer assistance where possible.

I would also like to commend Mayor John Adams, the administration, police and fire departments, as well as the entire emergency response team for their first-class handling of this disaster.

Finally and most importantly, to the residents of Leamington, the resilience they have shown through these tough days makes it an honour and a privilege to serve as their federal representative.

POLISH COMMUNITY

Mr. Andrew Kania (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, I am a proud first generation Polish Canadian.

On June 13, I was honoured to welcome to both my riding of Brampton West and the church of St. Eugene de Mazenod, His Eminence Jozef Cardinal Glemp of Poland, His Grace Thomas Collins, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Mayor Susan Fennell, my Liberal colleagues the MP for Etobicoke Centre and former MP Jesse Flis, and other dignitaries.

We celebrated the laying of the cornerstone at the building site of our new church. This cornerstone is an actual piece of St. Peter's tomb in Rome and was blessed by Pope John Paul II, adding to the significance of the occasion.

I would like to express my congratulations and thanks to everyone involved in making the building of this church, of which I am a proud member, a success.

Special recognition must go to Father Provincial Janusz Blazejak and the Pastor of St. Eugene de Mazenod, Father Adam Filas. Without their dedication, this project would never have happened.

I would also like to wish both Father Adam Filas and Father Andrzej Sowa, the Pastor of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, congratulations on the 20th anniversary of their ordination, which also took place this past Sunday.

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● (1410)

PARLIAMENT

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament has been damaged recently by certain members of the opposition who ignore the truth and make over-the-top statements.

As well, many members of our national media routinely inaccurately report because they will not take the time to seek out the truth.

This irresponsible treatment of serious issues may score cheap political points, but it also lowers unfairly the public's view of Parliament and parliamentarians, even those who diligently work on behalf of their constituents.

Would it not be better if the opposition criticized government based on truth and reality? Would it not be better if more of our national media did their homework and improved the accuracy of their reporting?

This inappropriate behaviour on the part of the opposition and the media hurts Parliament and hurts democracy in Canada, all for the sake of cheap political points.

Sad and it is just plain wrong.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

LEBANESE PRESENCE IN MONTREAL

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on June 18, a sculpture commemorating the arrival of the first Lebanese people in Montreal will be unveiled in Marcellin-Wilson Park in my riding. The piece, conceived by Gilles Mihalcean, highlights the human qualities that motivated these immigrants to seek a new land.

The artist incorporated dalet, one of the 22 letters of the Phoenician alphabet, which was used by ancient ancestors of modern-day Lebanese people. He also included a Phoenician boat and a Lebanese cedar, which are symbols linked to Lebanese identity.

They have come so far since the end of the 19th century. People of Lebanese origin have integrated themselves into and put their talents to work for their adopted society. They have helped their families prosper in peace by working as merchants, artists, firefighters, police officers, judges, clerks and more. These men and women—over 130,000 of them—have enriched Montreal and Quebec and helped create the city and province as we know them today.

This glorious, deeply rooted, beautiful and fragrant cedar will forever bring joy to the lives of people in Montreal and Quebec.

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[English]

PARDONS

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday the parliamentary secretary asked for unanimous consent to pass Bill C-23 to ensure this legislation applies to criminals, such as Karla Homolka who becomes eligible for a pardon this summer. Our party has sought to fix the pardon system. On Monday, the opposition parties, led by the NDP, sought to ensure that it remains broken a little while longer.

Let me be very clear, victims cannot wait any longer. This legislation is needed to ensure other notorious criminals do not receive pardons. It is urgent to pass this legislation before the summer. There is overwhelming support for this legislation among Canadians and victims' advocates. Canadians want a justice system that puts the rights of victims and law-abiding citizens ahead of the rights of criminals.

Why will the NDP not allow the bill to be passed at all stages and give unanimous consent? We call on the opposition parties to support speedy passage at all stages of this urgently needed legislation. When we ask again, do not say no.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no government can succeed in the implementation of its agenda and legislation without a dedicated public service. Canadians have in the federal public service a tremendous force for public good. Our country has and continues to enjoy the benefits of a professional, honest, loyal and efficient public service.

National Public Service Week is the annual occasion when its best and brightest are appreciated for their dedication above and beyond the call of duty.

[Translation]

The public service is a tremendous source of know-how that is largely responsible for Canada's success. During National Public Service Week, we would like to underscore the fundamental role played by the public service in the past, present and future.

[English]

The test of all new governments is to quickly learn to work with the public service in a respectful, open and trusting manner. In this respect, the current government is too often unsuccessful.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP has again today revealed illegal activities directly related to the sponsorship scandal. This morning the Montreal daily *La Presse* revealed that, in 1997, one of the heads of Groupe Everest paid for cosmetic surgeries for the spouse of Chuck Guité, the former senior official responsible for the sponsorship program, in the hopes of obtaining more federal government contracts.

This is merely the most recent bribe brought to light concerning the now infamous Liberal scandal.

The sponsorship scandal cost Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars, money that could have served our country well. This is unacceptable.

The leader of the Liberal Party wants to raise taxes, and I have to wonder if what he really wants is to line the pockets of his party cronies.

I would also like to ask the Liberal leader to tell us what happened to the \$40 million still missing from government coffers.

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[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. After 40 years we still have not implemented many of the recommendations. In fact, we have a government that is turning back the clock.

While the government claims to be concerned with women's equality, let us take a look at what it has done. It has cut funding to Status of Women Canada; closed 12 of 16 Status of Women regional offices; ended independent research and advocacy; abandoned the court challenges program; nullified pay equity; jeopardized the reproductive health of women; denied funding to countless advocacy and equality-seeking organizations; and on and on.

Oral Questions

Today, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women will table its report on the study conducted on maternal and child health. With the G8 and G20 summits just around the corner, I hope the government will take note of the recommendations in the report and take this opportunity to make an essential change in the lives of women and children in the developing world.

The government has had ample opportunities. It is time for it to listen to Canadian women and to take action.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time the Liberal Party thinks Canadians have forgotten the sponsorship scandal, its seedy past keeps coming up.

Today, we learned of bribes of cash and cosmetic surgery in order to ensure government contracts. However, no amount of plastic surgery can repair the damage done to Canada by the Liberals' sponsorship scandal.

Until the Liberal Party repays the remaining \$39 million stolen during the sponsorship scandal, these stories will continue to haunt it. Until the Liberals repay the stolen money, we will continue to remind them that it was taxpayers' money that was abused.

No matter what the Liberals think, new members, new staff, new leaders, or even a new coalition will not change the fact that the Liberal Party spent 13 years in government nurturing a culture of entitlement that has been rejected by Canadians.

Canadians will not be bribed. It has been too long. When will the Liberal leader instruct his party to repay the money stolen in the sponsorship scandal?

* * *

[Translation]

AID AGENCY

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to an organization in my riding, La Mosaïque.

La Mosaïque, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary, is an aid agency that currently has 400 volunteers and offers more than 30 very diverse services and activities to a wide-ranging client base in the greater Longueuil community.

Support services, community kitchen, assistance with food, education and clothing are a few of the services offered by this community volunteer centre, whose mission is to strengthen the social fabric of greater Longueuil.

I want to congratulate the founder and now municipal councillor, Monique Brisson, the director general, Danielle Lavigne, and, of course, the entire team and the many volunteers. I also want to recognize the winners of the poetry contest, "Des mots en partage", organized as part of the 25th anniversary events for La Mosaïque to acknowledge the volunteers.

I wish this organization 25 more years of success.

[English]

G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton; the Calgary Saddledome; the Richmond speed skating oval: what do these places have in common? They are all real legacy projects that have remained after Canada hosted major world events. Not only were they related to those events, they were actually completed in time to welcome the participants to the event.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about the pork-barrel spending for the G8 summit.

How about the \$2 million in park improvements in Port Severn, which is 135 kilometres from the summit site? It would be nice if it had some grass. What about the G8 washrooms in Baysville, which is 30 kilometres away? People are calling it "30 kilometres of grief for a little bit of relief". What about my favourite legacy project, the restoration of the bridge to Kearney, which is 42 kilometres away, that has not even been started yet? The summit starts in nine days. The boys may want to get somebody on that.

What Canadians know is that even though the lake is fake, the misuse and abuse of their money is real.

* * *

• (1420)

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in another example of the Liberal leader blaming Canada, this week the Liberal leader compared our free and democratic Canada to a communist dictatorship in Cuba, but he was not finished there. Yesterday, the Liberal leader called on China to criticize Canada's human rights record. It is clear. Given the chance, the Liberal leader's strategy is to blame Canada.

While the world faced the global economic recession, he talked down Canada's efforts. While his members called our soldiers war criminals, he sat silently. He has even said he is embarrassed Canada is hosting—

The Speaker: The member knows that personal attacks are not permitted, as Standing Order 31 states.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the G8 has turned into. What incoherence and hypocrisy. Just as the government is turning its back on Africa, it dares to invite African leaders. What hypocrisy.

How can the Prime Minister explain his incoherent summit planning and his hypocritical foreign policy?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, Africa is very important to this government. More than half our development budget goes to that continent. Canada leads other countries in terms of keeping its promises to Africa. That is why we are carrying on the tradition of inviting African leaders to the G8 summit. Frankly, I am surprised that the Liberal Party is against that.

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they are going to cut funding for Africa. They are going to cut aid for African countries. They do not have the courage even to admit it to the African leaders who are coming to Toronto.

[*English*]

It is also a question of the government changing the venue at the last minute, splurging on decorations, inviting half the guest list with 10 days left, and the Prime Minister is going to shut down the entire neighbourhood. A bake sale would not be run like this. A children's birthday party would not be planned like this. Canadians have to pay the bill.

How is the Prime Minister going to explain to Canadians that he has lost control of Canada's summit?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party seems extremely angry that Canada is leading the world right now in terms of the economy, not just through chairmanship of the G8 and G20, but also, obviously, through the strong performance of the Canadian economy, some of the strongest job creation in the advanced world, the lowest debts, the lowest taxes, the strongest banking system, the strongest balance sheets.

The Liberal Party should be cheering Canada instead of insulting it.

Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we always cheer Canada, but we cannot cheer \$1.3 billion in waste.

The Prime Minister has not only lost control of the costs, he has lost control of the agenda. He wanted to talk about women's rights, but he is not providing any protection for women's rights overseas. He wanted to talk about the economy, but there is no progress on banking reform. He started calling climate change a sideshow and then was forced to put it back on the agenda. Anyone looking at this would think this is chaos.

How can the Prime Minister explain that Canada has lost control of its own summit?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that sounds to me more like a leader who is losing control of his own party.

The fact is this government identified child and maternal health as a major development priority at the G8. That initiative has been warmly embraced not just by our G8 partners but by others around the world.

If we talk about things like the banking system, Canada has the leading banking system. Canada is the model to which many are looking in terms of financial—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Ajax—Pickering.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a fake lake, fiddlers and a landlocked boat were just the beginning. A drive around the industry minister's riding reveals a tour de pork: \$50 million dumped on distant gazebos and goodies under the guise of a day of G8 meetings to re-elect the minister. Even if the delegates wanted to drive 80 kilometres away to see it, they cannot because most of it is not finished. Some of it has not even been started. This is not a G8 legacy fund. It is a slush fund for a minister gone wild.

Did the Conservatives refuse to move both summits to Toronto and save half a billion dollars so they could give cover to this pork?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do note that the Leader of the Opposition promised to hold the G8 summit in Huntsville because he appreciated the good choice that this government made.

All of the G8 projects have already been completed or are expected to be completed in the coming weeks. We are proud of them. They are creating jobs as part of Canada's economic action plan, and that is good for this country.

What I can say is that the Liberals' repeated attempts to mislead, to say untrue things and to spread falsehoods will not work.

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax—Pickering, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he should take a drive around because he would see that they are not done.

The nearby riding of Nickel Belt received \$2.8 million for infrastructure. All together, the industry minister's riding will receive almost \$100 million. What is he building with it? More gazebos per capita than probably anywhere else on earth, from nearly a \$1 million bridge to nowhere 42 kilometres away that has not even been started, to \$2 million for park improvements 135 kilometres away that is currently mud. It was approved in the name of the summits but has a better chance of being visited by aliens than Barack Obama.

How do the Conservatives justify this pork?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will speak very directly to the project mentioned by the member opposite. He speaks about a bridge in Kearney. This is not a G8 summit project and has nothing to do with the G8 summit project. Just because the member opposite wants to spread mistruths does not make them true.

Oral Questions

I do have a list of literally dozens of projects amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars in the riding of Ajax—Pickering. These dozens of projects in the member's own riding all have one thing in common: the member of Parliament for that riding had nothing to do with getting them.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel to the House of Commons was very clear: ministerial responsibility does not limit the power of parliamentary committees. They therefore have the right to call political staff members, if needed to advance their work.

Why does the Prime Minister continue to support his press secretary, Dimitri Soudas, who is refusing to testify before a parliamentary committee? Is he above the law?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's position is clear. We support the tradition of ministerial responsibility to Parliament. That is the government's position and our employees answer to us.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's position is clear, but it clearly contravenes the authority of Parliament. With his stubborn refusal to appear before a committee, Dimitri Soudas could be charged with contempt of Parliament.

Does the Prime Minister realize that, by supporting his press secretary, he is complicit in the contempt for Parliament and democracy? Such action is unbecoming of a prime minister.

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, prime ministers and ministers are responsible to Parliament. The government's position is clear on another matter: the people of Canada believe that the pardon system needs to be overhauled. The people believe, as I do, that this subject is far more important than holidays. I hope that the Bloc Québécois will work with us to reform this system.

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, like you, the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel of the House of Commons has said that the parliamentary committees have the power to call whomever they want in order to accomplish their work. Today is the deadline for Dimitri Soudas to appear before the ethics committee.

Will the Prime Minister maintain his irresponsible position and continue to order his director of communications not to appear before the committee?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the tradition is clear: ministers answer to Parliament and their assistants answer to the ministers.

[English]

The reason the coalition parties do not want to ask questions of the ministers is that they do not want the real facts of this great country to come out. They do not want Canadians to know that, through the

universal child care benefit, 56,000 children have been lifted out of poverty and that 5 million Canadians have registered tax-free savings accounts with up to \$16 billion in new investment from that. The coalition parties also do not want Canadians to know about the 300,000 jobs. That is the real Canadian story and we are telling it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Carole Freeman (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister truly believes he is above the law.

Does he realize that by digging in his heels and preventing his director of communications from testifying, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics will have no choice but to draft a report and initiate the process to find him and Dimitri Soudas in contempt of Parliament?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc and all the coalition parties have the right to ask ministers any question and we, as a government, are prepared to answer.

[English]

They do not want Canadians to know that this government is succeeding. Through our economic plan, we have created 300,000 new jobs. Five million Canadians invested in the tax-free savings accounts, which is \$16 billion in accumulated savings for the future. The universal child care benefit has lifted 56,000 children out of poverty. We are getting the job done and they do not want Canadians to know it.

* * *

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Liberal Party leader flip-flopped yet again, this time on the Afghanistan issue. The Liberal Party leader wants to prolong Canada's military presence in Afghanistan, but that is contrary to the will of the House.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that Canada will withdraw all of its troops from Afghanistan as of July 2011?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the NDP leader would criticize another party leader. One of his members, his House Leader in fact, basically denied Israel's right to exist by making extremist statements with impunity.

He is in no position to criticize the Liberal Party leader or any other leader in the House.

[English]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): So, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not prepared to confirm that Canadian troops will no longer be in Afghanistan after 2011. The cost of Canada's involvement in the war is \$20 billion so far. The NATO costs on training are \$1 billion a month. That is exactly the approach that the Liberal leader wants Canada to continue with.

Oral Questions

Would the Prime Minister tell us if he agrees that the Canadian money would be better spent on humanitarian aid, development assistance work, justice, human rights and peace negotiations in Afghanistan? Could he at least confirm that?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, successive governments, both Conservative and Liberal, have worked with our international partners and with the Afghan people to bring peace, security and development to that country. We are extremely proud of the work that our men and women in uniform, our diplomats and our development workers have done with our international partners.

Quite frankly, I do not think a leader who shelters an MP who makes anti-Israeli extremist statements without repercussion should be making any criticism of policy.

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the faulty deal that the Prime Minister signed with the coalition of the unwilling shows why only a judicial inquiry will ever get to the bottom of the Afghan torture scandal. The government tried to silence diplomat, Richard Colvin, who was trying to blow the whistle on torture. DND officials were sending memos begging to silence him.

Why did the government reassign people who were trying to raise the issue of torture? Why did it want to stop Richard Colvin from exposing the truth and reporting on what he saw?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, three political parties worked to get a responsible resolution to this question but, unfortunately, the NDP did not. However, why would we be surprised? The deputy leader of the NDP knew full well what she was saying when she made statements that could have been made by Hamas, Hezbollah or anybody else, with no repercussions from that party whatsoever. I hope the leader of the NDP will come clean and actually face up to his responsibilities on that question.

While I am on my feet, I also hope that he will help us pass a reform of the pardon system, something for which Canadians have been waiting weeks.

* * *

G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the government how much of its out of control G8 and G20 spending was being splurged on untendered contracts. However, we only received an answer from the Minister of Public Works and Government Services who would only talk about her department.

The vast majority of the G spending spree is being done by the Departments of Public Safety, Health, Industry and Foreign Affairs.

Will the government tell us how many summit contracts for those specific departments were untendered?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the member opposite have a specific example that she is concerned about?

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): The truth is out there, Mr. Speaker. It seems that everything from G8 catering to building projects have been sole sourced to firms friendly to the Conservatives and their Harris buddies in Toronto all in the name of security. It is little wonder why they are wasting more than \$1 billion.

Will the government release details on how many contracts were sole sourced due to special security circumstances? Will it agree to allow the Auditor General to immediately review all contracts?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is from Newfoundland and Labrador and I think she is going fishing.

I just challenged the Liberals to name one contract that has caused them concern. They are saying that 85% of contracts are untendered. That is false. It is not true. More than 90% of Public Works contracts have been tendered. The Liberals cannot name a single contract that was not tendered because they are making it up.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities just said a few minutes ago that the project for the bridge was not part of the G8 funds. I have in front of me the press release of June 25, 2009 saying the contrary.

[*Translation*]

The Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities said that it was not part of the G8 fund. The June 25, 2009, press release says the opposite. Will the minister apologize and withdraw his statement, or do I have to table the press release?

[*English*]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing are Liberal falsehoods, untruths and mistruths. That is not the case.

We are very pleased to be spending money on some 12,000 projects on infrastructure in every corner of the country, some even in the constituency of the member for Hull—Aylmer.

We have been fair, open and transparent in ensuring that every region in the country gets their fair share. We have done a good job and we have seen more than 300,000 net new jobs created. That is good news for Canada.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the press release says the opposite. He should apologize.

The Minister of Industry showered his riding with gazebos, public washrooms and sculptures that have nothing to do with the G8. The minister indulged in some serious pork barrelling.

Why is the Prime Minister twisting and sullyng Canada's international reputation?

How much of that \$1 billion did the Conservatives waste on useless partisan spending, thereby blatantly disrespecting taxpayers?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will confirm once again that the bridge in question is not a G8 legacy project. I will be clear. It is not true, it is a falsehood and the Liberals should stop their fear-mongering.

I will say that this government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars in the great riding of Hull—Aylmer. All of those projects have one thing in common: They are as a result of the hard work of the member for Pontiac, my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, because he has worked hard to ensure that the Outaouais has its fair share of infrastructure spending.

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*[Translation]***OFFSHORE DRILLING**

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources says that regulating offshore drilling is a shared jurisdiction and that the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces must be respected. We could not agree more. But offshore drilling in the Arctic is a federal responsibility.

I have a question for the minister. Within his exclusive jurisdiction, will he make it mandatory to build relief wells for any offshore drilling operation?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 11, the National Energy Board announced that it would review all the rules that apply to offshore drilling. It is doing that now. Currently, there are no permits for offshore drilling in the Arctic. Let me be clear: no project will be approved unless we are certain that workers' health and the environment will be protected.

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, although I am aware that Newfoundland is responsible for regulating drilling off the province's coast, I want to ask the Minister of Natural Resources whether he plans to follow the lead of the Government of Quebec and call on Newfoundland to impose a moratorium on offshore drilling.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, offshore drilling in Newfoundland is regulated by the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board, an independent body.

This board announced on May 12 that it would tighten evaluation criteria for future projects, response plans and emergency plans, and it has done just that.

Once again, I am appalled that my colleague is trying to discredit independent boards that are credible and have a very solid record.

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SECURITIES

Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec and Alberta finance ministers have harshly criticized the plan for a national securities commission, the old dream of the Minister of Finance. According to them, the current passport system works very well. By eliminating this system, the government will create conflict between its Toronto commission and the existing authorities.

How can the government claim that Quebec and the other provinces are free to keep their regulators, when it is prohibiting—even abolishing—the passport system?

Why are they trying to tear this apart instead of making it better?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the provinces can continue to operate with the passport system if they choose to do so. It is clearly a voluntary system. It is up to the Government of Quebec and to the other governments in Canada. We will continue to work with the 10 provinces and territories who want to work with the federal government.

Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he said the complete opposite at a press conference, when he said that passports would not be accepted by the Canadian commission.

Ted Morton said that federal financial institutions tend to be very centralized. With insufficient resources and a lack of autonomy, they will be empty shells.

In Calgary and Montreal, the Minister of Finance's old dream will become our nightmare.

Why does the Conservative government want to deprive Quebec entrepreneurs of a regulator that understands their needs and can speak to them in French?

Why replace the AMF with an answering machine?

● (1445)

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the proposed model for a Canadian securities regulator is a highly decentralized model. It will rely on the expertise that exists in the various provinces and territories in Canada and in various areas of stock market, capital market expertise. That will be respected. That is part of the model.

Canada is the only major industrialized country in the world without a national securities regulator. We want to move forward to ensure that this pillar of our financial system matches the strength of the rest of Canada's financial system, which is the strongest—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we learned of yet another example of the abuse of power under the government. The chief of staff to the ACOA minister has made clear the minister's plans to deliberately hold up funding for infrastructure projects in New Brunswick in order to influence the upcoming provincial election and benefit the federal Conservative candidate in New Brunswick Southwest, who happens to be the Prime Minister's former director of communications.

Oral Questions

If the government is as accountable as it pretends to be, will the minister stand and explain his deplorable actions in withholding funding for infrastructure projects that have been approved?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is an absolutely ridiculous statement by the member opposite. I know all members of the House have respect for the member for New Brunswick Southwest, both as a former minister and a colleague. I look forward to continuing our working relationship over the course of time.

As is clear through funding announcements made as part of Canada's economic action plan, the needs of all New Brunswickers, in fact, all Canadians, are put well before partisan politics. We will continue to work with our colleagues in the provinces and municipalities to announce projects as agreed upon.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, he seems to be calling into question the credibility of the member for New Brunswick Southwest.

The ACOA minister has stated that he would take his time to reach a funding agreement for the toll bridge in Saint John. Meanwhile, he is holding up a funding project in New Brunswick Southwest, while we wait for the former director of communications of the Prime Minister to get the nomination in that riding.

This morning the premier was forced to call the Prime Minister over these political backroom games being played by that minister's office. Have the Conservatives no shame?

Why are they punishing the people of New Brunswick? Why this culture of deceit?

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, the member opposite is totally off base and incorrect in the tone of his question. In fact, we are moving ahead with projects. In the province of New Brunswick, since elected in 2006, we have 26 projects under community adjustment, 57 projects under recreational infrastructure, 73 projects under innovative community funds, 39 projects under the Atlantic innovation fund, 50 projects under the innovation stimulus fund, totalling \$273 million. In fact, I am making an announcement with the premier this afternoon.

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[*Translation*]

SHELL CANADA

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, various sources have told us that, since February, Shell Oil has hired eight lobbyists in Ottawa to ensure that the Shell refinery in Montreal East is seen only as Quebec's problem. This is scandalous.

Does that explain the government's hesitancy to deal with this issue? Is it because it does not want to upset Shell Canada, which has its headquarters in Calgary?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, who lives quite close to there, should have talked to the union representatives who have said, time and

time again, that they are very happy with the efforts by all levels of government trying to save these jobs.

I understand that a better offer has been tabled. We hope that the parties can come to an agreement.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about that. Shell Canada, in Calgary, has stated since June 14 that the file is closed. But, as he knows, one of the two interested buyers, Delek US, an American branch of an Israeli-based holding company, doubled its offer and is now willing to pay between \$75 million and \$150 million.

On behalf of the 500 skilled workers and in support of the Fortier committee, I am asking the Prime Minister this question. Is he ready to intervene and call the big boss, Peter Voser, Shell's CEO in London, England, to ask him to consider Delek US's offer in order to save Montreal's petrochemical industry?

• (1450)

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows and he cannot deny it, that from the start the workers have been happy with all levels of government involved in this file. The offer has been increased. That is good news. We hope that all sides can come to an agreement so that the jobs can be saved.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP refuses to support the speedy passage of Bill C-23, meaning notorious criminals would remain eligible for pardons. Now I understand it has introduced its own bill, which is a far cry from our legislation. Neither victims nor law-abiding Canadians think it is acceptable for notorious criminals to be pardoned, while the opposition continues to play political games in Ottawa.

Could the Minister of Public Safety update the House on the latest move by the NDP?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP proposal does not do what it claims it will. The NDP proposal will allow dangerous criminals to apply for a pardon. The NDP proposal will require the National Parole Board to issue a pardon to an individual convicted of a sexual offence even if the victim is a child and the individual has been convicted of multiple offences.

Canadians will not be fooled by that proposal and neither will this government. We call on opposition parties to support the speedy passage of urgently needed principled legislation at all stages immediately.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SHELL CANADA

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not true that workers are applauding the government's efforts. There is nothing to applaud; it has done nothing to date. Shell Canada is still refusing to negotiate in good faith with respect to its Montreal refinery. If the refinery closes, 3,500 indirect and 800 direct jobs will be lost, and the petrochemical industrial cluster will be marred forever. The Conservative government has done nothing for months.

While business groups, unions, municipal and provincial officials take action, the minister says he is monitoring the situation. When will he stop monitoring and start doing something?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was the union that said it applauded the efforts of government instances in this matter. I would remind the House that we have nothing to learn from that party, which considers oil to be a poison. It would like to have airplanes fly with renewable energy, as though that were possible right now. It believes that oil is poison and nothing can be done with it. However, when it comes to saving a refinery, it asks the government to do something and take action. That is a complete contradiction.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the public will question the credibility of a Minister of Natural Resources who trots out such nonsense. If the refinery closes, we will be forced to import petroleum products into Montreal on the St. Lawrence River.

Have they understood nothing about the environmental hazards? They will export our oil in bulk, with no value added here. Have they understood nothing about the economic problems? Thousands of families will lose their livelihoods. Have they understood nothing about the social dangers?

Have the Conservatives given up on Quebec and are they not even going to try to do something about a key issue like Shell?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of nonsense, does my colleague believe that the government can invent a buyer, especially when the NDP scares off buyers by smearing fossil fuels? We are pleased that an improved offer has been made and we hope there will be an agreement. My colleague should instead look at the statements about Israel made by the deputy leader of his party. That is shameful and that is what he should focus on.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when he was leader of the opposition, the Prime Minister moved a motion on November 30, 2004, calling on the federal government to sell the 11,000 acres of arable land back to the families and farmers whose land was expropriated to build the Mirabel Airport. The Conservatives even reiterated this promise during the 2006 election campaign and made an official announcement in Mirabel after the election.

How do they explain the fact that thus far, six years later, only eight files have been or are in the process of being resolved?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with the hon. member for Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel. Our government made a good decision and resolved a problem we inherited from the Liberals that goes back to the 1970s. I was willing to go to his riding to meet with farmers and other people to try to resolve this problem as soon as possible. I appreciate his question.

• (1455)

Mr. Mario Laframboise (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for his openness, but can he confirm that the negotiation process will be simplified and that the outstanding files will be resolved by the end of the summer? It is the negotiation process and red tape that are causing problems.

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I said we want to act quickly to resolve this issue. I think he is being a little optimistic to think this could be done by the end of the summer, but I am prepared to work with government officials and with my colleague to resolve this issue as soon as possible. This was a Liberal mistake from the past and we are prepared to rectify it.

[English]

Mr. Francis Valeriotte (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative arrogance has stuck Canadians with an absurd price tag for the G8 and G20. Shoddy planning and mismanagement have run up costs well over \$1 billion.

Meanwhile Canada's agri-retail sector is pleading for help to secure tonnes of explosive fertilizers that sit without proper security, unprotected from the dangerous plans of terrorists and drug dealers. We have raised this issue for months and still there is no action.

How can the Conservatives spend over \$1 billion to secure and promote just 72 hours of meetings, while completely ignoring for years this most obvious security threat?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight that our government is committed to protecting the safety of Canadians and our agricultural industry.

In 2008 we consulted with the fertilizer industry and we brought in new regulations under the Explosives Act to protect Canadians. These regulations reflect our commitment to ensuring public safety and security, while minimizing the cost to Canadian industry and end users.

Mr. Francis Valeriotte (Guelph, Lib.): They are asking for help, Mr. Speaker, not regulations. These sites remain unprotected.

The government spares no expense to build a ridiculous monument to the Prime Minister's ego, money blown on a phoney stock exchange, fake lakes, sham lighthouses and boats that do not float. The Conservative principles are phoney but the cost to Canadians is real.

The Conservatives' priorities are misplaced and their hypocrisy is stunning. When will the government actually address the security threat posed to Canadians by these dangerous materials?

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, I personally have met with the agri-retailers on at least two occasions. They have also presented themselves in front of committee. We are aware of their concerns. As I also said, in 2008 our government consulted with the fertilizer industry, and we brought in new regulations under the Explosives Act to protect Canadians. We are finding a balance between public safety and security, which is extremely important, while minimizing the cost to Canadian industry and to end-users.

* * *

OFFSHORE DRILLING

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Chevron is currently operating an offshore oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico that is tragically named *Blind Faith*. That could also be the name of the Conservative government's approach to offshore safety.

Yesterday at committee, an oil cleanup expert testified that there is no known way to get oil out of ice-filled Arctic waters. We have known this for years, but the government insists on selling off more and more exploration rights in the middle of ecologically sensitive areas.

When will the minister admit his mistake, change course, and start protecting instead of endangering our environment?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on May 11, the National Energy Board announced that it will review its entire regulations, and the public will be invited. This is what we learned last week. The public will be invited to submit recommendations.

We enforce world-class standards. Let us be clear: Canadian regulators will not allow any offshore activity unless they are convinced that the security of the workers and the protection of the environment are ensured.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the NEB is going to monitor is itself. This is like asking students to mark their own examine papers. Parliament unanimously passed a New Democratic motion calling for a complete review of all federal laws, regulations, and policies. President Obama has put a suspension on all deepwater drilling and has further boosted U.S. spending on alternative energy.

The fact is, the government is pushing for drilling in even deeper and more dangerous water. The fact is that the government has cut all funding to green energy solutions. Unlike the Conservatives, Canadians will not put their trust in blind faith. Will the minister stop carving up the Arctic and restore funding for the green energy solutions we so—

• (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is sad to hear the member discredit the National Energy Board, which has a track record of 50 years. President Obama suspended the Minerals Management Service to get where we are now. We have world-class regulations, and there will be no

project approved unless we are convinced of the safety of the workers and that the environment will be protected.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Liberal member for Ajax—Pickering once again revealed his agenda when he said that prisoners' rights are a real priority. He is the same member who delayed the vote on the bill to end the wasteful long gun registry and who refused to support a bill that would ensure that one of the country's most notorious killers does not receive a pardon.

Can the Minister of Public Safety explain to the Liberal public safety critic what it really means to stand up for victims?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike the member for Ajax—Pickering, real Canadians understand the consequences of not passing our pardons legislation. That is why we will do what it takes to prevent notorious criminals from being pardoned now.

Enough games from the opposition. Again, we call on the opposition parties to support speedy passage of urgently needed principal legislation at all stages immediately. We are committed to preventing the pardoning of notorious criminals now. Why will the Liberals not support us?

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier the Prime Minister wrongly argued his case for denying his chief spokesman's appearance before a committee. In fact, yesterday at committee, the distinguished law clerk said, "the Prime Minister, and any minister, has no authority to prevent someone from appearing in front of a committee".

Why does the Prime Minister continue to order Mr. Soudas not to appear, in violation of parliamentary authority? Just what does the Prime Minister have to hide?

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ministers respond to Parliament, and parliamentarians respond to their constituents. That is a basic lesson in parliamentary democracy 101 for the member of Parliament, who should understand that he works for the constituents of Malpeque, whom he has promised year after year he would vote to scrap the Liberal gun registry. Now, under orders from his leader, he has reversed course, just like he would have to follow the Liberal leader if they ever had a chance through their coalition to raise taxes and undermine the enormous economic success this government has built.

Points of Order

[Translation]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to a study by PricewaterhouseCoopers, the forestry industry is showing signs of recovery, except in Quebec, where it is still deep in crisis.

Does the government realize that by refusing to introduce practical measures such as the Bloc bill on using wood in federal buildings, it is abandoning workers and communities in Quebec?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member is well aware, our government is the one that has done the most for forestry in Quebec. From the beginning of 2010 to May 31, 2010, EDC supported the forestry industry in Quebec with financial products worth \$4.160 billion.

With the Government of Quebec, we have announced \$230 million for silviculture and forest management and \$100 million to develop communities affected by the forestry crisis. Meanwhile, all the Bloc members have done is carp for 20 years.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives sold out the softwood industry in the infamous softwood sellout. They sold out our shipbuilding industry in EFTA. The witnesses at the trade committee have stated that now our key supply management sector has been clearly put on the table as part of the Canada-E.U. trade negotiations.

Why is the government so eagerly and irresponsibly willing to sacrifice Canada's supply management system? Why is the government ready to sell out the thousands of farmers and hundreds of communities in this country that depend on supply management for their economic well-being?

• (1505)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is clearly committed to defending and protecting our supply-managed industries. However, we are also committed to creating trade opportunities for our farmers and workers around the world. That is why we want an agreement with the European Union that will deliver a \$12 billion boost to the Canadian economy, and that is why that member voted against a boost for our farmers in the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement just the other day.

We are on the side of workers and farmers. They clearly are not.

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JUSTICE

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP refused to support the speedy passage of Bill C-23, meaning that notorious criminals would remain eligible for pardons.

Neither victims nor law-abiding Canadians think that it is acceptable for notorious criminals to be pardoned while the opposition plays political games in Ottawa.

Would the Minister of Public Safety update this House on this critical issue?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government seeks to reform the pardon system in Canada. The opposition parties want to wait.

We are committed to preventing the pardoning of notorious criminals now. We will also ensure that dangerous criminals have to wait 10 years before being able to apply for a pardon.

Enough political games from the opposition. Will they finally do the right thing and support speedy passage of urgently needed, principled legislation at all stages immediately?

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[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Mr. Yvon Vallières, President of the National Assembly of Quebec.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order resulting from question period.

In question period, the issue of the Kearney bridge project, which was originally included in a press release, was raised. This project could not be completed before the G8, and as a result, it was not funded. It did not get a single dollar of federal government funding. Let me repeat: it was not funded. If the Liberal Party had checked with Infrastructure Canada or with the town of Kearney, it would have discovered that.

I have a suggestion. The next time the Liberals get in a car for one of their drive-by smears, they should get their facts straight.

Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

A press release was issued by Industry Canada on June 25, 2009 saying that the Minister of Industry and the member of Parliament for Parry Sound—Muskoka announced four new projects, and these four projects included the bridge.

A picture is worth a thousand words. I have a picture here that is worth \$730,000. This picture, showing a G8 sign, was taken over the weekend, three days ago.

The Speaker: Order, please. We are getting into a debate here rather than a point of order.

It seems to me that the hon. Minister of Transport and the member for Hull—Aylmer have a dispute concerning the facts. I would suggest that they arrange to have a late show or something and settle the matter there. I do not believe that it has anything to do with the rules of the House. I have heard nothing here that suggests the rules of the House have been impeached in any way. We should move on.

Does hon. member for Hull—Aylmer have a rules issue?

• (1510)

Mr. Marcel Proulx: Mr. Speaker, it is a question of somebody wanting to mislead the House, so I ask for unanimous consent to table the pictures.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the photographs?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am afraid that there is no consent. Is the hon. Minister of Transport seeking consent for something?

Hon. John Baird: Mr. Speaker, I am not seeking consent. I can inform the member for Hull—Aylmer and the House that the federal government has funded some work on Main Street and some sewer work in the town of Kearney in the amount of \$730,000. It is all expected to be—

The Speaker: Order. This is a dispute as to facts. I do not think that this is a point of order. Consent was refused for the tabling of the pictures. We are going to have to move on to tabling of documents.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to paragraph 91(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House the annual report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in relation to the Conflict of Interest Act for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32, I have the pleasure to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Amendments to Annexes A, B and C to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants”, done at Geneva on May 8, 2009, and the “Convention between Canada and the Republic of Namibia for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion With Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital”, done at Windhoek on March 25, 2010.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. John Duncan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to

Routine Proceedings

table, in both official languages, copies of the “Yukon Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements Annual Report 2004-2007”.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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CELEBRATING CANADA'S SENIORS ACT

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (for the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-40, An Act to establish National Seniors Day.

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

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STRENGTHENING MILITARY JUSTICE IN THE DEFENCE OF CANADA ACT

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-41, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following three reports of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting: first, its participation in the Third Strategic Concept seminar: NATO's Partnerships and Beyond, held in Oslo, Norway on January 14, 2010; second, the Fourth Strategic Concept seminar, held in Washington, D.C., United States of America, on February 22 and 23, 2010; and finally, regarding its participation at the meeting of the Standing Committee and Secretaries of Delegation held in Memphis, Tennessee, United States of America, on March 27 and 28, 2010.

Routine Proceedings

● (1515)

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the following reports of the Canadian Delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the following three events: first, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, Economic Leadership Forum and Legislative Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan, from November 4 to 7, 2009; second, the National Governors Association Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from February 20 to 22, 2010; and third, the U.S. Congressional Visit in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from February 23 to 25, 2010.

[Translation]

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to table in the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-China Legislative Association concerning its participation in the second bilateral consultation held in China from September 18 to 27, 2009.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports: first, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the visit of the Defence and Security Committee, held in Washington, D.C. and Florida, United States of America, from January 25 to 29, 2010; and second, the report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the joint meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees, held in Brussels, Belgium, from February 14 to 16, 2010, and the annual Economics and Security Committee consultation with the OECD, held in Paris, France on February 17 and 18, 2010.

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*[Translation]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two reports to table.

First, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, in relation to its study on Canada's foreign ownership rules and regulations in the telecommunications sector. Pursuant to House of Commons Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

Next, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, in relation to its study on Supplementary Estimates (A) 2010-11.

[English]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(a)(iii) and the motion adopted by the committee on Thursday, April 15, 2010, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the use of new technologies and their impact on the House and committee proceedings.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in relation to maternal and child health, which the government has indicated will be a priority issue at the upcoming G8 and G20 meetings in Ontario.

[Translation]

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

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● (1520)

*[English]***CANADA ELECTIONS ACT**

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-543, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (voting hours).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill to improve the accessibility of our voting system and to promote the ability of all British Columbians to exercise their democratic rights.

My bill would change the voting hours in British Columbia for a general election. Currently the polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. My bill would set the hours at 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. This would bring B.C. closer in line with other provinces where voting is open until 8:30 or even 9:30 p.m.

There are many working families in my riding. There are many single parents. Many people work long hours at multiple jobs to feed their families. Closing the polls at 7 p.m. prevents many of these people from voting. Everyone in this House has experienced election day. We know that voting places are always busiest in the hours after work. In British Columbia, where the polls close at 7 p.m., there are long lineups. Many people cannot make it in time and those who do are often discouraged by the lines and leave without casting a ballot.

With voter turnout declining in the last several elections, I believe it is the responsibility of politicians to make sure that the voting system is designed to be accessible to everyone.

This bill is simple. It is reasonable. It would not cost one penny and it addresses a very real problem in our community. I hope the government will realize the importance of this proposal and work with all members of the House to make it a reality.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-544, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act (slaughter of horses for human consumption).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this private member's bill would amend the Health of Animals Act by saying that no person shall import horses for slaughter for human consumption, and also that no person shall export from Canada or send or convey from one province to another horses for slaughter for human consumption.

There would also be an amendment to the Meat Inspection Act to add that no person shall import or export a horsemeat product for human consumption or send or convey a horsemeat product for human consumption from one province to another.

The main point here is health. We are seeing the prevalence in horsemeat of anti-inflammatory drugs. For example, phenylbutazone is quite likely to be prevalent in horsemeat. It is a known carcinogen and it is illegal to use it in any animal that enters the food supply.

My bill would prevent these drugs that are given to horses from entering the food supply. Therefore, I would ask all members to support this bill.

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

* * *

POVERTY ELIMINATION ACT

Mr. Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-545, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have been supported in this work by the members for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour and Chambly—Borduas as seconders, and also the members for Toronto—Danforth, Vancouver East, Winnipeg Centre and Halifax.

The purpose of this bill is to impose on the federal government the obligation to eliminate poverty and promote social inclusion by establishing and implementing a strategy for poverty elimination in consultation with the provincial, territorial, municipal and aboriginal governments and with civil society organizations.

This bill is an opportunity for real nation building where no one gets left behind, to build healthy communities and strong economies by taking advantage of the momentum created by the work being done at the human resources and social development standing committee and by the Dignity for All campaign.

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

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

BANK ACT

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-546, An Act to amend the Bank Act (compensation for investment advice).

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to avoid a flagrant conflict of interest that costs Canadians a lot of money every year. This bill would prohibit banks, subsidiaries and their representatives from receiving any compensation from a person or entity in return for recommending that a customer of the bank or its subsidiaries purchase an investment product sold by that person or entity.

For investment products, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, index funds, hedge funds, and derivatives such as options or futures, there are harsh penalties for individuals, and there are even harsher ones for a legal entity, in other words the bank itself.

I hope to have the support of all members.

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

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-547, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (arrest by owner).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce a bill that would amend subsection 494(2) of the Criminal Code where a citizen's arrest is only permissible if a perpetrator is in the process of committing a crime, a very short and often impractical window, even if the proprietor knows the individual, saw the individual, and the perpetrator has already committed the act.

I thank my colleague from Mississauga—Streetsville for seconding this.

Imagine homeowners who witness an individual vandalizing their home or property. Under the current act, they have no legal right to detain the perpetrator because by the time they reach him, the act has already been committed.

For example, a shop owner has been repeatedly robbed by a known career criminal, and yet one day, an hour after stealing something from the owner's store, the criminal comes back for more. The shop owner cannot capture him and call the police. Under the current law the shop owner would be charged with assault and forcible confinement and would be thrown into jail.

When just such an incident occurred last year in Toronto's Chinatown, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism vowed to change the law, as did the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice. A year later all they have delivered is false hope and disappointment.

Routine Proceedings

Our laws should attack criminals, not the victims. My solution is in this bill. Now it is up to the Conservative government, so I ask, are the Conservatives going to stand up for victims or aid criminals?

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

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-548, An Act to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act (increased democratic producer control).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill today, which would amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act in four ways: first, to increase the influence of western farmers in selecting independent outside directors to serve on the Canadian Wheat Board's board of directors and correspondingly reduce the role of the federal government; second, to limit the government's authority to give orders to the board to those cases where the government's financial guarantees or Canada's international trade obligations might be affected; third, to strengthen the rules for a fully democratic vote among grain producers before any legislation could be introduced to change the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk marketing system; and fourth, to require the federal government to conduct itself in a more consultative and collaborative manner in dealing with the board.

This is a piece of legislation that pushes democratic producer control over the Canadian Wheat Board. I am pleased to note that last week there was a survey of farmer opinion in western Canada that indicated 80% of western Canadian farmers would support legislation that moved in this direction.

I thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre for seconding the motion, as well as the Liberal agriculture critic, the member for Malpeque, for his encouragement and support.

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

* * *

DOCUMENTS REGARDING MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the memorandum of understanding between the right hon. Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of Bloc Québécois. This memorandum of understanding deals with the issue of striking an ad hoc committee of members of Parliament from the signatory parties who will review government documents related to the transfer of Afghan detainees from the Canadian Forces to Afghan authorities.

* * *

● (1530)

FAIRNESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES (EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE) ACT

(Bill C-13. On the Order: Government Orders:)

May 31, 2010—Consideration at report stage of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, as reported by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities without amendment—the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

Hon. Jay Hill (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been the usual consultations among all political parties and if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, be deemed to have been amended at the report stage as proposed in the report stage motion in the name of the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development on today's Notice Paper; be deemed concurred in as amended; and that the House be authorized to consider the Bill at third reading later today; and when the House begins debate on the third reading motion of Bill C-13, a Member from each recognized party may speak for not more than 10 minutes on the motion, after which the Bill shall be deemed to have been read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-23 be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage, and deemed read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: Did the hon. parliamentary secretary in his motion say that the bill be deemed read a second time?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Yes, Mr. Speaker, be deemed read a second time.

The Speaker: I understand that it already has and it is in committee, so that part of the motion appears to be a bit superfluous. In any event, I assume the hon. parliamentary secretary is seeking unanimous consent for this motion because he has not given notice of it.

Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two more petitions regarding the decision in budget 2010 to cancel the exemption for post-doctoral fellows.

Routine Proceedings

This is an issue that has brought a lot of attention from the research community, certainly from young researchers. Their view is that this decision is very harmful for the research environment in Canada, particularly for encouraging young researchers. They are asking that the decision be suspended until the government is able to meet with the national working group on post-doctoral fellows to establish a course of action. They are simply asking for a bit of notice before their lives are turned upside down.

I have presented this petition in a number of other formats for other petitioners and I am pleased to present it again today.

[*Translation*]

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by 65 people in my riding of Québec, who are calling on the government to support a universal declaration on animal welfare. This declaration is necessary because animals can feel pain and suffer, and every effort should be made to prevent animal cruelty. More than one billion people in the world rely on animals for their livelihoods. Animals are living beings, and we must respect them and treat them well.

On November 6, 2009, we voted in favour of Motion M-354, to support the development of a universal declaration on animal welfare at all relevant international organizations and forums. Although some changes have been made to the Criminal Code, the existing maximum penalties are much too soft in relation to the seriousness of the crime. We must do more and we are in favour of a real reform of the animal cruelty provisions.

• (1535)

[*English*]

BULLYING

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of over 1,500 people from across New Brunswick who have signed a petition bringing attention to the House of the situation with bullying in Canada. Given the Internet, e-mail and cellphones, this has become a 24 hour, seven day a week problem. The petitioners are calling on Parliament to consider introducing legislation that would target that problem of bullying.

CANADA POST

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions. The first one is signed by 1,600 petitioners throughout Vancouver Island who demand that Canada Post maintain mail processing services on Vancouver Island.

They say that the proposed move will negatively impact Vancouver Island communities and cause job losses. They ask that the negative economic impacts be considered on the communities before a decision is made in consultation with local communities.

They demand that the government release its operational plans to Parliament and to the Canadian public with respect to Canada Post.

COSMETIC USE OF PESTICIDES

Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP): Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am presenting yet another petition to ban cosmetic pesticides.

The residents of Victoria call for an immediate moratorium on cosmetic pesticides until they are proven safe, and until long-term health and environmental consequences are known.

We are witnessing the collapse of the bee population. We are witnessing increasing allergic reactions in our population. These petitioners recognize that while pesticides may continue to play a role in insect infestation, the cosmetic use of pesticides does not warrant the risk that we are taking.

Victoria has beautiful gardens without pesticides and the petitioners are calling on the government to enact Bill C-368 for an immediate federal moratorium.

INTERNATIONAL AID

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present an 83-page petition. That is 83 pages on behalf of hundreds of Ottawa residents.

The petitioners draw to the attention of the government that nearly half of the world's population lives today on less than \$2 a day, that the United Nations has stated that if wealthy countries were to donate .7% of their gross national income to official development assistance basic human needs could be met for all, that since 1970 Canada has pledged many times to donate .7% of that income to development, and that Canada currently only donates .34% to development.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to put in place a timeline to donate .7% of gross national income to development assistance, and that this be delivered and administered according to the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act of Canada to ensure ethical donation procedures.

[*Translation*]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting a petition signed by citizens of the riding of Manicouagan in the House today. The petitioners are asking the federal government to pass Bill C-452 to give the Competition Bureau the power to inquire into and create legislation regarding fluctuating gasoline prices.

USE OF WOOD IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS

Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I have the pleasure of presenting a second petition signed by several hundred residents of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and the North Shore who are asking the House of Commons to ensure swift passage of Bill C-429 to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act with respect to using wood in federal buildings.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents of Fleetwood—Port Kells to present two petitions.

The first petition deals with an issue debated in the House earlier this week in a take note debate. The petitioners call upon Parliament to recognize venous anomalies to be a separate and distinct health issue that may or may not be related to multiple sclerosis and to immediately apply the principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and release a statement supporting the rights of persons with MS to receive diagnostic services and recommended treatment related to impaired cerebrospinal venous return by a qualified medical practitioner.

• (1540)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition, signed by dozens of Surrey residents, calls on Parliament to support a universal declaration on animal welfare.

ELIMINATING ENTITLEMENTS FOR PRISONERS

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

First, I have a petition from hundreds of residents of the Conservative ridings of Cariboo—Prince George, Kootenay—Columbia, Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission and Surrey North.

These petitioners call upon the House of Commons and the Government of Canada to pass my Motion No. 507, which requests that the government prohibit the payment of old age security and guaranteed income supplement payments to serial killers, and that those proceeds be allocated to a victims compensation program administered by the provinces.

CANADA-COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from dozens of residents of the Kootenay area of British Columbia. They call upon Parliament to reject the Canada-Colombia trade deal until an independent human rights assessment is carried out. As we know, both Conservatives and Liberals have betrayed the public who have said, tens of thousands of times, not to say yes to this agreement. These petitioners say no.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present a petition signed by students of the women's studies program of the University of Waterloo.

These students are mindful of the fact that violence against women is often motivated by gender-based hatred, that half of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence, that Canadians continue to be horrified by the hate that motivated the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre, and

aghast that the glorification and incitement to similar acts of violence by misogynists is currently legal in Canada.

For these reasons, the petitioners urge the government to adopt my private member's bill, Bill C-380, which would add sex, the legal term for gender, to the list of identifiable groups in relation to hate propaganda provisions in the Criminal Code. Hatred and incitement to violence based on ethnicity, race and religion, and sexual orientation is proscribed by Canadian law. Why not misogyny and all gender-based hate crimes?

[Translation]

USE OF WOOD IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to present two petitions on the same subject signed by hundreds of people from my region and several other Quebec regions who are asking the House of Commons to ensure swift passage of Bill C-429 concerning the use of wood in the construction and renovation of federal government buildings.

The petitioners are asking the government to send a very clear message to the people and to government about considering wood as an option and a solution in construction projects. The petitioners want the bill to pass to meet the needs of thousands of workers, families and communities.

[English]

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be very quick. I have four petitions.

The first one is calling on the House of Commons to have a free vote to pass legislation that would see the long gun registry cancelled and streamline the Firearms Act.

SKIN CANCER

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on skin cancer. The petitioners are calling for a national skin cancer and melanoma initiative to provide much needed access to newer drug treatments, and funding for research and educational programs.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is on life. The petitioners are calling on Parliament to pass legislation to protect human life from the time of conception until natural death.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): The fourth one, Mr. Speaker, is regarding medical benefits. The petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to adopt specific and precise legislation to provide additional medical EI benefits to at least equal maternity benefits for people who find themselves in situations with very serious medical problems.

HALIFAX CONVENTION CENTRE

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to submit a number of petitions on behalf of hundreds of petitioners from Nova Scotia who are concerned about a proposed convention centre in downtown Halifax.

The petitioners note that 800,000 people annually enjoy the view of Georges Island from Halifax Citadel National Historic Park and that a development of two towers will block that view.

The petitioners ask that the government refuse to provide public funds for this or any development that would block the view of the centre harbour and Georges Island from the Citadel.

• (1545)

[Translation]

JACQUES CARTIER BRIDGE

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by nearly 2,000 citizens who live in my riding in particular or in the greater metropolitan area, calling on the government to make the bike lane on the Jacques Cartier Bridge, which connects Longueuil and Montreal, accessible year round for pedestrians as well as cyclists.

At a time when citizens are being asked to pitch in to help reduce our carbon footprint, this would give the citizens of Montreal and the South Shore an extremely effective means of doing their part.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Collectif vélo 365 cycling group, which initiated this petition, and particularly Francis Casaubon and Reynald Desharnais for their determination and their desire to improve the accessibility and safety of bike lanes.

[English]

CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to present several more petitions on a topic that is very important to me and to this government and that is the issue of pardons.

The petition was signed by well over 1,000 constituents and people from all across the country who are calling upon the government to make some changes with regard to pardons.

The petitioners were very happy when the government announced that it would be making those changes but they are also concerned that the opposition parties will not see those go forward.

The petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons and Parliament to change the Criminal Records Act to prohibit the granting of pardons to convicted sexual offenders.

PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition contains thousands of signatures of residents from Thunder Bay—Superior North who support the restoring of vital passenger rail service to the north shore that was cut in the early 1990s. It would be environmentally friendly, efficient and a big boost to the hard done communities of Marathon, Terrace Bay, Schreiber, Nipigon and Thunder Bay.

Government Orders

The petitioners are asking for parliamentarians to support Motion No. 291 to return passenger rail service to the north shore.

FOOD SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from many residents of northwestern Ontario on food security and food sovereignty. They are concerned that with millions of people struggling with hunger and poverty around the world, our current policies encouraging industrial agriculture and production of agri-fuels can do more harm than good.

Therefore, the petitioners argue that these policies will worsen population displacement and raise food prices around the world.

CAFFEINATED BEVERAGES

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by dozens of Canadians who call upon the government to reverse Health Canada's decision of March 19, 2010, that beverage companies will be allowed to add up to 75% of the caffeine allowed in the most highly caffeinated colas to all soft drinks. Soft drinks have been designed and marketed toward children for generations. Canadians are very concerned about children drinking coffee in colas, as they acknowledge caffeine is an addictive stimulant.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FAIRNESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES (EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE) ACT

Hon. Lynne Yelich (for the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development) moved that Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, be read the third time and passed.

Government Orders

Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always valuable, when we are discussing any legislation before the House of Commons, to inquire as to its origins. If I am permitted, I will expound upon the origins of the fairness for military families act.

Some time ago, I was knocking on doors in the south Ottawa village community of Osgoode. I ended up on the doorstep of a Canadian soldier, Mr. Duquette, who, along with his wife, was just heading out on a date, only to be interrupted by a visiting member of Parliament. He told me the story of his service to the Canadian Forces in the Golan Heights. He served there for roughly a year. When he went into service, he left behind a four-day-old child to whom his wife had just given birth. Only one day after they were able to bring their young boy home, he was sent by order into the field on our behalf.

One of the things that helped him get through this time away from his family was the notion that he would take advantage of his rightful benefits under employment insurance for parental benefits. He, like all members of the Canadian Forces, pay into the employment insurance system and, thus, have every expectation that they should be able to draw parental leave just like the rest of us.

When he returned, he was startled and deeply disappointed to learn that he would not be able to spend time with his son because the eligibility period, during which people can collect their parental benefits, had expired. It lasts only for the year immediately following the birth or adoption of the child. Given that this soldier had been serving us overseas for over a year, that entire period of eligibility had gone by and, sadly, he would not be afforded the benefit for which he had been paying for many years.

He opened up the act to find out if it could really be true and, not only did he learn that it was as bad as it sounded, he also learned that it was even worse. He found that criminals who are serving prison sentences are able to defer their benefits until after they get out of jail, but soldiers who are serving our country on order from their government cannot.

I told him that I would work hard with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Human Resources to fix the injustice and I have been doing that for some time now. I am very thankful that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Human Resources agreed with me and with the Duquette family and introduced in this House the fairness for military families act in order to redress this injustice and allow soldiers to defer their parental benefits until after they get home from service.

This bill would have an impact on countless soldiers who serve us and put themselves in harm's way even though they have small children waiting for them back at home. It is a sacrifice that not only the soldier makes, but a sacrifice made by the entire family. The fairness for military families act recognizes that sacrifice and would help soldiers to acquire the benefits for which they paid.

When the bill first came through the House of Commons it was passed rather quickly and then went to the human resources committee to be studied further. We invited the Duquette family to testify.

The one logistical problem that all members in the committee will recall vividly was that Mr. Duquette was and is still serving us in Kabul, Afghanistan, so he could not be at the committee in person. His wife, who is still here in Osgoode, came downtown and testified in person and he by teleconference from around the world. It was the first time they had seen each other in months and it was a real delight to see their faces light up when, via teleconference in a parliamentary committee room, they were able to connect.

● (1550)

I was also heartened, as a parliamentarian, to see members of all parties come together in a spirit of non-partisanship to do the right thing and support the Duquette family and the thousands of military families just like them. Not only did we have a great session hearing from the family, understanding their concerns and the trials and tribulations of families that sacrifice so much and do so much good, but we, as a parliamentary committee, unanimously passed the bill and sent it back to the House of Commons in just one meeting. That illustrates the power of all parliamentarians to work together and get things done for our citizens, our families and our soldiers.

On behalf of my constituents, I commend members of all parties who participated in making this happen. It has been a real honour to work on behalf of this family and to partner with parliamentarians of every colour in order to get the job done.

I understand that we are getting close to the day when this bill will pass through the House of Commons. I would encourage all members to keep up the very effective work they have been doing to move it forward. I will be encouraging our friends in the other place, the Senate, to move with equal haste so that this bill can become law and families can begin to benefit from the fairness that they deserve and for which they have paid.

We have a duty to all of our citizens but perhaps a special duty to ensure that the soldiers who are protecting all of us get the benefits that they deserve. It has been my honour to play a small role in making that happen.

● (1555)

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-13 on the last part of its voyage through Parliament, the so-called fairness for military families act.

The proposed act will amend part I of the Employment Insurance Act to extend the period during which employment insurance parental benefits may be paid for Canadian Forces members whose start date of parental leave is deferred or who are directed to return to duty from parental leave.

This act will help relatively few Canadians. We are told by the department that it would be about 50 to 60 people a year at a cost of about \$600,000. Nonetheless it is important for those who it will assist, and it assists Canadians that we all agree are entirely worthy of that assistance.

Government Orders

As my colleague, the parliamentary secretary referred to, at committee we heard from Lieutenant-Colonel James Duquette, who was posted to the Golan Heights just four days after the birth of his first child. As such, he missed his opportunity to take parental leave. It was very nice to hear from him, from Kabul, and his wife, Anne, who testified as well. They made very compelling witnesses in support of the bill.

There is a curious factor, though, which is the timeline of the bill. On April 5, the government had a press release about Bill C-13, indicating it would introduce it. On April 12, the legislation was introduced and then it was almost a month before it was debated in the House. It was very quickly passed by the House and went to committee. It was not until May 26 when the human resources committee had this testimony, went through clause-by-clause and everything passed. It is now another month since it came back to the House. I do not know if it would have even come to the House this week if the Liberal Party had not inquired about its status.

As the parliamentary secretary suggested, all parties support it. Therefore, it makes sense to get this through. It has been kind of a case of hurry up and wait and hurry up and wait on the bill. It is important.

I can talk from a personal point of view. I come from a military area, Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. It is home to many serving members of the Canadian Forces and many more veterans. I think we have one of the highest populations of veterans in Canada.

It was not very long ago that I attended the funeral for Petty Officer Second Class Craig Blake, who was the 143rd Canadian killed in Afghanistan. He was killed in the Panjwai District in Afghanistan. He was a member of the Fleet Diving Unit Atlantic. He was diffusing IEDs when he lost his life. He has a wife and two sons. He was a hockey coach. He was remembered at his funeral for the wonderful community work he took part in and the great loss it was to his family.

I remember having a connection to one of the earliest deaths in Afghanistan, and that was Corporal Paul Davis who died in March 2006. I have spoken in the House before about flying home from Parliament on a Friday with a number of other parliamentarians. When we arrived in Halifax and turned on our Blackberrys, we heard the awful news that Corporal Paul Davis had been killed in Afghanistan. His father, Jim Davis, is a dear friend of mine and has been an eloquent and passionate spokesperson on behalf of military families who have lost loved ones.

I have many constituents who have served in Afghanistan and have come home. Even if they have come home relatively unscathed from their service in Afghanistan, their families have paid a very significant price. They make great sacrifices. To go months without seeing their family is a very difficult thing, even if they return home safely.

Most of us who sit in this place travel from somewhere else in Canada and we find it difficult, especially with young families as in my case. It is difficult to be away for chunks of life. It is very difficult for military families to be away for months at a time, as in the case with Lieutenant-Colonel Duquette and others, especially around the time of the birth of a child or shortly after. It makes no

sense that we should compound the sacrifice of that family by not allowing those families to have parental leave.

The bill will make a difference for those families. I think it could have been stronger. We appreciate the amendment that the government promised us. I spoke to this when it first came to the House and indicated that we should ensure we covered as many military families as possible. The government, through the parliamentary secretary, indicated that the government would do that and it would ensure that amendment would be in place.

• (1600)

Others serving abroad could have been included in the bill. With the cost of the bill being only about half a million dollars a year, it would not have been very much to add others, for example, those in police forces who serve overseas.

When Lieutenant-Colonel Duquette appeared from Kabul via video conference at committee, he was asked a question by an opposition member about police and RCMP. The question was “Should we be amending this bill, in your view, to include those people as well?” In his answer, Lieutenant-Colonel Duquette said, “Yes, I definitely think that applying it to police serving internationally would be very important”.

Even departmental officials indicated at that same committee that this would not have been such a terrible hardship. I asked Mr. Louis Beauséjour, a fine bureaucrat in the Department of HRSDC, “How much of a problem would it be to have this bill apply to other personnel beyond serving members of the Canadian Forces?” His answer was, “There was no reason other than to determine what the underlying reason for the amendment was”.

We could have amended the bill. It could have been a much stronger bill, but nonetheless it is what it is. It will assist a certain number of military families. I want to indicate my appreciation to the parliamentary secretary and to the government for providing the amendment that is part of the bill today.

When we look at employment insurance, we need to look at the big picture. This has been a topic of much debate in the House and across Canada in the last couple of years.

Our social infrastructure is not suitably designed for the kind of recession that Canada has undergone in the last couple of years. After the economic update of 2008, there was an outcry from people across the country saying that we needed to provide support to people who needed help the most. Among the most vulnerable people were those who had lost their jobs and those who would lose their job. At that point in time, the recession was just taking hold and the government was very slow to act.

Then the issue of stimulus came up over Christmas and January 2009, and the new budget came in January 2009. Everybody assumed that the government would seriously address the issue of employment insurance, that it would look at, particularly, the issue of access to EI and the fact that many people simply did not have access depending on where they lived across the country. Access could be denied in a lot of cases. Quite often it is denied to women who have lost their job because they tend to work part-time hours and may not have enough hours to qualify.

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When the government brought in its plans for employment insurance in the budget of early 2009, it did not address that issue at all. That brought cries of protest not only from who we might expect would be opposed to its inaction, such as labour unions and public policy people, but from people in just about every province, including provinces that were led by spokespeople like Premier Brad Wall, Premier Gordon Campbell and Premier Dalton McGuinty. All of them said that one of the gaps in the employment insurance system was the issue of access. Still we had no action from the government.

At one point in time, 1.6 million people were unemployed and almost half of those people had no access to employment insurance.

Changes have been made to the EI system over the years and some of those changes have been made by varying governments, but they have always reflected the fact that employment insurance should be there for those who most need it. A lot could have been done.

Bill C-13 to me is a very worthy improvement to EI. All parties have indicated their support for the bill. We need to do all we can to support military families, to recognize they have a particular burden, that those who serve and the families that serve those who serve make a special and significant sacrifice on a regular basis. The bill will do something to alleviate that. It is a limited bill and it could have been made better. It has been made a bit better but more could have been done. Nonetheless, I want to assure the Liberal Party's support for the bill. It is a worthy initiative and a recognition for those who serve our country valiantly.

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to support Bill C-13, to create fairness for families with respect to parental leave. As my colleagues have already stated, this bill will extend the eligibility period for parental leave for members of the Canadian Forces who are called back to duty while on parental leave. They will be able to complete this leave when they return from duty.

The bill indicates that the period during which the member may benefit from this right shall be 50 weeks. We suggested that these 50 weeks be retroactive for members who have already been called back to duty while on parental leave. The government agreed to make this amendment to the bill. I note that it was done today and that is a very good thing.

I also share the opinion of the member who just spoke that this is another example of a piecemeal bill. It targets one set of improvements to be made to the employment insurance system, which should really be overhauled.

We will support Bill C-13. It is a question of fairness, especially since we are asking our Canadian Forces to risk their lives in situations that are not only difficult but dangerous. The Bloc has the greatest respect for members of the military and as parliamentarians, we have the responsibility to not impose additional risks on them.

Furthermore, we must provide the best possible accommodation between their career and their family life, and we must ensure that

their return to the country is facilitated by measures that help with their integration in civil society.

I make this distinction because we believe this bill should have been more comprehensive in terms of the reality of the military. Although this measure is necessary, the Conservatives are continuing their bad habit of making piecemeal changes rather than undertaking genuine reform of employment insurance and real reform to support the military. A good number of members return home traumatized and suffering from post-traumatic stress, elements that have not been addressed by this bill.

I would also remind the House that members of the Canadian Forces pay employment insurance premiums just like any other worker. They are therefore insurable.

It is only fair that they be entitled since they already pay for this coverage. However, they did not have full access to it because of their job. That said, I think the point needs to be made that there is a whole other dimension of the reality faced by our military that is not covered.

• (1610)

The current government makes much of the contribution of Canadian armed forces to various military interventions, but what about its responsibilities when some members return damaged by their experiences, suffering from physical injuries and trauma?

They are less inclined to talk about the increased suicide rate among armed forces members who return to civilian life and the incredible lack of the psychological and financial support they need.

I would like to remind the House that the armed forces should provide adequate follow-up of its members who return from a mission such as that in Afghanistan, especially since we know that 4% of soldiers returning from Kandahar develop suicidal tendencies, 4.6% have symptoms of major depression, and more than 15% experience mental health problems.

In the course of its parliamentary work, the Bloc Québécois has always been concerned with support for veterans, all those who have proudly donned the uniform.

We circulated a petition that will be presented to the House of Commons. It is asking the House to change, among other things, the way military personnel are treated financially after leaving the armed forces.

In 2005, the House of Commons passed a Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act, commonly called the Veterans' Charter, which came into force on April 6, 2006.

Since then, National Defence no longer provides lifetime monthly pensions for its soldiers. Instead, it introduced a lump sum payment in 2006. For every injury, there is a corresponding indemnity, up to a maximum. The amount is paid once, and the armed forces member is left to figure out on his own how to handle the money.

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In January 2010, the Canadian Forces veterans ombudsman was very critical of this new system for compensating soldiers injured in service. Since stopping lifetime pensions, the forces have been providing veterans with a lot less money and failing to meet their needs.

The ombudsman said that he was not a proponent of the lump sum payment because someone with psychological issues could spend it unwisely and not have a single cent to put towards their financial security. The ombudsman, a veteran of Bosnia and Afghanistan himself, added that veterans can quite easily become homeless, and this sometimes happens. Many of them lose their way because of mental health problems. He says the only way to force them to maintain a residence is to send their compensation in monthly installments by mail, as used to be the case.

We cannot remain indifferent to these observations of the Canadian Forces ombudsman.

This new way of compensating our soldiers causes them, and often their family, to quickly become financially disadvantaged for the reasons outlined by the ombudsman.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the Bloc is voting in favour of Bill C-13 with the amendment. We truly hope that when we return in the fall we can present legislative measures to help soldiers who return from combat with injuries by giving them better financial support.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-13 on behalf of my party.

I want to say at the outset that the military looks for young people as recruits. It is not looking for older people my age. The military attracts and advertises to a younger group of people who are not really joining for the benefits and who do not necessarily understand what they are getting into, at the end of the day. They may think, perhaps wrongly, that they are going to be taken care of if they fulfill their mission and something befalls them in the process.

Therefore, I think it is a positive sign, unlike in World War I and World War II, when we had cases of post traumatic stress and suicide and these issues tended to be ignored, covered up, and downplayed as signs of weakness on the part of individuals.

In today's environment, certainly since the end of the gulf war, we are seeing more interest in post-traumatic stress disorder issues. It is definitely something we have to look at. The military personnel have to be made aware that we are prepared to look after them a little more than we have in the past.

I have a 23-year-old son in the reserves. As a matter of fact, he moved to Kingston on June 1, and he will be going to Afghanistan in November. He is not concerned about these issues, even though he is aware of the statistics and so on. People in his position are not necessarily preoccupied with what could possibly happen.

However, those of us who have been around for a while know historically that there is a certain percentage of people who will develop problems in a war environment. Therefore, we have to prepare ourselves to take care of those instances.

I know that the Bloc member who just spoke gave some statistics. About 4% of soldiers have suicidal tendencies when they come back from Kandahar, and 15% have mental health issues. The member wants us to look at perhaps a more comprehensive approach to the EI program.

Since the employment insurance system was set up in the 1940s, we have seen a positive progression of the system to the point where, in the 1970s, the system was very open, and many people were able to take advantage of it. However, it was curtailed and cut back somewhat in the last number of years. We saw for the first time, I believe it was the first time, a sitting government take money, take the surpluses from the EI system and use them to pay down the deficit. We saw that to the tune of \$57 billion.

One might ask what is wrong with that. The answer is that the money does not belong to the government. It is money that is raised from the workers themselves and that is matched by the companies that employ them. Therefore, it is not right for the government to be using that money essentially as a source of revenue to pay down the debt of the country. It is essentially robbing the workers and the employers of these contributions.

Now that we have gone through a very large recession over the last year, it has become clear that there are some problems with employment insurance that need to be fixed. We have seen some measures on the part of the government. Last year, \$1 billion, which was agreed to by the government and the NDP, funded measures for self-employed people under Bill C-56.

• (1620)

We have had several bills introduced in the House. The question is why we are doing this in a piecemeal fashion. It is not dissimilar to the crime agenda of the government. Rather than introducing those bills on a one-off basis, in a boutique sort of fashion, we asked why the government did not, as it did for the budget implementation bill, which by the way we did not agree with, simply put all these changes in an omnibus bill, bring it to Parliament, and make up for 100 years of inaction on much-needed reforms in the Criminal Code. The same approach should happen here.

We should deal with all these issues in one big bill. The bill is, of course, being supported unanimously in the House. However, my friend, the member for Winnipeg Centre, pointed out initially, when the bill was introduced, that this was something that probably could have been done simply through an administrative measure, perhaps through an order in council.

It affects perhaps 50 to 60 soldiers a year. The cost of the program is around \$500,000 to \$600,000 a year. Basically, it amends the Employment Insurance Act to extend the benefit period, the period of duration of parental benefits, for Canadian Forces members whose period of parental leave is deferred or who are directed to return to duty from parental leave. That was an oversight in our system in the past. The Conservative member who introduced the bill was certainly attentive to that missing part, so he introduced this bill. It is very positive from his point of view.

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Our critic, the member for Acadie—Bathurst, brought in an amendment. We thought it was a good suggestion, and we still do, that would allow the bill to apply to the RCMP and police forces, because there are several members from the police forces and the RCMP who travel with our regular forces and our reserves when they go into theatre. There are also some who are in Haiti at the moment. We feel that they should be covered under the bill as well. The Liberal members also seem to be agreeable to that. For whatever reason, at committee, that particular amendment was not adopted. I am really not sure why that would have been a problem. Nevertheless, it was not adopted.

The fact of the matter is that it is time for us to sit back. We have to proceed, obviously, and pass the bill today, but we have to have the government, or a new government, at some point in time, do a comprehensive study. It should not be one that takes a decade, but at least do a comprehensive study of the EI program. Get input from all of the interested parties. Bring in a comprehensive approach to EI so that we can get away from this piecemeal approach to EI reform, which is basically predicated on the basis of what sort of press conference or press coverage we can get on a limited measure on a certain day. That is not what the public of the country sent us here to do. That is not the way they want us to approach the legislative agenda of the country. They want to see a comprehensive plan for EI. They want to see a comprehensive plan for other sectors of our country as well.

• (1625)

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made earlier today, Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, is deemed read a third time and passed.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-22, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, or the protecting children from online sexual exploitation act, brings back to life a bill that was killed in the last session when the government prorogued Parliament. It may be a tired line to hear from me or from members over here but the fact is that the former bill, Bill C-58, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, received first reading on May 6.

In short, the bill would make reporting child sexual abuse images mandatory for all Canadians, including Internet service providers, or ISPs. The tragedy here, of course, is that every day that goes by, more of these offences take place. It is a scourge on our society and we probably could have done something earlier but the P word stood in front of that. There was prorogation and the bill was not passed.

As the parliamentary secretary noted yesterday, government has an obligation to protect the weak and vulnerable in society,

particularly our children. Debate on this bill is long overdue and I am honoured to speak in support of legislation that seeks to defend the rights of children in Canada and around the world.

While this bill is technical in nature, its purpose is a moral and praiseworthy one that ought to have been adopted long ago. At committee, I know this bill will be examined closely before any final decisions are made, such that this House can ensure Canada no longer lags in its responsibilities to protect our children from sexual exploitation.

I have a number of statistics that I will get into at the finish of my speech but the preface for them is this. Canada does not lead in the prevention of child Internet pornography or sexual exploitation.

I would like to express, though, how troubled I am that it has taken the government so long to do something about this important topic. It has been almost four and a half years that it has been the government and legislation to update criminal laws so that they better reflect the modern technologies and modern conveyance of information, as bad as this is, has not been brought forward by the government in a timely fashion.

The victims of these crimes cannot wait and the government's tactics have deprived many children the free and happy lives they deserve. Many of us have children and many of us provide the best we can for them and think that we are providing for them a free and happy life. Sometimes I say to my children that they have too free and happy a life, but let us be clear. There are many children who are in captivity. Their freedom has been taken away and they do not live free and happy lives whatsoever. They are children who have been exploited and continue to be exploited every day.

To begin, I want to discuss the current legislation governing child pornography. There are sections in the Criminal Code that exist, particularly in 1993 when the Liberal government introduced section 163.1 of the Criminal Code which prohibited the production, distribution, sale and possession of child pornography.

Let us all think back to 1993 when we did not have Blackberrys, our portable computers were probably the size of this podium and technology was certainly not as advanced as it is today. Therefore, the act, while it was good at the time, is woefully inadequate. It described child pornography as:

the visual representation of explicit sexual activity with a person who is or who is depicted as being under the age of 18;

the visual representation, for sexual purposes, of persons under the age of 18; or

any written material advocating or counselling sexual activity with a person under the age of 18.

That was all very good to have been introduced in 1993.

Canadians have a clear understanding of the illegality that is child pornography. At present, it is a criminal offence if one makes available distribution of child pornography, as I just defined, online. This is very straightforward and Canada continues to condemn the production and accessibility of online material depicting the sexual exploitation of children.

If society stopped there, if modern technology stopped there, if it were just a matter of stopping the production of child pornography and distribution of it online, I suppose we would be doing our job. Maybe there are some members who have been here since 1993 and remember, probably with some pride, that that was adequate at the time.

• (1630)

Under our present laws, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that child pornography is accessible through an Internet service provider, a judge may order the provider to supply the information to aid in locating and identifying the person who posted it. Judges may also order the removal of the child pornography if its source can be identified.

These laws are both valuable and necessary, though, as I will highlight later, further action is needed on the part of the government. Right now, in cases involving the online sexual exploitation of children, a prosecutor may choose whether the accused should be charged with a serious indictable offence or be liable for the less serious summary conviction offence. Cases of this nature ending in indictable offences are punishable for up to 10 years in prison. They are very serious. Summary convictions are currently punishable up to 18 months.

Let us be clear that viewing or possessing child pornography is punishable as well. Distributing child pornography online is as illegal as viewing it and this is a punishable offence. A maximum five-year sentence exists for indictable offences, while a maximum of 18 months remains for summary convictions.

Needless to say, Canadians are well aware of the horrible continuation of child pornography around the world and they want to bring it to an end. They do not want Canada to be laggards. They do not want Canada to be behind. They want Canada to be ahead on this issue but we are not. Canada's current legislation clearly hands down harsh consequences for those who break the law regarding the online sexual exploitation of children but more must be done to prevent these awful crimes.

As I briefly mentioned, Bill C-22 would implement rules that would require Internet service providers to report images of child sexual abuse. This measure is a welcome change if Canada is to directly combat the rise in Internet pornography exploiting children. The legislation reads:

This enactment imposes reporting duties on persons who provide an Internet service to the public if they are advised of an Internet address where child pornography may be available to the public or if they have reasonable grounds to believe that their Internet service is being or has been used to commit a child pornography offence.

This is calling on the public, third parties and people on the outside to notify the ISP that they have knowledge of child pornography on sites. Think of the ISP as the carriage or the distribution conduit for child Internet pornography. This is a good thing because I do not know if there is any one agency or one government in the whole world that can adequately survey, police, patrol or keep watch on everything that is happening on the Internet with respect to child Internet pornography or sexual exploitation.

Members of the public, third parties and the many interested groups across the country that are mobilized on this issue will be

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given the opportunity to report them to the ISPs, and now, because of this legislation, the ISP would have the duty to report.

I also want to highlight a couple of the clauses that are interesting and important in this bill. Clause 3 reads:

If a person is advised, in the course of providing an Internet service to the public, of an Internet Protocol address or a Uniform Resource Locator where child pornography may be available to the public, the person must report that address or Uniform Resource Locator to the organization designated by the regulations, as soon as feasible and in accordance with the regulations.

Clause 4 reads:

If a person who provides an Internet service to the public has reasonable grounds to believe that their Internet service is being or has been used to commit a child pornography offence, the person must notify an officer, constable or other person employed—

This is the addition. One would think that the notice would be given to a police officer. That is how the Criminal Code has been written for centuries. However, this act, written by the Department of Justice, continues on to read:

—for the preservation and maintenance of the public peace of that fact, as soon as feasible and in accordance with the regulations.

It widens the scope to whom the reporting can be done. In a clever way, it widens the scope of who can report and it narrows the scope of who is responsible, that is the ISP, and broadens the scope as to who should be informed.

We expect that persons employed for the preservation and maintenance of the public peace could include people under the municipalities act for bylaw enforcement. This could, under the person power of the municipalities act across this country, perhaps in an uninvaded territory and constitutional talk, give municipalities or regents the power to be firmer on issues of Internet child pornography distribution.

• (1635)

Clause 5 talks about a person who makes a notification under the previous clause must preserve all the data. Everybody knows that in a court of law we need to have the evidence. It is not good enough just to have a whole bunch of people watching or make the ISP basically liable to report and having the report done to a wider audience or a wider array of public police officers. The person reporting must also preserve the evidence, the electronic data, because without that there cannot be any convictions.

Clause 7 reads:

Nothing in this Act requires or authorizes a person to seek out child pornography.

In other words, the act stops in making ISPs or anybody under this act a peace officer for the purpose of investigating or going further than what is on the ISP or the URL.

Clauses 8 and 10 talk about some civil liability and some limits of liability that a civil proceeding cannot be commenced against a person for making a report in good faith, under clause 3. This goes to libel, defamation and slander.

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We can see a good-natured citizen making a report of a site that is questionable. It is reported by the ISP to a peace officer but there is no conviction. However, during the course of this, maybe it leaks to the public that this is being done and it might harm someone's reputation. So, we can see a litigation chill effect that if this clause, the whole harmless clause, were not in this act maybe it would clamp down on the reporting, which would be against the purpose of the act.

In September 2008, federal and provincial ministers of justice and attorneys general, those responsible for justice in Canada, agreed that the federal legislation to establish mandatory reporting of online child pornography by Internet service providers was necessary. So, this has come from a long line of meetings with comparable justice ministers and attorneys general. It is a good step but one wonders why it was not done earlier.

We now have this legislation before the House that would apply to suppliers of the Internet to the public, those that provide electronic mail services, Internet hosting services and operators of social networking sites. There may be some concerns that the net is too wide but let us take it to committee and examine that and call in the Privacy Commissioner. Let us bring the major Internet service providers into the House of Commons committees and explain why it is not their job to report incidents of the production or the distribution of child Internet pornography. Why do we not do that? Why have we not done it sooner?

As I have demonstrated in the duties implied in Bill C-22, the legislation would require groups to report tips they receive regarding where child pornography may be available and notify police and safeguard evidence that is involved with the offence itself.

Those providers who do not comply, this is the penalty aspect, would be faced with offences of graduated fines. For individuals, the maximum first fine would be \$1,000; for the second offence it would be \$5,000; and for subsequent offences it would be \$10,000. We must remember that these are for the reporting agencies. They are quasi-criminal, they are fines, they are structured very much like environmental offences and they are a good start.

I think at committee I might push for some criminal negligence provisions that might strengthen this act to make it even more deleterious for companies and their directors who knowingly and repeatedly fail to comply with the law, which I think is fairly reasonable.

As I stated when I first stood on this issue, child exploitation is a scourge on our community and action is long overdue. The delays because of prorogation and the delays because of other quasi-justice issues being put in the storefront first are inexcusable.

I will say, however, that all the proposed changes that I have just covered in detail, while unexamined yet by the committee, certainly appear to ensure the future safety of children and aim to eliminate the online sexual exploitation of minors. Evidence is clear that action on the part of the federal government is essential to address growing sexual exploitation of children.

• (1640)

The government has touted its whole law and order agenda, but it has taken four and a half years to get to this most egregious part of

criminal activity, and one area of criminal activity that has seen an exponential growth and therefore an exponential increase in the harm to the community. The time to act is now.

In June 2008, waiting for federal direction and leadership, provinces took the lead. Manitoba, for instance, passed a law requiring all persons to report to Cybertip.ca any material that could constitute child pornography. Ontario has now followed Manitoba, waiting for the federal government to catch up by passing a similar law. In 2002 the United States adopted laws imposing reporting requirements on ISPs. In 2005 Australia passed laws for the same element. So, 2002, 2005, Manitoba and Ontario; we are not leading here in Parliament. The government is not leading on this issue; we are following. Taking action is evidently the right thing to do.

I would like to share some statistics with the House that convey the utter urgency with which we must protect our children from online sexual exploitation. Statistics Canada in reporting on child pornography said that clearly it is an increasing problem. There were 55 offences in 1998 and 10 years later, the number is 1,408; 55 offences as compared to 1,408.

Estimates from the federal ombudsman for the victims of crime, when we had one, would indicate there are over five million child sexual abuse images on the Internet. This is inexcusable for a country that is wealthy, inexcusable for a country that pretends to care about the rights of children, inexcusable for a government and a country that is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The crimes continue. Between 2002 and 2009, the aforementioned Cybertip.ca analyzed that 57.4% of child pornography images were that of children eight years and under. Eighty-three per cent of the images were of girls. Thirty-five per cent of the images depicted severe sexual assault being inflicted on children.

The Internet, as I said before, is a difficult domain to govern; it is probably impossible, but we must make better efforts. Child pornography sites are hosted in roughly 60 countries, and the rankings are alarming.

We all have an idea how big Canada is in the world. We are a small country in population.

The country hosting the most child pornography sites is the United States, again a wealthy, northern, industrialized country that would seem, by all its political rhetoric, to care about its children. The United States hosts 49% of these websites. Forty-nine per cent of the world's child pornography sites are in the United States. Second is Russia with 20%. Remember that the United States is a very large country and a very wealthy country. Russia is a very large country.

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Where would we expect Canada to sit in terms of its population, in the small ranking, let us pray? No. Canada hosts 9% of the child pornography sites in the world, and that is not a good statistic. That is why we have to pass this law. That is why it ought to have been passed sooner.

It is why the government has to do more about clamping down on Internet child pornography. It is a crime we all agree should be clamped down on. It is a crime about which we realize the government should do more. It is a crime that has so far been untended to by the communications industry, which is why I said all parties should be amenable to having all the ISPs, all the big names, say them, Google and others, in here. They should be defending why they have not done anything sooner, why they have not, on their own, cut back on their inherent knowledge, their implied knowledge, of the existence of child pornography Internet sites.

The figures are all from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. Anybody who doubts the urgency of the issue should understand Canada must act immediately.

It is very difficult to determine where the images and websites are hosted, but they can be supported from different locations in the world. As such, oftentimes each photo and each site must be individually tracked, something highly difficult to achieve. Bill C-22 goes somewhere toward that, but more work must be done.

For one website depicting the sexual exploitation of children, Cybertip.ca.ca tracked it for 48 hours and the site went through 212 different Internet addresses in 16 countries. That was in two days. ISPs running the networks to which these computers are connected should be able to suspend service to those computers.

• (1645)

We need legislation to do that. That is not in this legislation. That is not even a justice issue. That is an issue on which the government with its various departments and ministers responsible should be concentrating.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the bill does not require anyone to seek out child pornography in an attempt to shut it down, although if an Internet service provider becomes aware and notifies the police that one exists, the provider will not be subject to civil proceedings, as I mentioned earlier.

Child sexual exploitation is one of the top three concerns regarding children and society. We must support this bill, but we must do more.

The Deputy Speaker: Before moving on to questions and comments, 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 Vancouver Quadra, Forestry Industry; the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, Justice; and the hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Arts and Culture.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit surprised that I am not being given a chance to give my

speech. I was told that we would have 10 minutes for speeches, without a period for questions. But if there is a period for questions, I have a question for the member who just spoke.

The Deputy Speaker: We are now doing questions and comments. It is now time for questions or comments for the hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

Mr. Serge Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I have at least one question for the member.

In listening to his speech, I imagine that he has read the bill and is prepared to have it examined in committee. I do not know how familiar he is with the Internet. I use my computer a lot, but I admit that I do not always understand the idea behind what needs to be done. I would like to know whether the member understood why, when individuals responsible for a server are alerted that there is child porn on websites on that server, they must preserve this material and then are required to destroy it? Did he understand what that means? I understand what it means, but I find it is not worded well. This would protect people against self-incrimination. As a lawyer, my understanding is that to be protected against self-incrimination, one must first refuse to respond.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member, who is a lawyer and a member of the Standing Committee on Justice. If I have understood the question correctly, he wants to know what will happen with a given site that contains unpleasant things. I feel that the bill makes it clear that ISPs have an obligation to report this to the police.

Perhaps the committee will look at the question of safeguards again self-incrimination. I would like to tell the member that I have no idea if that compiles with the Charter, but I imagine that all of the government bills and all those coming from the justice minister comply with the Charter. I assume that, but it would be a good question for our friend, the Minister of Justice.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for another excellent speech on this bill. I think I heard roughly the same speech last November.

Last November the member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe talked about how Brazil had set up an ethics rules basis for ISPs. More importantly he talked about how Germany and Sweden blocked the child porn sites.

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It seems to me to be very wasteful for us to have spent five years on this, and it will probably be another five years before we get this legislation through the House. The minister announced she was putting \$42 million into more police activity to play cat and mouse with a bunch a criminals who are simply going to move to another jurisdiction when they are close to being caught.

We could solve the whole problem. If Sweden has blocked it and Germany has blocked it, why would we not simply short-circuit this whole tortuous route that we are following here and simply do what they are doing and block it?

Have those programs for blocking it been successful? When did they start? What can the member tell us about what is happening in Germany and Sweden?

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, there are countries that have done much more than we have done.

I did review my speech from last November and I felt guilty that it was so strident in criticism of the government's inaction that maybe I was responsible for the prorogation and the lack of achievement here. As my father used to say, a half loaf is better than none. Therefore, my speech was less critical of the government.

Let us get the act and then let us get on the government's back, and really not the justice minister's back but the Minister of Industry's back, about what we are doing about controlling the Internet while providing safeguards for free speech and safeguards, as the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin said, against self-incrimination. There has to be a broader review of the criminal and quasi-criminal nature of Internet service providers nationally and internationally as they pertain to Canada.

With respect to this bill, I would say a quarter loaf is better than none, so let us get it passed.

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member will know that the bill also provides for a number of areas where regulations have to be promulgated for this legislation to come into force. This is an opportunity for the government not to enact the legislation. With respect to the regulations, clause 13(a) of the bill refers to “designating an organization for the purpose of section 3”, the reporting agency, and clause 13(b) refers to “respecting the role, functions and activity” of that organization. This bill has not even been vetted properly. It is not efficient.

With all due respect, it appears to me that the government has been negligent in providing a bill that could effectively deal with the situation and give us an instrument which can be dealt with, with the urgency that it requires.

We have dealt with car racing and other minor amendments to the Criminal Code. There is no question in my mind that a bill to do with the protection of children deserves some urgency better than what has been demonstrated by the government at this time.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, the member's long service on the much coveted committee on the scrutiny of regulations has come to bear on that question. I was on that committee for six months; it felt like twelve.

The member asked a very important question. Regulations are either a real incentive and a prize in a piece of legislation because

they allow some flexibility with the naming of authorities, naming of quasi-criminal power, as long as it is not delegated too much. There can be some good aspects to regulations promulgated to a bill. The ones that are dilatory the member has canvassed.

We have to take the government at face value and on good faith that it wants to fill the act with cogent and efficacious regulations that put the spirit of the act into compliance and go after the goal, which is not to have 9% of the world's child pornography Internet sites being provided from Canada. That is remarkably bad and the government cannot be proud of it.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the question I would like to ask my Liberal colleague is quite short.

He seems to be very familiar with the legislation. I would like to know if he understands clause 7 in the bill, which states:

Nothing in this Act requires or authorizes a person to seek out child pornography.

I would like him to explain the meaning of this clause.

Mr. Brian Murphy: Mr. Speaker, that is simply the limit of the law.

[*English*]

This is a bit of a quasi-criminal statute and it says that there is a limit to the duty on the ISP and that limit is basically reporting. It is a step forward. It is not saying that ISPs have a duty to be the investigator and seek out where exactly the sites are, and who provides them, but to report them to the authorities. I would think that is appropriate. It is a great question for committee.

It seems to me that we would want police officers, constables and other persons as defined in the act, to do the investigations. We do not want the ISPs doing the investigations for a number of reasons: first, they may not have that authority because they are not peace officers under the Criminal Code; second, they might screw up the investigation, leading to acquittals; and third, they might charge more to all of us for that service.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all our speeches on this bill can be summed up in one word: finally. Finally, the government has taken action on an issue that was easy to act on. It could have done something much sooner, when it knew it had the unanimous agreement of the House, but it did nothing for four years.

Government Orders

The government started by introducing a bill that died on the order paper. It reintroduced the legislation in the first session, but the bill could not move forward because of the prorogation. We would have thought the government could have introduced a bill that could pass easily, seeing as how it is so important.

I do not think I will ever head a minority government, but I would like to humbly make a suggestion in case there is another minority government. It seems to me that one of the first things a minority government should do is get down to work on legislation, introduce bills that have broad support and start accomplishing things. That is not what this government did. It leaves things until the end.

It is funny, because on the morning the government introduced this bill, I happened to be talking to a legal counsel for a large police force. He asked me what we were doing with Bills C-43 and C-48. One of those bills was replaced with the one that is before us. Finally, this government has done something.

Obviously, this bill will have to be studied in committee. Since it is short, I took the time to read it before coming into the House. I have said in the past that I hate the way federal bills are written, but we cannot change tradition. They seem to be deliberately written so that most people cannot understand them at all. That way, the federal government can always claim the law says something and spark a political debate that the average person who wants to keep informed cannot follow. I have always said, and I still believe, that poorly written laws are first misunderstood and then poorly applied. I get the feeling that that will be the case with this legislation unless we make it a bit clearer.

Basically, the bill is good and that is why we will vote in favour of it. However, that is also why we want to make it clearer, so that the people who can take action realize what we want them to do. When an Internet provider receives an indication that someone is accessing child pornography through the service provided, the provider should be able to seek out that material and remove it. Basically, that is what we want. Everyone agrees that this is a good principle. We are very accommodating in terms of freedom of expression and freedom of publication. There are limits, however, and child pornography is one of them. These limits need to be enforced in this extraordinary new medium, the Internet.

Clause 3 states:

If a person is advised, in the course of providing an Internet service to the public, of an Internet Protocol address or a Uniform Resource Locator where child pornography may be available to the public, the person must report that address or Uniform Resource Locator to the organization designated by the regulations, as soon as feasible and in accordance with the regulations.

This assumes that the person is advised. There is no question of that in the bill. Clearly, this means that if someone from the public informs the provider that there is child pornography on its server, that person is obligated to do something. That person must inform the organization that will be created. This will slow down the enforcement of the act. At the rate this government moves, I have a feeling that the organization will not be ready even by the time my granddaughters—beautiful twin girls whose first birthday is next week—are old enough to use the Internet. I really hope it will be created, because I do not ever want them to see child pornography on the Internet. I am more worried about the old men who look for such images.

● (1700)

I just do not have faith in this government. Whenever it spots consensus on something urgent, it chooses to wait until the end of the session, then tries to rush everything through. If I have time, I will talk about one urgent situation people are dealing with now.

I will now read clause 4:

If a person who provides an Internet service to the public has reasonable grounds to believe that their Internet service is being or has been used to commit a child pornography offence, the person must notify an officer, constable or other person employed for the preservation and maintenance of the public peace of that fact, as soon as feasible and in accordance with the regulations.

As I understand it, this is about the server, the person providing Internet service to the public. I would have thought that person should notify the new organization. When someone notifies an Internet provider that child pornography is available on its server, the address must be provided to the organization designated in the regulations.

Suppose that instead of doing that, the person complied with clause 4 and provided the information to a police officer. The police officer would find the address or organization in question to which the problem should be referred to remove the child pornography from the Internet. We all agree on that point.

There must be some details about computers that I do not understand. Clause 5(1) reads as follows:

A person who makes a notification under section 4 [the server that notified the police officer] must preserve all computer data related to the notification that is in their possession or control for 21 days after the day on which the notification is made.

The person has to preserve the data. If that person is smart enough, he or she will not allow public access to the data, but the data must be preserved because the police will need them to conduct an investigation.

Clause 5(2) reads as follows:

The person must destroy the computer data that would not be retained in the ordinary course of business and any document that is prepared for the purpose of preserving computer data under subsection (1) as soon as feasible after the expiry of the 21-day period, unless the person is required to preserve the computer data by a judicial order made under any other Act of Parliament or the legislature of a province.

The intent is that this person will remove the data and that it will no longer be available on the server. We also want the regulatory body to verify if it is child pornography. Action must be taken quickly. You have to be an optimist to believe that a new organization will act swiftly. This body has not yet been created. A number of organizations have been created and they are not working as quickly as we had hoped.

Suppose that action is taken quickly and that it is child pornography. It will be taken off the site. Perhaps they will search for the person who put the pornography on the site, who committed the offence.

That is the end of it. The person does not keep the data. That worries me. I understand that they should not put it back on the server and that it should be removed immediately. Nevertheless, this is rather inconsequential to our approval.

Government Orders

Some things really intrigue me. The member for Brome—Missisquoi spoke about clause 7, which reads: “Nothing in this Act requires or authorizes a person to seek out child pornography.” In other words, we do not want anyone to feel obligated to report child pornography or to look for it. We are not obligating everyone to do so. However, people are being encouraged to report child pornography to an organization that will ensure that it is removed from the site.

These sections are fine. The same goes for clause 8, which protects a person who makes a report against civil suits. It is obvious that a person who reports child pornography should not be threatened with civil or criminal proceedings because of their report.

Now for clause 9: “For greater certainty, nothing in this Act affects any right of a person to be protected against self-incrimination.”

● (1705)

For those who do not know what self-incrimination is, here it means when an individual testifies and is required to provide relevant information that could incriminate them, we want them to feel free to tell the truth and request protection against self-incrimination.

In this case, I do not really see under what circumstance there might be any self-incrimination. The person making the report might say that they visited a site but did not pay for it. I do not see what protection they would need, but it is good to give them that protection just in case because we want to encourage them to report the site.

This protection against self-incrimination has existed for a long time in English law, including criminal law. I have never understood this odd mechanism whereby we ask a question of an individual who refuses to answer it because the answer might incriminate them. They are then told that they are required to tell the truth but that they will receive protection by virtue of objecting. That means their testimony cannot be used against them.

This mechanism becomes quite complicated during a trial, especially if it concerns any criminal activity. Shortcuts have been taken and have become commonplace. I am sure people are familiar with the phrases “to seek court protection” or “to seek protection from the law”. When a person seeks and is granted court protection and is prepared to tell the truth, but is aware that their testimony could incriminate them, they would like their testimony not to be used later to incriminate them. In this case, this always takes place during the cross-examination.

Protection against self-incrimination consists in not answering questions, but here we are asking someone to report something on their own initiative. I agree that if a person says they used a credit card to pay for a certain site, that the person should be protected because they are serving the public good by allowing the site to be removed.

Clause 9 represents a very good intention that should be better explained. We should find a more modern way to ensure this right, which has always been expressed in such a complicated manner. My explanation is no exception.

Offences are created. Here again, we really need an explanation. We understand that the law has already been amended to make putting child pornography on the Internet a crime, which we agree with. In any case, if it is not one, it would have been a good opportunity to say so here and it is still a good opportunity to say so now.

Clause 11 states: “Every person who knowingly contravenes any of sections 3 to 6 is guilty of an offence and liable on...conviction—”

But how can someone contravene that? The person is not obligated to notify their Internet provider, but if they do, I do not see what infraction they could have committed under clause 3. Maybe the fact that they did not communicate the address as quickly as they could have could be seen as a contravention.

Essentially, these clauses encourage good citizens to get child pornography websites taken off the Internet.

● (1710)

Since our time is limited and we are at the end of a session, the Bloc Québécois is willing to give its consent to this, just as it was ready to support a number of causes presented by the justice minister. However, we are against some of them. If he wanted to, he could easily understand why we are in favour of some of them and against others. I think that he needs to understand some principles and forget the propaganda.

We are in favour of legislation that will reduce crime. We are in favour of measures that help find and convict criminals. We are not for criminals' rights. The rights exercised in court do not belong exclusively to criminals. They are rights that belong to everyone, should we ever be unjustly charged.

But here, the methods used are based on one philosophy only, fear of punishment.

We are convinced, and my professional experience tells me, that the fear of punishment is not a deterrent for criminals. Heaven knows my law practice has been diverse. I was the one who helped create the Carcajou squad with Mr. Duchesneau and Mr. Barbeau. Policing principles are what produced the most results in the fight against organized crime. I do not want to be seen as someone who lobbies for criminals. However, I am a lawyer and I think it is important that laws be fair and that we avoid the dangers that our neighbours to the south have fallen into.

If the fear of punishment were a deterrent, the United States would have the lowest crime rate in the world, because it has the highest incarceration rate. In the United States, officials were applying minimum sentences to everything, convinced that that would reduce crime, but it did not work. There are so many reasons to explain this, and it is understandable. First of all, regarding minimum sentences, I would be curious to conduct a little test and ask all hon. members how many minimum sentences there are in Canadian laws. There are 27. What is the minimum sentence, for instance, for committing a crime with a firearm? People probably do not know. They are not familiar with our laws.

Government Orders

If most of us do not know what they are, then what about the public? Moreover, the public does not know much about the people who commit crimes, especially the most serious crimes. It is not the most educated people who commit crimes. People who commit crimes do not do the math and tell themselves that if they commit a certain crime, they could go to prison because there is a minimum sentence and that they should commit another crime because it carries a shorter minimum sentence. Come on. Crime is opportunistic, and criminals' main concern is not getting caught.

As I said, it is important to look at how countries use incarceration. The United States is the grand champion, with an incarceration rate of 760 per 100,000. Russia is in second place, with 626 per 100,000. I have some other figures from a list of about 185 countries compiled by Kings College Oxford in England. In Australia, the rate is 129 per 100,000; in China, 119. I do not know whether these data are reliable. Canada has a rate of 116 per 100,000, which puts us ahead of Holland, with 100; France, with 96; Belgium, with 93; Switzerland, with 76; Sweden, with 74; and Japan, with 63.

We can see that there is no connection with the severity of sentences. Here in Canada, people are three times less likely to be the victim of a homicide than in the United States, and in Quebec, they are five times less likely.

• (1715)

We are against minimum sentences, because they do not work and they force judges to hand down sentences they consider unfair.

[English]

Mr. Paul Szabo (Mississauga South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made one statement which I think is quite true, that we tend to write sloppy legislation federally. It is not very readable. It is not understandable. We have a small bill and I think we understand the intent of it, but it has several places where regulations are required. We have not even designated what an organization would be. It has not been created yet. We do not know what its functions or duties are.

In my case, I am not sure why we have provisions in clauses 3 and 4, one of which is that a person who is aware of an Internet protocol address or URL must report to this undesignated agency, but then if a person who provides Internet service becomes aware that there may be pornography passed through a site, he has to report it to a police officer.

I have never drafted legislation but one-stop shopping where there is a funnel and a place where all Canadians can participate would make us all part of the solution. This is a punitive bill in some strained type of language which would not stand the test of scrutiny in court challenges.

I wonder if the member, from his experience, would advise the House whether or not the bill really is going to be a good starting point in terms of dealing with the serious issue of protecting children from pornographic use. Perhaps we should reconsider an instrument in which we can have some sort of an agency set up so that all Internet providers and all Canadians can access to report any information to do with such nefarious activities.

• (1720)

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Ménard: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member who just spoke, I think that this is a good start, but it is just a start. There will have to be some follow-up. This is a good start because it does let people know that if they see child pornography on the Internet, they can do something, but the bill does not say that they must. That is not a bad thing to say. People who do not know who to tell, perhaps because they cannot find the information, will naturally tell the police.

There have been good results in a number of provinces with the co-operation of people who have come across sites belonging to kids who are obsessed with weapons or who are talking about murdering people or things like that. The person who was involved in the incident at Loyola College had a site like that. After that happened, of course a lot of people noticed certain sites and reported them to the Sûreté du Québec, which then went to those places and seized people's weapons.

At least this lets people collaborate, and that is a good start that we should not hold up.

[English]

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member about the offences in Bill C-22. It seems to me that as an individual the offences are \$1,000 for a first offence, \$5,000 for a second offence, and evidently \$10,000 for a third offence or possibly six months in jail. On the corporate side for companies it is \$10,000 for the first offence, \$50,000 for a second offence, and \$100,000 for three or more offences.

It seems to me that most of the child porn sites would be run by corporations and probably underworld figures. That would be my guess. It seems to me that these amounts of money are not going to deter organized crime. The \$10,000 for an offence is just nothing more than the cost of doing business.

I would ask the member whether he has the same sort of concerns about the offences in the bill and whether or not, at committee, we might look at perhaps increasing those penalties?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Ménard: Mr. Speaker, this bill does not cover offences related to manufacturing pornographic material or making this material available to the public. Clauses 3, 4, 5 and 6 address the possibility of reporting such material, and also the Internet service provider's obligation to preserve this material and destroy it at a later date. Child pornography should be prohibited via other provisions in the Criminal Code, and those are the provisions that would apply if the source of the Internet child pornography were discovered.

Private Members' Business

I think that the sentences provided for in clauses 3, 4, 5 and 6 are sufficient for the crime in question. Nowhere do we see the crime of putting child pornography on the Internet. We are simply forcing people to alert the organization in question when they notice that child pornography is available. The organization will probably ensure that the child pornography is removed from its site.

Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the riding that is named after a painter—

Mr. Serge Ménard: Marc-Aurèle Fortin.

Mr. Christian Ouellet: Marc-Aurèle Fortin, thank you.

The Bloc would rather prevent crime and find remedies for it instead of arresting people after the fact.

Statistics in Canada show that most Canadian parents use outdated or ineffective methods to teach their children about personal safety. Does the member for Marc-Aurèle Fortin think that we could include some preventive measures in this bill to help parents teach children about personal safety and about behaviours that could cause them problems?

• (1725)

Mr. Serge Ménard: Mr. Speaker, that would probably be a good idea, but I honestly will not suggest it. I do not want to slow down the adoption of this legislation by suggesting another amendment. This is only the beginning, but it is a good start. It is giving the public access to an organization that will deal with online child pornography. I hope that it will make this material disappear.

It would be a lot of work to add obligatory child education. If we think about how long it took to craft this little egg, an amendment like that would be like crafting a bull. However, it would be a good idea to do it.

I have a beautiful bookmark with a painting by Marc-Aurèle Fortin that I would like to give to my colleague so that he can remember the name of my riding.

[English]

Mr. Jim Maloway: Mr. Speaker, part of the bill requires that an ISP or other person providing Internet services, when the police is notified, must keep the computer data related to the child pornography offence for 21 days and after that the computer data must be destroyed unless the police have obtained a court order to keep the data.

Other members have drawn attention to this provision and asked the question about whether the 21 days are long enough? I would like to ask the member, as a long standing lawyer and a member of the House, whether he thinks the 21 days would be adequate or is that another provision that we are going to have to change at committee?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Ménard: Mr. Speaker, I know my limitations and that question goes beyond my area of expertise. My impression is that the timeframe is that short for technological reasons. I am hoping that they will explain in committee what happens when someone has seen a website with child pornography and has informed the organization. What happens next? I hope that the child pornography will be taken down immediately.

However, the timeframe seems reasonable to me if it is in order to come to a conclusion about the nature of the site. It could even be longer than 21 days. If this organization is inundated with reports at the beginning, it will require an efficiency that is often lacking in government organizations.

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: There are still a couple of minutes before 5:30 p.m. Does the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona wish to start his remarks?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-22 for two minutes.

I have to admit that this has been a very long process. I have been reading the *Hansard* on this bill and previous incarnations of it. This whole process has been about five years now. The computer industry changes very dramatically, so the government and Parliament had better hurry up and get on top of this issue. We may find that by the time we get to where we want to be, a new problem will have presented itself.

In June 2008 the legislative assembly of Manitoba passed a law requiring all persons to report to cybertip.ca any material that could constitute child pornography. Ontario passed a similar law in December 2008. The United States and Australia adopted laws in 2002 and 2005 respectively, imposing this requirement on ISPs.

I will point out some of the benefits of dealing with cybertip.ca. It is currently estimated that over 5 million child sexual abuse images are on the Internet. An analysis of over 12,000 website incidents was done by cybertip.ca. It was looking into the countries that hosted these sites. The United States was number one at 49%. Russia was second at 20%. Canada had a surprising 9% of all the sites. Japan was at 4.4%. South Korea was at 3.6%.

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I regret to interrupt the hon. member. He will be able to continue his comments with 18 minutes left when this returns on the order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

The House resumed from June 10 consideration of Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (qualification for and entitlement to benefits), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-280, under private members' business.

Call in the members.

• (1755)

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

*Private Members' Business**(Division No. 75)*

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland) André
 Andrews Ashton
 Asselin Atamanenko
 Bachand Bagnell
 Bains Beaudin
 Bellavance Bennett
 Bevilacqua Bevington
 Bigras Blais
 Bonsant Bouchard
 Brison Brunelle
 Byrne Cardin
 Carrier Charlton
 Chow Christopherson
 Coady Coderre
 Comartin Cotler
 Crombie Crowder
 Cullen Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) Davies (Vancouver East)
 Demers Deschamps
 Desnoyers Dewar
 Dhaliwal Dhalla
 Dion Donnelly
 Dorion Dosanjh
 Dryden Duceppe
 Dufour Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) Easter
 Eyking Faille
 Folco Foote
 Freeman Fry
 Gagnon Gaudet
 Godin Goodale
 Gravelle Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les
 Basques)
 Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord)
 Hall Findlay
 Harris (St. John's East) Holland
 Hughes Hyer
 Jennings Julian
 Kania Laforest
 Laframboise Lalonde
 Lavallée Layton
 Lee Lemay
 Leslie Lessard
 Lévesque MacAulay
 Malhi Malo
 Maloway Marston
 Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) Martin (Sault Ste. Marie)
 Masse Mathysen
 McCallum McGuinty
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood) McTeague
 Ménard Mendes
 Minna Mourani
 Mulcair Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe)
 Murphy (Charlottetown) Murray
 Nadeau Neville
 Ouellet Pacetti
 Paillé (Hochelega) Paillé (Louis-Hébert)
 Paquette Patry
 Pearson Plamondon
 Pomerleau Proulx
 Rae Rafferty
 Ratansi Regan
 Rodriguez Rota
 Roy Savage
 Savoie Scarpaleggia
 Sgro Siksay
 Silva Simms
 Simson St-Cyr
 Stoffer Szabo
 Thi Lac Thibeault
 Tonks Trudeau
 Valeriotte Vincent
 Volpe Wilfert
 Zarac — 143

NAYS

Members

Abbott Ablonczy
 Aglukkaq Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac) Allison
 Anders Anderson
 Armstrong Arthur
 Ashfield Baird
 Benoit Bernier
 Bezan Blackburn
 Blaney Block
 Boucher Boughen
 Braid Breikreuz
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville) Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Brown (Barrie) Bruinooge
 Cadman Calandra
 Calkins Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country)
 Cannon (Pontiac) Carrie
 Casson Chong
 Clarke Clement
 Cummins Davidson
 Day Dechert
 Del Mastro Devolin
 Dreeshen Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Dykstra Fast
 Finley Flaherty
 Fletcher Galipeau
 Gallant Gagné
 Glover Goldring
 Goodyear Gourde
 Grewal Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hawn Hiebert
 Hill Hoback
 Hoepfner Holder
 Jean Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's) Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kent Kerr
 Komarnicki Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lake Lauzon
 Lebel Lemieux
 Lobb Lukivski
 Lunn Lunney
 MacKay (Central Nova) MacKenzie
 Mayes McColeman
 McLeod Menzies
 Merrifield Miller
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Nicholson Norlock
 O'Connor O'Neill-Gordon
 Obhrai Paradis
 Payne Petit
 Poilievre Prentice
 Preston Raitt
 Rajotte Rathgeber
 Reid Richards
 Richardson Rickford
 Saxton Scheer
 Schellenberger Shipley
 Shory Sorenson
 Stanton Storseth
 Sweet Thompson
 Tilson Toews
 Trost Tweed
 Uppal Van Kesteren
 Van Loan Vellacott
 Verner Wallace
 Warawa Warkentin
 Watson Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
 Sky Country) Wong
 Weston (Saint John) Yelich
 Woodworth
 Young — 137

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

The House resumed from June 15 consideration of the motion that Bill C-469, An Act to establish a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-469 under private members' business.

• (1805)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 76)***YEAS**

Members

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Allen (Welland) | André |
| Andrews | Ashton |
| Asselin | Atamanenko |
| Bachand | Bagnell |
| Bains | Beaudin |
| Bellavance | Bennett |
| Bevilacqua | Bevington |
| Bigras | Blais |
| Bonsant | Bouchard |
| Brisson | Brunelle |
| Byrne | Cardin |
| Carrier | Charlton |
| Chow | Christopherson |
| Coady | Coderre |
| Comartin | Cotler |
| Crombie | Crowder |
| Cullen | Cuzner |
| Davies (Vancouver Kingsway) | Davies (Vancouver East) |
| Demers | Deschamps |
| Desnoyers | Dewar |
| Dhaliwal | Dhalla |
| Dion | Donnelly |
| Dorion | Dosanjh |
| Dryden | Duceppe |
| Dufour | Duncan (Etobicoke North) |
| Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) | Easter |
| Eyking | Faille |
| Folco | Foote |
| Freeman | Fry |
| Gagnon | Gaudet |
| Godin | Goodale |
| Gravelle | Guay |
| Guimond (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques) | |
| Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord) | |
| Hall Findlay | Harris (St. John's East) |
| Holland | Hughes |
| Hyer | Jennings |
| Julian | Kania |
| Laforest | Laframboise |
| Lalonde | Lavallée |
| Layton | Lee |
| Lemay | Leslie |
| Lessard | Lévesque |
| MacAulay | Malhi |
| Malo | Maloway |
| Marston | Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca) |
| Martin (Sault Ste. Marie) | Masse |
| Mathysen | McCallum |
| McGuinity | McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood) |
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| Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe) | Murphy (Charlottetown) |

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| Proulx | Rae |
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| Regan | Rodriguez |
| Rota | Roy |
| Savage | Savoie |
| Scarpaleggia | Sgro |
| Siksay | Silva |
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NAYS

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| Aglukkaq | Albrecht |
| Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac) | Allison |
| Anders | Anderson |
| Armstrong | Arthur |
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| Bezan | Blackburn |
| Blaney | Block |
| Boucher | Boughen |
| Braid | Breitkreuz |
| Brown (Leeds—Grenville) | Brown (Newmarket—Aurora) |
| Brown (Barrie) | Bruinooge |
| Cadman | Calandra |
| Calkins | Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country) |
| Cannon (Pontiac) | Carrie |
| Casson | Chong |
| Clarke | Clement |
| Cummins | Davidson |
| Day | Dechert |
| Del Mastro | Devolin |
| Dreeshen | Duncan (Vancouver Island North) |
| Dykstra | Fast |
| Finley | Flaherty |
| Fletcher | Galipeau |
| Gallant | Généreux |
| Glover | Goldring |
| Goodyear | Gourde |
| Grewal | Harris (Cariboo—Prince George) |
| Hawn | Hiebert |
| Hill | Hoback |
| Hoepfner | Holder |
| Jean | Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission) |
| Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's) | Kenny (Calgary Southeast) |
| Kent | Kerr |
| Komarnicki | Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings) |
| Lake | Lauzon |
| Lebel | Lemieux |
| Lobb | Lukiwski |
| Lunn | Lunney |
| MacKay (Central Nova) | MacKenzie |
| Mayes | McColeman |
| McLeod | Menzies |
| Merrifield | Miller |
| Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) | |
| Moore (Fundy Royal) | |
| Nicholson | Norlock |
| O'Connor | O'Neill-Gordon |
| Obhrai | Paradis |
| Payne | Petit |
| Poillievre | Prentice |
| Preston | Raitt |
| Rajotte | Rathgeber |
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| Warawa | Warkentin |
| Watson | Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to |
| Sky Country) | |
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being 6:07 p.m., the Houses will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

**NATIONAL HUNTING, TRAPPING AND FISHING
HERITAGE DAY ACT**

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-465, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Order, please. When this bill was last before the House, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona had the floor and there are three minutes remaining in the time allotted for his remarks. I therefore call upon the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to finish off the three remaining minutes of my speech regarding Bill C-465. The bill has the full support of everyone in all four parties in the House, so I do not imagine it will present a huge problem to get the bill passed through committee.

One of the aspects of the bill is that it would designate September 30, or perhaps the third Saturday in September, depending on how the committee develops it, as the national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day. We have to recognize that the United States has had such a heritage day since 1972. With the increased border changes over the last couple of years, with the United States now requiring passports for their citizens to return to the United States and with the global recession still not being quite resolved, there is a lot of pressure on tourism right now in Canada.

As I had been indicated before, in Manitoba, in northwestern Ontario and right across the country the fishing camps, tourist camps and all sorts of other camps are hurting. Numerous camps that rely on American tourists and cross-border tourism are finding that their business is down. I was told that business may be down as much as 30%. Therefore, we need to come to grips with how we can recover from that and get the hunters and fishers back to Canada to keep our industry alive.

Private Members' Business

One of the ideas that I have pushed in the past, which I know other people support, is that we should work with the Americans to reduce the price of passports. We have had various meetings with United States congresspeople and at every meeting the issue of having a bigger update of people applying for passports has been raised. At our last meetings in February, one congressman indicated that to get passports for just himself and his family was quite an expensive enterprise. We should be working at that level with the United States to try to reduce the cost of the passports to encourage more people to get them so we can get more tourism from the United States.

I cannot believe that my three minutes could possibly be over. I had so much more to talk about. I had some information on the buffalo hunt, which members will know was pointed to as an example of bad hunting practices where 60 million buffalo were practically wiped out. However, it has all been brought back by conservation and farmers and ranchers working to—

• (1810)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Resuming debate. The hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings.

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Madam Speaker, I stand today to address Bill C-465, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day, that calls for September 23 of every year to be designated as a special day of recognition.

I give kudos to the member for Northumberland—Quinte West today for bringing forward this bill. He is a colleague and a neighbour. We share a pair of ridings that truly are a paradise for fishermen, hunters and people who love the outdoors. It is a rural community that recognizes that not only is this a passion and a way of life for many people, but it is also a serious form of income and support for the people in our ridings.

Most people are probably aware but for those who are not, the tourism sector is a major recipient of fishing and hunting activities and it is the largest employer in Canada. So it has a significant impact across this country.

A national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would give Canadians an opportunity to celebrate the long-standing practices of hunting, trapping and fishing in Canada. It would recognize the contribution that Canada's hunters, trappers and anglers have made to the settlement of Canada.

By supporting Bill C-465, the Government of Canada is in line with a similar recognition that is already in place in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. The United States designated a national hunting and fishing day back in 1972.

Once again, I thank the member for Northumberland—Quinte West for bringing us up to date, for giving solid recognition to these activities and for making the public aware of just how important these activities are, not only to communities in rural areas but also to a number of urban areas. Most urban areas in this country have hundreds of lakes, rivers and streams either right beside them or very near to them. The citizens of those communities can also take advantage of these wonderful opportunities.

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Bill C-465 celebrates multiple aspects of Canadian society. It celebrates the history of the forming of our nation. It celebrates our vast and diverse natural resources. It celebrates outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship. Canada's vast and diverse natural resources fuel the spirit of adventure in Canadians and captures the imagination of people from around the world.

Who, growing up, has not sat around a campfire singing *Kumbaya* or putting an arm around the shoulder of a friend or telling stories? Those are memories that most of us have never forgotten. That, of course, comes with the privilege and the possibility of being able to hunt or fish.

Many Canadians are active outdoors because they have access to a tremendous array of outdoor recreational facilities, with fishing in particular being one of Canada's most broadly pursued activities. I have a bit of personal history with fishing that I would like to bring forward to hon. members in the House and really close the loop on it.

As a youngster, I can recall leaving school with friends, grabbing an old bamboo pole and heading down to the lake that was about a mile and a half south of us. We would grab an old green line, stick it on the end of our pole and put a hook on it. On the way down to the lake we would overturn the stumps and the rocks and pick up a few worms or leeches and stick them in our pockets and then down to the lake we would go. We were so excited when we had our lines in the water and were able to entice a fish to grab on to it. I remember my first fish. I was so excited. I did not know what to do with it other than to take it off the hook and let it go again, which was fine because that fish was safe for another day.

This is almost like *déjà vu*. I was down at the lake just outside my home earlier this year with my grandson and granddaughters and all of a sudden I heard the wild shriek "I've got one". They were doing the same thing that I did when I was young.

• (1815)

So the excitement generated from this activity to our youth and recognizing just how important it was to teach them, to show them how to do a live release, how to basically clean the fish if they wished to eat it, how to understand what it is to preserve and conserve for future generations so that perhaps down the road their children would have the same privilege was a wonderful closing of the loop to me.

It is not just a sport. It is a passion to many people. It is a source of pride for many Canadians. Certainly, it can be enjoyed, and is enjoyed, by people of any age, background or ability. It is an easy way, an affordable way, for families to spend some quality time together.

It is highly lucrative, from a point of income, whether for people in the industry or actually even from different levels of government, whether it is with taxation, whether it is for permits, because each year approximately 3.2 million Canadians participate in recreational fishing and they spend \$7.5 billion per year practising this sport. It is not just a simple little recreational activity, but it actually is a huge generation of dollars and levers of activity in our economy that certainly contribute a great deal to our GDP as well.

There is the other element of that. As I mentioned, this bill pertains to both hunting and fishing. Canadians naturally enjoy the

actual resources when hunting. I am very fortunate. I live in an area where hunting is, in some ways, more than a passion. There are some who say that when the annual deer hunt takes place in my area, it is a national holiday in Hastings county. Literally, there is hardly a male, and the ladies as well, who do not participate. It is not just what they call the thrill of the hunt. It is definitely a social activity. It is a get-together. It is a time to swap stories. It is a time to fraternize. It is a time to recognize that we have a wonderful outdoors and a great heritage that we can take advantage of, that we can utilize, and that we can enjoy.

I am very fortunate. Where I am, we have white-tailed deer, elk, and moose, which continue to be associated with Canada, particularly by a lot of our international tourists or hunters who do not have any wildlife that is anywhere remotely accessible to them.

Across this country, we have such a diverse geography and such a great quantity and selection, *per se*, of fish. There are no less than 270 different varieties of fish. Who can resist a nice fresh bass fillet that has been caught, filleted and fried in a pan of butter over an open fire? Really that, to me, sort of typifies exactly what fishing is all about.

I see my colleague across the floor. I know he is from the Nipissing area, as well. My aunt and uncle had a camp on Lake Nipissing. I never saw anybody in my life fillet a pickerel like my aunt. I learned that as a youngster and now I am teaching my grandson and my granddaughter. And I see the number of activities that take place from this, the number of tourists we are able to gather.

My other colleague is from northern Canada where, quite obviously, it is more than just a recreation. Northerners have an asset there that is a treasure. It is something that really is right back from the hunting, fishing and trapping days during the establishment of our country, with all of our explorers taking advantage of our natural resources. It has just played such a significant role in so many ways that it is really imperative that we do designate a special day, not just for the history, but for the reminder that this is not just our past but it is also our future and we must protect and conserve it.

Canada does enjoy an international reputation, as we all know, as a fishing and hunting mecca. Anglers in Canada spend, as I mentioned, almost \$7 billion a year. It certainly is more than an important contributor to the northern area because it also provides many people with the opportunity to explore and see a part of their heritage that many of them did not even know existed.

Most important, as we are going through some different evolving periods, the United Nations has named 2010 the year of biodiversity, a celebration—

• (1820)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order, please. I am afraid the hon. member's time is up. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of Bill C-465 brought forward by the member for Northumberland—Quinte West with whom I share some time with on the justice committee and have come to know.

I know his area is one in which hunting, trapping and fishing are not only pastimes but for some more or less a full-time occupation, job, or vocation. In this great country of ours, we have to realize that there are people who do not wear suits and do not sit in Parliament, but who are out in the woods and the streams, and the oceans for that matter harvesting and being in the outdoors making a living, not only in the actions of hunting, fishing and trapping but in supporting others who hunt, fish and trap.

In my own province of New Brunswick and in my own region of Atlantic Canada the issue of guiding and outfitting is one that is to the fore often in public discourse. I guess I am one of the few speaking from Atlantic Canada and I want to bring that representation here. I know my friend from Yukon has brought his perspective from the north which is very valuable.

I might as a footnote add that the bill needs two amendments. One is the second “whereas” in the preamble, which states:

Whereas Canada’s hunters, trappers and fishers have made a significant contribution to the development of our nation by traversing and mapping the prairies, forests, streams and rivers from coast to coast;

The member for Yukon made it very clear that the unopposed addition of a third coast, “from coast to coast to coast” is appropriate. As my colleague, the member for Yukon, brought forward in his remarks there is a great deal of activity and importance to the north, evidenced by fishing, trapping and hunting. Therefore, with that friendly amendment the bill can go forward.

There is another amendment that I will get to in a few moments.

We have to realize that in the North American context we are not the first in advocating such a day. The United States has national organizations that promote hunting and fishing heritages. Many states have enacted laws protecting hunting and fishing opportunities, and several provinces and territories have taken that initiative as well.

Members of Parliament should also know that in support of the bill the various wildlife federations and fish and game associations have welcomed the passing of an act respecting a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day.

The bill is well-intentioned and is something that should receive support from all members of the House. Why? It is because we can all tell a story, as the previous speaker did, about history and person recollections.

Mine is a unique one in that I went to grade school, junior high school and high school with Bill Taylor who is a great Canadian. When we were all sitting around asking what are we going to do for a living, I suppose I might have said I was going to be a lawyer and a politician. Hopefully I did not at that age. However he said, “I’m going to be involved in the preservation of the Atlantic salmon”. We asked if he was going to buy a camp and take outfitters out. That was our vision back then. He said, “No. I’m going to work in the preservation of the Atlantic salmon”.

As teenagers, we had a chuckle. Now Bill Taylor, my friend, my age, under 50 barely, is the president of the Atlantic Salmon Federation. He is the president of a multi-country, international organization that is aimed at the preservation and promotion of the

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Atlantic salmon species. That means he is very involved in the preservation of fish and of the species, but he is also very involved in the preservation of the people who earn a living in the preservation of the species.

For instance, he is hand in glove with preservation people, with scientists, with researchers, with people who take the sport to the outfitting lodges, and youth groups who become more appreciative of our lakes and streams, and the greatness and the grandeur of the Atlantic salmon species.

● (1825)

I was very proud to be with Bill Taylor when the premier of our province made a number of catch-and-release camps on various rivers throughout the province. This means of course that the ultimate aim of preservation is not to take more than what is needed and the Atlantic Salmon Federation, for instance, has made it clear that it perceives its role in preservation to promote the sport of fishing, but also as a hyperactivity to that, to promote the preservation of the species. For that, it is to be commended.

The other aspects of hunting, fishing and trapping life in the Atlantic provinces, my personal mea culpa is that I have been a fisher and hunter since I was legally able to do so. My father was an avid outdoorsman. I have gone duck and partridge hunting and all kinds of hunting. I have been trout fishing, deep sea fishing and mackerel fishing. As I mentioned before I am young, under age 50, but I remember those being normal, accepted, everyday activities of youth my age in a semi-urban setting which is Moncton, New Brunswick.

However, I see that slipping and it is a bit like the television ad where the family is googling and blackberrying each other and decide they should go out camping so they can get away from these things, and I say this to a House full of people on their computers. But the point is, we are losing touch with our natural resource which, simply put, is the outdoors. Anything that encourages people to get outdoors and see the grandeur of our country, the most beautiful country in the world, should be congratulated.

For that I congratulate the member. I also want to congratulate my colleague from Yukon who in a similar vein had promulgated a private member's bill currently listed as Bill C-277. That bill calls for the establishment of a national fish and wildlife heritage commission to re-establish the survey on the importance of nature to Canadians to help protect Canada's natural resources, and promote activities related to fish and wildlife including hunting, fishing and trapping.

I say for the next generation that we have to do a public education program on the respect that we have for nature and the knowledge that young people have to engage in about their natural surroundings because it is frankly missing.

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One housekeeping matter as the bill would move forward to committee is the aspect of our aboriginal population. It would be harmless, more comprehensive, and meaningful if a friendly amendment at committee, or otherwise, were inserted to ensure that our aboriginal heritage in this great country would be respected. That wording could be as follows: "Whereas aboriginal peoples have exercised and been sustained by traditional hunting, trapping and fishing activities for food, ceremonial and commercial purposes since time immemorial" and added to the other whereases "which are wholly acceptable, positive, factually correct and inclusive". That would make the bill very complete.

I hope the mover is open to such an amendment when it does pass through the committee. With that, the package in Bill C-465 is non-controversial. It is very positive and may be used as a tool for MPs across the country, public leaders across the country, municipal leaders, schools, et cetera, to use the opportunity of the proclaimed day to promote practices that would lead future generations to appreciate the value of recreational hunting, fishing and trapping.

A sad note perhaps in closing, I mentioned that my father introduced me to the culture of duck hunting in Grand Lake, New Brunswick, where we would get up at an ungodly hour of three or four in the morning and go down to the Coys Gut Landing out on the waters into the blinds with his best friend from nearby Douglas Harbour. We would wait for the sun to rise and for 35 years we were able to do that. It was a great experience. Sadly, he has passed away. We went back one year and it was very difficult to continue going back because it was not about the outing and the hunting, which were great experiences, it was about the camaraderie and the father to son, generation to generation passing down of experiences and culture, and what I think the essential nature of what our country is about.

• (1830)

It is not hunting for everybody. It is not fishing for everybody. However, if there is one thing everyone in the House and everyone in this country has to appreciate, by virtue of being Canadian, it is our nature, our natural surroundings, our outdoors, and our love of the grand space that is Canada from coast to coast to coast.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I address this bill today. It is a matter that speaks to the heart and soul of my constituency. Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking is a place where many people participate in or even make their living from hunting, trapping, and fishing.

This bill speaks to what many consider to be the heritage of this country. It is a heritage informed by values that spring from a belief that our common spaces are important and should be protected and a belief that these outdoor pursuits are a tie to our past and a bridge to our future. These are values our communities come together over. Fuelled by the spirit of volunteerism, these values take shape in the form of action at the local level time and time again.

Whether it is an angling club cleaning up a trout creek, lodge owners rehabilitating walleye spawning beds, or hunting clubs helping to restore native species, such as wild turkeys in Ontario, these are examples of values in motion. They speak to what is important to Canadians.

If I can get a couple of shameless plugs in, I will give a few local examples, as well. This coming Saturday morning, the Elliot Lake Rod and Gun Club will hold its free fishing tournament for children and challenged persons. It is an event that helps spread the joy fishing can bring and it attracts new people to the sport.

Also this weekend, the people in Dubreuilville are hosting that community's annual Father's Day walleye tournament. They have a tagged fish worth \$10,000. It promises to be a great event. If you are good with a jig or have a great worm harness technique, you might want to get up to Dubreuilville this weekend.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that we have amazing fishing throughout Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, from Manitowadge to White River, from Hearst to Smooth Rock Falls, from Wawa to Nairn Centre, and let us not forget, on beautiful Manitoulin Island.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

I firmly believe that this is a very Canadian phenomenon that affects all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Hunting and fishing are in many ways an integral part of our identity.

[*English*]

From the riches of the Grand Banks fishery to the legendary voyages of the coureurs de bois, Canada's infancy was defined by these elements.

The first people who sailed to what became Canada learned from the first nations how to feed themselves from the bounty of the land. First nations continue, to this day, to rely upon the tradition of hunting and fishing to put food on the table. They are not alone in that regard, but their situation is unique.

Sadly, we have seen in the past how these natural food sources can become tainted. When we consider what hunting and fishing mean to Canada, we also have to consider what we have done to degrade these resources.

Think about the plight of the people of the Grassy Narrows First Nation. Those people have the right to feed themselves in a traditional manner, but pulp and paper waste dumped into the English-Wabigoon River system tainted the fish they rely on. As a result, many people in Grassy Narrows developed Minamata disease from exposure to mercury that was in the walleye, pike and whitefish they ate. If it were not for a Japanese scientist, the people of Grassy Narrows might still be making themselves sick on this traditional food source.

It is a sad example of the way we have not always cherished our rich, natural bounty in Canada.

Unfortunately, this instance does not stand alone. We have witnessed the decimation of the Grand Banks fishery. We have seen our once mighty Pacific salmon runs decline to a trickle. We have watched as our Arctic fauna struggle to survive in an ever-warming environment, and we have fought to keep invasive species from replacing native species at an alarming rate.

I wish I could stand here and speak only to the warm, fuzzy aspects of this subject. A large part of what we are discussing here are the ideas formed by a passion that is ignited when a kid catches his or her first rock bass from a dock or tags along on his or her first partridge hunt. That is what we want to celebrate. However, we would be doing a disservice to those ideas if we ignored the many ways in which we do not promote the well-being of the natural spaces these experiences are tied to.

When we see budgets bloated with legislative changes to regulatory documents that protect our environment, we have to ask ourselves if our commitment to this heritage is genuine. We have seen changes in what triggers a federal environmental assessment and changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act tucked into an omnibus budget, where they were somewhat hidden. We can only speculate as to what larger debate would occur if these were debated as stand-alone items. In general, these changes made it easier for development to go ahead for things like bridges.

I understand that we need bridges, but we should be mindful of where we build them, especially if that turns out to be a shallow riffle where fish spawn. We need to remember that there are more concerns in play than the flow of traffic and the bottom line. When we weaken our environmental assessment process, we are not remembering that. When we sneak changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act into a budget, we are acting in an underhanded way that seeks to avoid the scrutiny of those same people whose passion we celebrate in this motion.

This motion mentions the economy that is tied to hunting, trapping, and fishing. I would put it to you that this economy is huge, not only in terms of overall revenue generated but in terms of what it means to the people living in areas that rely on this economy. Certainly there are elements of this economy in our larger cities, but it is the smallest, most remote parts of Canada where this economy is most critical.

Tourists come for fishing, but when they are there, many go to events in these communities, such as powwows or festivals, such as the North of 49 Music Festival in Hornepayne that is taking place from July 1 to July 4. It runs both ways, too. One is just as likely to see music fans from those kinds of festivals buy a dozen worms and a bit of tackle from the local store and test their luck on the fish at the campground or lodge they are staying at.

As the bill states, millions of Canadians participate in and enjoy these activities. More often than not, when they do so, it will be in rural Canada and not in the bigger cities.

• (1840)

I can go out and walk along the Ottawa River and see a great many people fishing, but when people usually think about fishing, they think about a more natural and remote environment. In Canada, it could be a pristine lake with just oneself and the loons. That is the experience most people would want to have.

A great many people make their living by providing these experiences. There are countless lodges, campgrounds, outfitters, guides and stores connected to hunting and fishing all across Canada. When I drive throughout my constituency, I am reminded time and again just how many people's livelihoods rely on this

connection to the land. These people are true entrepreneurs, and anything we can do to help them is well deserved.

In closing, I would like to say that the national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day is a great idea, but let us honour the spirit of that legacy and stop ramming through legislation that threatens this heritage. Let us stop creating omnibus budgets and let us debate changes to important legislation, such as the Navigable Waters Protection Act, as stand-alone items. Let us go out of our way to protect our environment instead of weakening federal environmental assessment legislation in Trojan horse budgets.

Let us do all we can instead of the bare minimum. Let us be a little extra cautious and avoid the next Grassy Narrows type of catastrophe. In that way, we will truly be standing up for Canada's heritage. We will be honouring our rich tradition that is embodied in the pursuits of angling, hunting and trapping.

I want to thank the Speaker for her time and patience in hearing all of our speeches. I think this is a really great, important heritage day to be speaking about. I can say, from the bottom of my heart and the bottom of the hearts of my constituents, that we appreciate the fact that we are able to enjoy the outdoors the way we can.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to address Bill C-465, which seeks the designation of the 23rd day of September of every year as an official national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day. This national day would commemorate hunting, trapping and fishing as part of Canada's heritage and as present day recreational pursuits.

My riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound has some of the best hunting and fishing areas in Canada, and the people there love to hunt and fish. Every year we celebrate a number of fishing derbies, such as the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular, which is a fishing derby that brings out thousands of local residents and tourists to the community of Owen Sound and area. As many as 5,500 anglers have entered this event in any given year. I myself take part in as many hunting and fishing trips as I can, although not as many as I would like, throughout the year with friends and family locally and on Manitoulin Island.

I very much look forward to the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung fulfilling the promise she made to her constituents a year and a half ago that she would stand up and support getting rid of the gun registry, which Bill C-391 would do. I sincerely look forward to that. I know her constituents are waiting with bated breath to make sure she does that.

Hunting, trapping and fishing are traditions that are alive and well throughout Canada. They are not just part of our past, but part of the current heritage of Canadians from coast to coast to coast who enjoy these pastimes for the sport, for the camaraderie and for food, whether it be fresh fish, venison, wild turkey, moose meat and many others. I want to emphasize this point. As we all know, if one who can hunt and fish, one will never starve in this great country of ours that is rich with fish and game resources.

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My riding has many sportsmen's, fishing and hunting clubs in every municipality that keep these traditions not only alive but strong. They do great work to maintain community spirit, educating the young on the importance of hunting, fishing and especially conservation, as well as charitable work. The Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association, of which I have been a member for 35 years or more, operates a fish hatchery that raises and plants thousands of fish into our local lakes and streams.

I echo the Speech from the Throne in stating that our values as Canadians are rooted in our history. Hunting, trapping and fishing have been an integral part of the life of all Canadians and our first settlers. These activities defined where people settled and determined transportation routes. These activities formed the very backbone of our financial structures. Hunting, trapping and fishing helped to set the tone for our economic and social development. Whether it be the Hudson's Bay Company and the fur traders, or later, farmers settling across the landscape, hunting and fishing have been integral to the nation.

North American aboriginal people still use hunting, trapping and fishing as a means to provide food, clothing and tools for their families. Settlers and Canadians have hunted and fished to help feed their families when times were tough or crops were poor. Hunting, trapping and fishing allowed for the establishment of a partnership between different aboriginal peoples and the European settlers. From a historical perspective, fur trading played a key role in the creation and exploration of North America and formed the basis of Canada's early economy, an economy that today is one of the world's most stable.

Through hunting, trapping and fishing, Canadian communities were forged. Citizens were brought together; together in trading, together in communities and together in celebrations. Hunting, trapping and fishing are defined by the landscape of Canada and these pursuits ultimately resulted in the mapping of mountains, prairies, forests, streams and rivers across Canada.

Hunting requires the hunter to be resourceful, patient and observant, skills that are valuable in all facets of life.

Designation of a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would provide an opportunity to highlight how fishing and hunting provide sustenance and are intricately tied to cultural traditions of Canadians.

Hunting, trapping and fishing are predominantly recreational activities today, enjoyed by Canadians and international tourists alike. These activities make significant contributions to Canada's economy. For example, in 2008, hunting, trapping and fishing contributed \$1.2 billion to Canada's gross domestic product. Canada's fur trade, which includes fur farming as well as trapping, contributes more than \$800 million to the national economy each year. This industry is a huge part of the economy in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, where tourists flock in all seasons of the year for fishing and hunting opportunities.

• (1845)

These industries support and strengthen Canada's economy and sustain jobs. From campsites to outfitters, from travel guides to restaurants, the hunting, trapping and fishing industry attracts

visitors to Canada and provides many Canadians with opportunities to explore Canada's natural environment. Canada's economy has benefited from this billion dollar industry.

Funds from the sale of hunting tags, licences and stamps are used to help protect wildlife and natural habitat. This is done through conservation projects undertaken by organizations like Ducks Unlimited Canada, a non-profit organization which is dedicated to the conservation, restoration and management of wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. Through its western boreal forest initiative, Ducks Unlimited Canada is working to find a sustainable balance between development and protection of the wetlands.

The need for conservation of Canada's natural resources was first recognized by hunters—

Hon. John McKay: Talk about the fake lake.

Mrs. Bonnie Crombie: Artificial lake, fake mosquitoes, too.

Mr. Larry Miller: Madam Speaker, I remind the other members in the House that they will get their turn to speak.

The need for conservation of Canada's natural resources was first recognized by hunters, trappers and anglers as they realized that the development and unregulated use of natural resources posed a threat to the future of many species. As such, hunters, trappers and anglers have been active supporters of laws and regulations governing the sustainable use of our natural resources.

Canadians actively participate in hunting, trapping and fishing. Each year, approximately 3.2 million Canadians participate in recreational fishing and spend \$7.5 billion on the sport. Nationally, about one in every 10 Canadian adults is an active angler.

Recreational fishing is a legitimate social and economic use of fisher resources and is integrated into the management plans that conserve fish stocks. Managing and sustaining recreational fisheries allows Canadians to enjoy Canada's natural resources. Many hunters, trappers and fishers of today aim at living in harmony with nature to develop a strong sense of observation and to reconnect with nature and their roots. Myself, I hunt and fish as a sanity time to charge my batteries and clear my mind from the stresses of work and politics.

When practised in a responsible and respectful way, hunting, trapping and fishing do not pose a threat to wildlife populations. In fact, in most instances, these activities are necessary for sound wildlife management. For example, the deer population will often grow too large in number for a habitat to support. If some deer are not harvested, they destroy their habitat and that of other animals and often die from starvation or disease.

The harvesting of wildlife is carefully regulated to ensure a balance between population levels and wildlife habitat. Hunting also plays a role in public safety by managing bears, coyotes and cougars in urban and suburban areas and the protection of private property for agricultural crop production.

Private Members' Business

The United States of America has celebrated a national hunting, trapping and fishing day since 1972, when it was passed by Congress and proclaimed into law by the President of the United States. In Canada, similar legislation exists in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario, recognizing the contributions that these activities make to the cultural, social and economic heritage. In 2009, Manitoba also had its first hunting appreciation day.

The designation of a national hunting, trapping and fishing heritage day would serve as a link between our ancestors and future generations. It would serve as an opportunity to raise awareness about the history of our great country and the role that hunting, trapping and fishing have played in the exploration and settlement of Canada. This day would provide an opportunity to celebrate the long-standing practices of hunting, trapping and fishing in Canada. It would also provide an opportunity and encourage Canadians to travel and explore their country and discover the heritage of their ancestors.

I can think of no better way to recognize the culture of a riding like Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and its people, along with a nation like Canada, with a rich history of hunting and fishing, than making September 23 a national heritage day. I reiterate my support of the designation of that day as a federal commemoration of an important aspect of national history and heritage.

● (1850)

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank all of the members who rose today and those who rose in the first hour of debate in support of this bill.

This evening we heard some personal anecdotes of a family nature from the member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe. I share those anecdotes. He talked about hunting with his father. He talked about a man who was important to him and his family, a man who was important to all Canadians and to anyone who enjoys fishing. I am referring of course to Mr. Taylor, who is advocating for Atlantic salmon. I too have advocated for the reintroduction of Atlantic salmon into Lake Ontario. A Coburn Creek settler said that at one time, one could walk across the creek on the backs of the salmon when they were spawning. They were Atlantic salmon, which were replaced with Pacific salmon.

We heard from a member from northern Ontario just a few minutes ago with regard to some of her perceptions about the changes to the environmental protection act and certain other things. I do not necessarily agree with her but I will take her kick in the pants along with her support for this bill. She needs to know that I was born in her riding and for a short time was raised in the White River area of her riding. My recently deceased uncle trapped in the White River area. That hunting, trapping and fishing heritage is of a very personal nature to me.

I spent many years hunting and fishing with my late father just up the Ottawa Valley in Renfrew. The member for Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe mentioned his association with the great outdoors and the great times he had with his father. It means a lot to me. If I talk much more about it my voice will break as his did.

This means a lot to every Canadian. Whether they are new Canadians or not, people need to know that this heritage of ours began when our first nations crossed the Bering Strait into Canada.

They had an abundant availability of fish and wildlife. Fur provided a means of clothing themselves. If it were not for them, we would not be the country that we are today.

This bill just does one thing: it recognizes in a significant way that hunting, fishing and trapping are more than just sports. They are more than just a way to earn a living. These activities actually go to the very core of what it means to be a Canadian in the true sense. It means that we incorporate God's great gifts of fish, wildlife, this great environment of ours, how we enjoy it and how we incorporate it not only into our lives but into the very culture of our country, the very culture of our families. These things bring families together.

The member for Prince Edward—Hastings talked about his first experiences with fishing and his experiences now with his grandchildren. I too have experienced the great outdoors with my grandchildren, who happen to live in northern Ontario and in western Canada. After I leave this place I hope that I will be able to continue to enjoy the great outdoors with my grandchildren, as my father did with me, and his father did with him. Every member who has risen to speak on this subject has related the same familial story, that hunting, fishing and trapping is a culture in this country, whether one is an aboriginal, a new Canadian or an older Canadian.

I want to thank those members who have risen in support of this bill. I look forward to working with them to make it an even better bill as time goes on.

● (1855)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Pursuant to Standing Order 37, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Bill S-210, under private members' business.

* * *

● (1900)

[*English*]

FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC) moved that Bill S-210, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is truly an honour to rise today in the House to speak to this bill. I know we all say that time and again, but I mean it from the bottom of my heart.

Private Members' Business

It is an honour for me to represent the citizens of Kitchener Centre in the House. I consider this place to be a rather sacred place. I sometime wonder if we could only see around us the ghosts of great parliamentarians from our history, if our conduct in this place would somehow be improved and would benefit from their influence.

We have in this chamber over years seen many great orators, the likes of which may never be seen again. I think of John Diefenbaker and Tommy Douglas. We have had many great orators who sought to improve the spirits of Canadians and to improve the sanctity of the House. It is why some months ago I reacted so strongly when we had protestors in the gallery who interrupted the proceedings of the House.

The business of democracy is the most important business we do and I think of this House as somewhat of a cathedral of democracy. If only we could remind ourselves of that, we might speak in the same hushed tones and with the same respect and good spirit that we would if in fact we were in a cathedral. If we could only remember that the lives of millions upon millions of Canadians depend upon what we say here, we might perhaps put aside some of the play acting that we occasionally find ourselves in and proceed in a more solemn manner.

Therefore, I welcome the opportunity speak to Bill S-210, An Act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act (involvement of Parliament).

As the member of Parliament for Kitchener Centre, I am very proud of the people of my riding and I work hard to serve them with excellence. My riding has grown from when I was a boy. There were approximately 71,000 people in the city of Kitchener. Now there are 210,000 people in the city of Kitchener and over 500,000 in the Waterloo region. It is an urban riding and yet, in the midst of that urban hustle and bustle of housing, vehicles and transportation and a diverse industry, we have areas of secluded nature. The Grand River runs through our region. I have canoed it on occasion and have had the pleasure to watch beaver paddling down the lake. The other morning I went for a run not more than five minutes from my house, along the river and came across a deer. Many deer still populate our region and we live side-by-side with them.

I am a member of the environment committee since being elected. In that capacity, I have worked hard to serve my constituents by informing myself about the great issues of the day as they relate to the environment in Canada.

Before addressing the impact of the proposed amendments in Bill S-210, which the government fully endorses, I would like to put this legislation into a larger context, and that is the need to support sustainable development.

Our country is blessed with a natural legacy that is recognized the world over. Within our borders, we are stewards for 20% of the world's natural areas, 10% of the entire globe's forests and 7% of its renewable freshwater. Not only do we harness these resources to generate economic prosperity, but we also depend upon them to maintain the health of our ecosystem as well as the well-being of Canadians.

I have had personal opportunity to explore the wilds of Canada. Since I have been a teenager, I have been an avid canoeist. I have

spent many a happy hour out in the woods. I can recommend it to anyone. There is nothing that will take away our cares. Floating out onto a pristine lake in the middle of nowhere, all of our worries melt and are absorbed into the water. It is said that is the defining trait of Canadians, a love of the outdoors.

● (1905)

It is said that is the defining trait of Canadians, a love of the outdoors. On the wall of my MP office and previously my legal office, hangs a print from the Sierra Club of Canada with the words endorsed upon it, "Tread softly, for the ground you walk upon may be paradise". Indeed, in Canada we do walk upon paradise if it can be found anywhere on the face of this earth. We ignore or misuse these resources at our peril. For just as our natural resources create jobs and generate economic growth, a degraded environment throws dirty oil into our economic engine. Yet the converse is also true. If our engine gets no oil at all, our economy and quality of life will suffer.

Naturally we have debates over how to proceed and it is a good thing to hear a diversity of points of view. However, we should all remember that we are all here for the same purpose and we are all dedicated to improving our environment.

For this reason, like other responsible countries, Canada is committed to sustainable development, an approach that seeks to integrate social, economic and environmental priorities. By adhering to this principle, our drive for economic growth will not come at the expense of the environment. By the same token, our desire to protect and sustain our natural environment will not undermine our economy or the well-being of Canadians.

Since coming to office, our government has taken concrete actions to enhance sustainability. Indeed, Canada's economic action plan includes funds to support a cleaner and more sustainable environment and to help us achieve Canada's climate change objectives. Moreover, recognizing that Canada's environment and economy are inextricably linked with those of the United States, we have moved forward on both national and bilateral fronts.

Here at home we are taking a holistic approach to protecting our fresh water resources. Enforcing regulations and laws goes hand in hand with strengthening the capacity of our scientists to monitor and to address both man-made and biological pollution. Through stewardship and partnership programs, we are engaging Canadians in the process of cleaning up problem areas and keeping them clean.

To be successful, sustainable development requires the active participation of all sectors of our society. We have to get everyone pulling in the same direction and we cannot ignore what important sectors of our society have to say. That is why the government encourages Canadians from all walks of life to reduce their environmental footprint.

On the bilateral front, in February 2009 President Obama and the Prime Minister created a Canada-U.S. clean energy dialogue, a plan for our countries to move forward toward a low carbon economy. Since that time, we have pursued that dialogue through meetings and round tables with business leaders, academics and other experts from both sides of the border. Our two countries have already aligned targets in several key areas.

Private Members' Business

With respect to climate change, Canada has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17% from 2005 levels by the year 2020 and we support the G8 goal of reducing global emissions by at least 50% by 2050.

Goals, targets, without measures to support them, are useless, in my view, and I have often made that point. I do not agree with those who just grandstand by setting targets without actually making concrete proposals. To help us achieve those goals, we are determined to work better together with the U.S. to develop clean energy technologies like carbon capture and storage and to replace the aging infrastructure of the North American power grid with a more efficient system. For our part, under Canada's economic action plan, we have already committed \$1 billion to the green infrastructure fund over five years to support modern energy transmission lines and sustainable energy projects.

● (1910)

However, our commitment to bilateral co-operation does not mean we will delay our own action on the environment. In April of this year, for example, in advance of U.S. legislation, we announced our intention to regulate tailpipe emissions. We are now working with the U.S. to ensure common North American standards for greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. We breathe the same air.

These are all concrete examples of this government's commitment to sustainable development. By investing in research and technology, stewardship and effective regulation, we are working both on our own and at the bilateral and multilateral levels toward achieving the delicate balance between our social, economic and environmental priorities.

Another important illustration of that commitment was the passage, with all party support, of the Federal Sustainable Development Act in 2008, barely 18 months after our government first took office. In our collective enthusiasm for this legislation, however, several key elements were overlooked during the committee stage. The amendments before the House today in Bill S-210 would address these issues, strengthening the act so that we can work more effectively toward our mutual ultimate goal of sustainable development.

The existing act requires the government to produce several reports and table them in the House. In the interests of greater accountability and oversight, Bill S-210 proposes these reports should also be tabled in the Senate. This is a sensible change that I trust will enjoy all party support.

In addition, Bill S-210 would give the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development more flexibility in the timing of one of his reports. This would help ensure that the information is as useful and as relevant as possible. In this way, the report would contribute to greater accountability and support the drive toward sustainable development.

Our government is committed to both sustainable development and greater accountability. The amendments proposed to the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act in Bill S-210 would strengthen both these objectives.

It is worth noting that in keeping with the Federal Sustainable Development Act, the government has embarked on broad

consultations for the draft federal sustainable development strategy. I submit that by reinforcing a commitment to debate and transparency on sustainable development, the amendments before the House are, thus, very much in the spirit of the act itself.

I have to say that I was particularly pleased as a Conservative member to sponsor a bill proposed by a Liberal senator, not only because I respect the work that Senator Tommy Banks has done but because I wanted to demonstrate a non-partisan, indeed a bi-partisan spirit in the House.

A bill like this serves to remind us that we all serve the same master, the people of Canada, and we should do so with civility and respect. I have worked closely with Senator Banks in moving this bill forward and I very much appreciate the support that he has shown to me.

For all of those reasons, I ask all members to join with me in supporting Bill S-210.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated some of the heartfelt language of the member opposite in terms of his deep concern for the environment. I imagine that he must be very embarrassed to be part of a government that had to be shamed into even mentioning climate change at the G8-G20 summit. The government was planning to do nothing on that issue with the leaders of the world.

He talked about measures but his government ignored the very organization it had appointed, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. It came out a year ago with a plan of measures to address and accomplish the government's own goals and the government ignored that. It is not putting the measures in place that its own advisors recommended. In fact, it has lowered its target instead.

When an independent audit under the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act shows that under the Conservative government emissions are rising and will keep rising, why are his colleagues claiming in the House that the opposite is true?

● (1915)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that the opposite is true. In fact, the most recent numbers indicate that emission levels have dropped by something in the order of 2.1%.

I am very proud of what our government has done. The world can be grateful that our government stuck to its guns in relation to international climate change negotiations because, as a result of our government's position, we now have an agreement at Copenhagen that includes the major emitters like the United States and China. Without those major emitters, it would not matter what the rest of the world did. It was really through Canada's efforts and insistence that we bring those emitters along that we have that great agreement coming out of Copenhagen.

Private Members' Business

More work needs to be done, a lot is scheduled and Canada is in the forefront of it. There is a lot that I could talk about regarding our efforts in this area. We have invested \$1.48 billion over 14 years in eco-energy for renewable power and in 99 projects to increase low impact renewable power by 4,000 megawatts. We have 773 solar water and solar air projects across the country. I could go on but I just do not have the time to review them all right now.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in case anybody is watching us tonight, I think they might be surprised to know that this bill is just about correcting an oversight that occurred during the development of the Federal Sustainable Development Act. It would allow for reports that are tabled under that act and that are reported to Parliament to also be reported to the Senate. That is what we are really talking about here.

However, because the government prorogued the House, the member had to bring this bill back before the House. It just demonstrates how inefficiently run the government is when, in the first place, we would have to introduce a bill to give permission to table reports in the Senate and that we would have to go through this process a second time because the government cannot run its legislative agenda correctly.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Mr. Speaker, the act originally suffered from a defect that, as I understand it, arose at the committee level as a result of an amendment the committee proposed that introduced language from the Auditor General Act that it was not quite up to snuff.

I am quite happy to correct that. Perhaps I will take a moment to mention some of the other initiatives that our government has under way. For example, we have the eco-energy for biofuels initiative to which we have devoted \$1.5 billion over nine years, ending in 2017. We are supporting 21 proponents in the production of renewable fuels, representing \$966 million and the potential protection of 1.6 billion litres of biofuels attainable by 2012.

The fact is that our government is getting the job done and we are delivering.

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to stand this evening to speak to Bill S-210. It is a carbon copy of a bill that was originally numbered Bill S-216, a bill brought by a Liberal member of the other place and a bill, frankly, that should have been dealt with and expedited through these Houses some time ago.

The reason we are having to deal with a new version of the same bill is that the Prime Minister, in his wisdom, decided to prorogue the House of Commons for some month and a half if not two months in order to avoid democratic scrutiny. One of the unfortunate side effects of that decision is that this important bill was bumped and now, months later, on the eve of the House rising, we get the government reintroducing a Liberal bill to amend a Liberal statute.

As the member for Kitchener—Waterloo just referred to, this bill would perfect and improve the Federal Sustainable Development Act. That act was brought into being through the good work of a previous Liberal member of Parliament who is no longer sitting here but who had worked long, hard and feverishly before his departure from elected office to ensure Canada had an overarching strategy to ensure that as we grew our economy and we created employment

opportunities and wealth, we would at the same time stop a fundamental fiction. The fundamental fiction is that the environment remains ancillary or outside or removed from the way in which we operate our economy. It is a view that the member understands ought to be better promoted in his government, but I do not think it is a view the Prime Minister particularly accepts. The view is that the environment and the economy are now completely and inextricably linked.

Let us look, for example, as my colleague asked moments ago, at the G8 and G20 summits being held here in Canada this year. The Prime Minister resisted and resisted dealing with the climate change issue, just as he resisted attending the Copenhagen conference last December until he became the embarrassment of the international world when he was the only leader of the top 80 or 90 countries not to intend to show. So he came to Copenhagen. I had the privilege to be there to follow the negotiations closely and it was a remarkable phenomenon to watch the Prime Minister of Canada walking the halls with literally nothing to do. In fact, when it came time to make a speech to the thousands of delegates who were there, it was the Minister of the Environment who spoke, not our head of government, while President Obama and some of other prime ministers and presidents spoke with great passion about how they were retooling their economies and countries to deal with this challenge of integrating the environment and the economy in a meaningful way.

Even if we took the government's commitment to deal with child and maternal health issues at face value, which it is going only a certain distance in addressing, is it actually possible to address child and maternal health issues today on this planet without dealing with the climate change crisis? My years in Africa on the ground working in development for UNICEF taught me a long time ago that desertification in sub-Saharan Africa, freshwater shortages, growing cycles being interrupted, environmental migration and what would now be called environmental refugees, all of these forces at play on women and children and maternal health ought to be addressed at a meeting that was serious at the G20 level that purports to address these issues.

However, the Prime Minister does not really see sustainable development or this need to show leadership on integrating the environment with the economy as a winning file. I think his chief of staff, his pollsters and his focus groups are telling him, because he is a man who lives by tactics, but I think the Prime Minister has decided that this is an area where he simply cannot win.

● (1920)

Instead of showing the leadership the country desperately wants, needs, and deserves, he has sloughed off the issue. He wants it to be managed and contained to ensure it does not grow into a brush fire for him.

That is what we are seeing here. The bill should have been dealt with three or four months ago. The law should have been passed in the view of the official opposition and we should be working now to actually improve a national approach to integrating the environment and the economy.

Private Members' Business

After all, the question that this generation has now and for generations to come is a simple question but an important one. Are we going to learn how to live within the carrying capacity of the planet, or not? To pretend that the carrying capacity of the planet is limitless, whether it is through resource extraction, whether it is through putting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, this ruse, this fiction is over. What science is telling us is that we have a finite period of time to deal with the carrying capacity challenge. We speak of that in terms of climate change, for example, by ensuring that the planet's temperature does not increase by more than 2°C over the next 50 to 100 years.

The member who spoke on behalf of the government talked about a climate change target that the government has. We accept that target at face value. The government says it is a 17% reduction from 2005 levels in the next 10 years.

If it is a 17% reduction of greenhouse gases in the next 10 years or less, where is the plan? Where is the road map? Where is the pathway to retool our economy to ensure that we can achieve that target? There is nothing.

We have now had almost 55 months of Conservative government. We have had three ministers of the environment. We have had over 10 public promises for greenhouse gas regulations and we have no greenhouse gas regulations. We have no price on the right to emit carbon and greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. As a result, people and industries will continue to pretend that the atmosphere can continue to assimilate as much greenhouse gas as we can put into it.

We know that cannot be the case and we are falling behind. We are falling behind 27 European Union countries who already have a price on carbon emissions. We are falling behind the United States where President Obama gave a keynote address last night to the nation speaking about the need to transform the American approach to its economic activities and its energy base.

Because we have no plan, it is difficult to take the government, after 54 months of governing, in any way seriously to talk about a sustainable development strategy, one that integrates meaningfully, as I said, the economy, environmental considerations and our well-being.

The greatest mistake being made by this regime is that we are losing out on opportunities like never before. The world is rushing to transform itself, jurisdiction by jurisdiction, country by country, city by city, province by province to adopt clean technologies.

Ontario, for example, recently announced that it was going to become a source of solutions for water and waste water technologies for the entire planet. That is what Ontario has decided to do. That is what we should be doing across the country. With some federal and national leadership, Canada is in a wonderful place to provide so many of the solutions, so much opportunity, so many jobs, so much wealth to be created, while at the same time improving the state of our natural environment, which is simply a necessity as we go forward.

I am pleased to rise on behalf of the official opposition. We will be supporting this bill. It is an important bill that builds on the legacy of the work done by Liberal members and Liberal senators. It is an idea

whose time has come. Unfortunately, it should have come some months ago.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak today to Bill S-210. It is a bill, as we were saying earlier, that originated in the Senate, was introduced in the Senate, and is today being studied in this House.

This bill is quite simple. It amends two acts, the Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act. It makes two amendments, including one that simply would have the commissioner table reports not only in the House of Commons but also in the Senate. That is the first amendment in the bill we are studying today.

The second amendment would give the Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development the possibility of tabling reports more than once a year on the progress made by the government in matters of the environment and sustainable development.

We will support this bill. Why? Because these amendments are quite simple. This is part of what we might call a new environmental governance that leaves more room for independence and assessment. Why? Because Canada has given itself a number of tools and instruments in the past few years.

For example, Canada now has environmental indicators it can use to assess the government's progress in a number of sectors from water to forestry. These tools are available to us.

We have to ensure that there is more accountability and more independent auditing, and that the commissioner can play an increasingly significant role.

I remember when a sustainable development bill was passed a few years ago. It was a Liberal member, John Godfrey, who introduced the initiative. He received the support of all political parties, with a few amendments of course. Why? Because it was high time we responded to all of the big international summits, all of the Earth summits from Johannesburg to Rio, by coming up with a sustainable development strategy.

However, a few months ago, after the government decided to respond to the passing of the bill, we realized that it had introduced its own sustainable development strategy. A close look at that strategy reveals that it contains no quantitative or numerical targets that would make it possible to really assess the government's progress. It does contain targets, but they are not clear and quantitative targets. They are just qualitative targets.

We have to give the auditor more tools to assess sustainable development progress.

Private Members' Business

This is not the first time we have wanted the Commissioner of the Environment to pay a larger part in various laws. Among others, I am thinking of Bill C-288, which was introduced by the member for Honoré-Mercier. That was a bill to implement the Kyoto accord and to get the Commissioner of the Environment involved. There was also Bill C-311, the climate change bill, which was a response given at the end of the Kyoto accord and an attempt to follow up on it.

Once again, parliamentarians tried to give the commissioner more tools to assess the government's progress.

This is important, because the Commissioner of the Environment has already looked at how the government carries out and applies its sustainable development policy.

I remember a report from the Commissioner of the Environment, when the government was examining the application of the strategic environmental assessment as part of its sustainable development policy. There is a directive from the Prime Minister's Office, dating back to 1994, which requires all departments to carry out impact assessments. Those are what we refer to as strategic environmental assessments.

• (1930)

These ensure that all departments' three *Ps*—policies, plans and programs—are consistent with sustainable development. Each policy, plan and program must be assessed by the department, looking not only at sustainable development, but also at environmental protection and social development.

What did the Commissioner of the Environment observe a few years ago? I remember the title of one of the chapters from the commissioner's report. It had to do with assessing the application of sustainable development within the Department of Finance. Talking about strategic environmental assessments, the commissioner at the time, Johanne Gélinas, titled the chapter, "Greening the tax system: Finance Canada dragging its feet". If there is one fundamental department within a government, it is the finance department. And the tabling of the budget is a crucial time for parliamentarians, because the budget makes it possible to guide policies and utilize the tax system to bring about social and environmental governance.

What the commissioner basically indicated was that the Department of Finance was not applying the strategic environmental assessment to its policies, programs and plans. What are the consequences? The Canadian government tells us that it is important to protect the environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, at the same time, the finance minister provides tax breaks to the oil industry. On the one hand, the government says we must protect the environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change but, on the other, it uses an available tool, taxation, to give breaks such as depreciation deductions to an industry that is a major contributor to increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Had the Department of Finance respected the 1994 directive from the Prime Minister's Office requiring the Department of Finance to conduct an environmental assessment of its policies, governance would probably be quite different.

That is why we have to give the Commissioner of the Environment a bigger role to play. We have to make sure that we really get independent audits, independent being the operative word

because that is what will be used to guide all sectors in Canadian and Quebec society. I am talking about independent audits, but also independence for the media and scientists. The point is that we have to make sure policy is not influenced by vested interests.

That is why we have to amend the Sustainable Development Act to give the commissioner more powers, and at the same time, the government has to be aware that when the so-called environmental watchdog sends out clear messages and strongly recommends that the government do something different, the government has to listen. The more reports the Commissioner of the Environment produces, the better governance will be, as long as this government decides to listen to independent advice and respect the people's wishes to build a sustainable society for the future.

• (1935)

[*English*]

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak today to Bill S-210, which is private legislation by the hon. Senator Banks that will require the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to report not just to the House of Commons but to the other chamber of Parliament as well.

As originally passed, the Auditor General Act and the Federal Sustainable Development Act do not currently require either the Auditor General or the commissioner to report to the other place.

Despite this, the fact is that the Auditor General and the commissioner already report their findings to both chambers, by convention. However, the proposed amendments in this bill would formalize that process in law. This is a worthwhile improvement to both acts. I know that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development supports this change.

It should be no surprise that when the hon. Senator Banks, who I know has been working diligently on this for quite some time, originally introduced this legislation as Bill S-216, it received the support of all parties in the House. Unfortunately, the government decided to prorogue Parliament, again, this year, so the legislation had to be reintroduced.

The Standing Orders dictate that private members' bills from the other place are not lost if they are passed again by the upper chamber within 60 days.

Bill S-216 was duly reintroduced and passed again by that other chamber as Bill S-210, and here we are, tasked with voting on it again in the House after the delay caused by prorogation.

It is too bad that this time has been lost, since this bill could conceivably have been passed into law by now. A number of bills are in the same situation, or worse.

Just this week I heard the Conservative member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke speak in this House complaining about how so few bills, especially government bills, had been passed in this session of Parliament. That is really the pot calling the kettle black. If the member's own leader, the Prime Minister, had not suspended Parliament, all the government bills would not have been wiped out. The Conservatives would not have had to start from square one on their legislative agenda. Moreover, if they could work better with the opposition, Parliament could work better and pass more needed legislation.

This bill is fundamentally about reporting on the government's progress on the issue of sustainable development. For over 15 years now, federal departments have been required to make sustainable development plans and to report to Parliament on their progress toward sustainability. Members know that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has been critical of successive governments in following these requirements. Many federal departments have had spotty records on planning and working toward sustainability. Some are not even reporting adequately.

In this context, having formal arrangements for the commissioner to report to the other chamber and to perhaps invite a bit more scrutiny is a good thing.

This bill would also allow the commissioner to report to Parliament more than just once a year. It would allow reporting to occur immediately if something urgent or noteworthy came up instead of requiring waiting a whole year to have it in the next report. That is a reasonable idea.

Right now, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development reports under the auspices of the Auditor General and is an assistant auditor. In addition to reporting on the government's progress and plans for sustainability, the commissioner is also responsible for overseeing the environmental petitions process on behalf of Canadians, which was set up to make sure that Canadians can get timely answers from ministers on environmental issues.

It has been suggested by many that the commissioner should be taken out from under the wing of the Auditor General's office and should become more of a stand-alone office. Regardless of whether that is in the cards or not, Parliament must ensure that the office of the commissioner remains independent from interference and that it is funded adequately to continue its important work.

• (1940)

I say this not just because the commissioner performs an important job for Parliament and allows a certain level of desperately needed accountability, but because of the track record of the government. That track record is one of generally avoiding accountability, especially regarding the environment.

Even as we speak, the government is pushing forward legislation to give itself new powers to scrap the majority of environmental assessments on infrastructure and other projects. The government wants the Minister of the Environment to be able to sidestep the checks and balances Parliament has put in place. These checks are there to make sure that we avoid environmental disasters. With the catastrophe unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico, one would think that

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the government would see fit to rethink its strategy of removing all of the precautions.

Even if the government's primary concern is the bottom line, environmental safeguards are a key element of a good business plan that ensures that projects are sustainable in all ways, economically and environmentally. They prevent hidden financial costs down the road, as BP is discovering. We either invest a little at the beginning, or we pay a lot in the end.

Sadly, gutting environmental assessments this year was just the latest in a number of examples. It was only last year that the same government granted itself the power to basically rip up the assessment process for development projects on lakes and streams in the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The obsession of the Conservative government for more and more power and less and less accountability has become very clear to Canadians and to most of us.

Parliament must remain vigilant and ensure that the various officers and commissioners of Parliament, such as the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Office of the Auditor General, and others, can retain their independence.

This is private legislation, and thus, members traditionally can decide on their own whether to support it or not. For my part, I am pleased to say that my support for this legislation has not wavered, and I would encourage my New Democratic colleagues to remain supportive as well. I invite all other members of the House to pass Bill S-210 so that it may get the consideration and examination it deserves in committee.

• (1945)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a real treat to speak to Bill S-210, a bill that is important. It requires reporting to both this House and the other place, the Senate. It is a real treat to speak to it, because it was one of those rare occurrences when all the parties worked together to see something very positive happen.

This government is committed to preserving and protecting our fragile environment to preserve it for future generations. All too often, we have partisan attacks by the coalition members. However, that did not happen when I offered to work with a former colleague, John Godfrey, in a previous Parliament. It was good times, and we were able to work together, and now we have some fine tweaking of that bill to make it proper.

Senator Tommy Banks brought it through the Senate. It required a very special person who would carry it and present it in this House, and that is the member for Kitchener Centre.

Before I speak specifically to the bill, I just want to acknowledge what an ideal person the member for Kitchener Centre is and how fortunate that riding is to have a person of his calibre. He is actually one of the brightest minds here on the Hill. He practised law for almost 30 years and then was honoured to represent Kitchener Centre when he was elected in 2008 to this House of Commons. Almost right away he was acknowledged and recognized for his commitment. He serves on the environment committee but also on the justice committee.

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A little over a year ago, our government introduced the Environmental Enforcement Act. It is very important that the laws we have are enforced. That was one of the changes we needed. Who better to carry that torch to make sure that our environment is being protected and that our laws are being enforced than the member for Kitchener Centre? He was the one who brought respect and decorum to committee, to this House, and of course, we saw that pass through this House. That was good news.

This bill is also an important piece of legislation, and again, he was asked to carry it. I am really honoured to be able to work with him on the environment committee. His goal appears to be to bring decorum. He is one of those rare persons who encourages respect and professionalism, both within this House and at committee. Again, it is a real honour to work with him. He is an ideal person. I want to thank the people from Kitchener Centre for electing a person of his integrity to represent them here in the House.

Regarding Bill S-210, I believe that it would be useful to review the existing accountability provisions in the Federal Sustainable Development Act, legislation that was passed last year with all-party support. In particular, I would like to look at the role of the environmental indicators to help promote transparency. As members know, transparency is important to Canadians and is important to this government. There actually has never been a government that has been more committed to transparency than this government under this great Prime Minister.

This government is committed to improving and reporting so that Canadians are better informed about the state of the environment. As members will recall, the act requires the Minister of the Environment to monitor implementation of the federal sustainable development strategy and to report on the progress every three years. To do this, the government draws on data available through the Canadian environmental sustainability indicators.

Environmental indicators are at the heart of the act, and while this government is committed to achieving a healthy environment for all Canadians, we need to know that our efforts are yielding results with respect to both the health of Canadians and the strengthening of the economy.

● (1950)

We look to environmental indicators for evidence on key issues such as the quality of the water and the air. These indicators give us the information we need to measure performance on the environment. They help us to make important policy decisions that address any gaps, and they enable Canadians to better understand the relationships between the economy and the environment, and human health and our well-being.

That is why our government has extended funding for the Canadian environmental sustainability indicators. It is an initiative from 2008 to 2009, and now again in this budget we are reflecting the importance of measuring the progress that the government is making toward a cleaner environment.

Yet, it is not enough to develop indicators to collect data on long-term trends. Nor is it enough to use these indicators as a yardstick to measure progress. Nor is it sufficient to report on our progress of implementing the strategy every three years. To deliver the kind of

accountability and transparency that Canadians expect, and they deserve, we need greater flexibility than the existing legislation provides.

The Federal Sustainable Development Act and the Auditor General Act requires the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to prepare regular reports. These include an assessment of whether the draft federal strategy for sustainable development contains measurable targets and implementation strategies.

The commissioner is also required to assess the fairness of information provided in the government's progress report. Finally, the commissioner continues to audit departmental sustainable development strategies and reports on whether the departments and agencies have contributed to meeting the overall government targets.

The existing legislation, however, limits the tabling of such reports to certain times. In effect, this constrains the commissioner's ability to provide analysis and insight into the government's progress toward sustainable development. Not only could more frequent reports aid the government, they could also contribute to greater understanding among Canadians about the importance of sustainable development, how far we have come in meeting our targets, and how far we have yet to go.

It is vital to recognize that sustainable development is not a goal to be achieved in the usual sense of the word, rather it is an elusive, ever-moving target. Even if our environmental indicators suggest positive results, and they do, we have seen greenhouse gas emissions go down under this government by over 2%. So even though these environmental indicators suggest positive results, we do not believe the job is finished. What do we do? To do so would jeopardize the lasting impact of the good work this government is doing on the environment, and it would impinge upon the legacy that we leave to future generations. Consequently, we must always be attuned to the delicate balance between social, economic and the environmental priorities. We must monitor our progress carefully and frequently, and recalibrate our actions.

That is why the amendments in Bill S-210, brought to the House by the member for Kitchener Centre, are so important. That is why we do support this good work. The amendments will give the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development extra latitude to table more reports as required. These reports could very well heighten the impact of the government's good work on sustainable development and would surely reinforce the goal of greater transparency and accountability.

The proposed amendments would increase accountability in another way. The Federal Sustainable Development Act currently requires the government to share the draft federal strategy with the Canadian public, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development.

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Our government is getting it done in so many ways. As members in the House know, we are committed to protecting and preserving the environment for this generation and future generations. I want to again thank the member for Kitchener Centre. What an amazing member he is and I applaud him for his effort in bringing unity to the House as we move together to protect the environment.

• (1955)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to what was Bill S-216 and is now Bill S-210.

Before the member for Kitchener Centre gets too excited in his applause for the parliamentary secretary, the fact of the matter is that the leader of the government over there is the one who has put him through all the aggravation regarding this bill.

The member spoke to this bill in the House last fall and there is no reason why we should be where we are today. This bill should have long since been passed. I applaud the member for his determination and hard work on this bill, having gone through the process he has gone through to get the bill as far as he did, then have the rug pulled out from under him by his own leader at the end of the year, and now having to start the whole process over.

After reading in the Senate *Hansard* what Senator Tommy Banks said regarding this matter, I do not think the senator is as thrilled with the hon. member as the member pretends Senator Banks is. The Prime Minister is creating work for Senator Banks, who could be happily working on some other projects, which I am sure there are a lot of in the other place.

I wanted to speak about the history of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development during its past 131 years. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada has conducted many audits of environmental and sustainable development matters, but since 1995 it has had a very specific mandate in this area, thanks to amendments to the Auditor General Act.

The 1995 amendments to the Auditor General Act created the position of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development within the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and gave the commissioner specific monitoring and reporting duties on behalf of the Auditor General. It also added environmental impact to what the Auditor General takes into account when determining what to report to the House of Commons.

I would point out that the reports that are produced are given to Parliament, but under the 1995 legislation the Senate was left out. The government says it was inadvertent and Senator Banks says it was deliberate. I am not sure who is right about it, but, in practice, however, the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North has pointed out that in actual fact the reports that come through are shared with both Houses, in any event. I believe the need for this legislation is more housekeeping in nature than anything else.

In addition, the departments are required to prepare sustainable development strategies and update them every three years. Finally, the amendments in 1995 to the Auditor General Act also authorized the Auditor General to receive petitions, which the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North spoke about, on environmental and sustainable development matters and required ministers to respond to them.

Under the 1995 amendments to the Auditor General Act, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development is appointed by the Auditor General of Canada. The commissioner actually holds the rank of assistant auditor general and, in addition, assists the Auditor General in carrying out the environmental audit responsibilities, monitors and reports on federal department progress in implementing its sustainable development strategies, and also administers the petitions process on behalf of the Auditor General. As the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North pointed out, there is some debate as to whether this position should be separated out of the office.

• (2000)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona will have five minutes remaining when the House returns to this matter.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the 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*]

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising with respect to a question that I asked in the House previously regarding forestry and pine bark beetle.

I am the proud member for Vancouver Quadra which is an urban riding. It is a riding in which the history of the city has been built on the forestry industry. There are many families in Vancouver Quadra who remain directly or indirectly dependent on a healthy forestry industry.

There were two challenges that I raised in my question. One was the difficulties in the forestry industry in Canada. In British Columbia, the lumber sector, value-added manufacturing, and pulp and paper have been struggling. Many jobs have been lost, communities have been affected, and families are obviously very affected. Their retirement security is uncertain. The ability of their children to afford post-secondary education is at risk.

That is the economic challenge that the government has not properly addressed, compared with its very generous support for other industries, such as the auto industry.

The second challenge is the pine bark beetle. In British Columbia 20% of trees in our province are dead or dying from pine bark beetle. We have hillsides of grey, brown sticks, where every tree in the pine forest has been killed by the pine bark beetle. Whole landscapes look as if they have been bombed. There is a tremendous impact on communities dependent on those forests, but there are also impacts on the soil and the water, the ability of the soil to absorb water, the erosion of soil, and on wildlife.

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These pine bark beetle dead forests are like kindling. They are tinder dry. Fires burn much hotter and spread much more quickly through these dead forests. Many of these forests are in interface areas around communities. In fact, 103 aboriginal communities are at risk.

The government promised \$1 billion over 10 years to address the pine bark beetle problem and very little has been done. This is a promise broken that undermines the safety and security of people and communities across British Columbia.

I just want to quote the B.C. First Nations Forestry Council vice president who claimed that last year's:

—near-record forest fire season in B.C. has been exacerbated by the federal government backing away from providing millions of dollars to reduce the threat of pine-beetle-killed wood.

The mayor of Lillooet, where a fire came within a kilometre of the town, agreed that the federal pine beetle program was cut. There is no doubt that the pine beetle exacerbated the summer's wildfires. He said that there has not been progress on dealing with the pine bark beetle.

In the last two years there have been no dollars in the budgets to show a pine bark beetle commitment. This has been an undermining of an important environmental and economic challenge in British Columbia. It is a broken promise by the Conservative government.

• (2005)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate to hear someone be so pessimistic. The three members of the coalition seem to have little to say that is positive. I guess it is because they are experiencing little that is positive, being in the situation in which they are. The problem with finding a bad partner is that it often leads to misery.

I want to talk about opportunity and the sense of optimism taking shape across Canada. Our natural resources sector, like the rest of our economy, is showing clear signs of recovery. Prices for many commodities are rallying. In the forest sector, for example, the price of lumber per thousand board feet has increased from \$195 to \$314, more than 60% in the past year. Our export of wood products increased by 2.1% just from January to February.

We need to be encouraged by these positive signs. Most industry analysts expect further improvements as the global economy recovers. The worst may be behind us, but we are not out of the woods yet. Canada's forest industry faces pressure from tough global competition. In British Columbia and Alberta in particular, we know the unprecedented infestation of the mountain pine beetle continues to cause strain.

As all members know, the Government of Canada is very concerned about these challenges. That is why we have taken such clear and decisive action to renew Canada's forest sector. Budget 2010 committed \$100 million over four years to support the development, commercialization and implementation of advanced and new technologies in the forest sector. This support will help make Canada's forest industry even more competitive.

In June 2009 we launched the \$1 billion pulp and paper green transformation program. Through this new program, we are working

to make Canada's pulp and paper industry a greener, more sustainable industry and a leader in the new global bio-economy.

In April this government made two announcements in British Columbia under the green transformation program. At Port Mellon, we announced a \$6 million investment in the Howe Sound Pulp and Paper mill. In Kamloops we announced an investment of more than \$57 million for two capital projects at Domtar.

These initiatives are building on the unprecedented steps that our government has taken under Canada's economic action plan to support the forest industry and all who depend on it. The action plan is providing \$1 billion over two years under the community adjustment fund to mitigate the short-term effects of economic restructuring. We are also making significant investments in skills and training. We have provided \$1.5 billion over two years to the provinces and territories for skills training.

Our action plan allocates \$170 million specifically to help our forest industry develop new products and processes and capitalize on new markets. The initiative includes the industry efforts to find new uses and markets for B.C.'s beetle-killed timber. Perhaps the member does not know that a worldwide audience saw a great example of this at the Richmond Olympic Oval during the Winter Olympics. With 15 massive beams and a roof made from 1 million board feet of timber, beetle-killed timber is prominently displayed in this world-class speed skating facility. We have taken many other concrete actions to deal with the effects of mountain pine beetle.

Our government has and will continue to support forestry workers and communities now and in the future, while securing a sustainable and competitive forest sector for the future.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, that is another laundry list. The Conservative government is patting itself on the back and congratulating itself for initiatives that it had nothing to do with, including the Richmond Oval, which was planned and incorporating pine bark beetle wood long before the government was even in office.

The fiscal situation, the pension plan and the banking system are all no thanks to the Conservative government. They were all decisions by a Liberal government that the Conservatives fought and voted against when they were in opposition. We have a jobless recovery. We have unemployment that has gone from 5% to 8% under the government. We have \$1 billion spent on a fake lake summit.

What is being spent to reduce the risk of fire to first nations and communities around British Columbia? Nothing.

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Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, there is a real litany of fiction. It is very interesting. Let me go through some of the things about which she wants to hear. We have committed over \$1 billion over three years for the community development trust. That is to support communities directly affected by the mountain pine beetle. Of this funding, \$233 million is going to B.C. and Alberta to assist communities and workers. We continue to invest in combatting mountain pine beetle, providing \$600,000 in 2010-11 to support science on that very issue.

Nature has presented us with a very difficult challenge in the mountain pine beetle infestation, but the Government of Canada is continuing to face this challenge squarely by working with the provinces, industry, forestry communities and first nations.

• (2010)

JUSTICE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to follow up on a question about the government's approach to crime and justice in our country. It was a question about the cost of its agenda. It was a question that cut to the heart of issues of government transparency, accountability and fiscal management.

In question period, instead of responding to my concerns, the minister made a number of accusations about the NDP. I want to respond to those first briefly because it gives me the opportunity to highlight the constructive and productive approach that New Democrats are taking in Parliament.

The minister responded to my question by asserting that New Democrats did not care about victims. Canadians know that as false. All members of the House care about victims.

As a New Democrat, I have stood in the House on numerous occasions over the past months and proposed concrete measures to meet the needs of victims. I have called for the government to spend \$5 million for child advocacy centres to provide counselling and support to young victims of crime, a heinous form of crime, sexual assault.

These centres were proposed two years in a row by the former victims ombudsman Steve Sullivan. He asked the government for \$5 million in its budget twice. Twice the government refused.

I am here tonight to ask the government if it will support victims and agree to this proposal from New Democrats and from that ombudsman. This \$5 million for advocacy centres pales in comparison with the \$2 billion that the government will spend for just one of its crime bills, the bill that ends the two-for-one credit for pre-sentencing custody, which is the main subject of my question.

When the government was first pressed to reveal the cost of its two-for-one sentencing bill, it adamantly refused. The government said that these figures were a matter of cabinet confidence. It said that Canadians had no right to know the cost of the bills that would be debated by their elected representatives. The New Democrats disagree.

New Democrats say Canadians have every right to know the government's internal cost estimates. New Democrats believe that Canadians have every right to that information as a matter of democratic principle. New Democrats believe in transparency. New

Democrats believe in accountability. New Democrats believe in sound fiscal management.

These are the three qualities that have been lacking in the government's approach to a number of different issues in the House.

Eventually the government relented slightly. It refused to release any documents, but the Minister of Public Safety stated publicly that the bill was going to cost \$90 million. That figure contrasted starkly with independent analysis conducted by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Reports from that office suggested that the cost could be as high as \$10 billion, with 75% of that borne by the provinces.

In the face of overwhelming evidence that the \$90 million figure was flat out wrong, the minister revised his own cost estimate overnight. On Tuesday, he told Canadians the bill would cost \$90 million. On Wednesday he stated that it would cost the federal government \$2 billion.

I notice there is silence on that side of the House because that is tough to explain to people how one can go from \$90 million to \$2 billion in 24 hours.

That is a 2,000% increase in the government's cost estimate. This makes the government's handling of the G8-G20 security budget look like fiscal prudence. The \$2 billion is in direct costs to the federal government with billions more downloaded to the provinces.

Does the government disagree with New Democrats when we say that Canadians have the right to transparency and accountability from their government? How does the government account for the 2,000% overnight increase in its own cost estimate for one of its crime bills?

I wonder if the government can tell Canadians now. What is the cost of the two-for-one sentencing bill to the federal government and the provinces? Does it believe that spending \$2 billion for additional time in prisons is necessary and appropriate, but spending \$5 million on child advocacy centres to support child victims of crime is not?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only a member of the New Democrats would think there is something wrong in having truth in sentencing. This government is proud of the work that has been done to protect Canadians from being victimized by crime. This government works tirelessly to keep Canadian communities safe from criminals and to provide law-abiding citizens with the kind of criminal justice system for which they have been calling.

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I remind the hon. member that the act was supported by victims' groups, police associations, opposition parties and our partners at the provincial level. The law ensures that criminals will pay their debt to society in full. This government accepts there is a price to pay to ensure dangerous criminals do not create new victims or terrorize previous ones.

Now it has been suggested that government is concerned only with punishing criminals, that this government favours purely punitive measures over rehabilitative treatment. Let me be clear. For our government, public safety is paramount. It is true that the Truth in Sentencing Act has, at its very foundation, the idea that criminals should serve the time prescribed by law and face consequences for their actions. However, once public safety is addressed there is, without question, a need to successfully reintegrate offenders into society.

The cost associated with incarcerating offenders for longer periods of time in our existing institutions cannot be measured merely in beds, or cells or correctional officers. We recognize the importance of programing, of providing employable skills to offenders and of addressing mental illness and drug abuse.

This government believes that offenders should serve their full sentence and will make no apology for that. We also believe they should be provided every reasonable opportunity to earn their way back to society and to contribute to it positively when they return.

Longer sentencing means more exposure to that programing.

As I have stated, public safety must come first. Keeping dangerous criminals behind bars achieves that. That is why our legislation was supported by the police, provinces, victims and, yes, even opposition parties.

Before the Truth in Sentencing Act, criminals, including convicted terrorists, were sometimes released the day after their sentencing. This was unacceptable to us and unacceptable to Canadians. The Truth in Sentencing Act rights a wrong. It comes at a cost. Canadians tell us that they accept that.

● (2015)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that imprisoning Canadians can be measured in other things, but it is measured in dollars. I did not hear the hon. member answer my question of how much it would cost? He should tell Canadians.

If that is the party of fiscal responsibility as it claims, if that is the party of transparency and accountability, tell Canadians here tonight how much the two-for-one sentencing will cost the federal government and the provinces. I did not hear that answer and I will keep asking it until it is answered.

New Democrats want to make our communities safer and experts know how. They have told us we need to address the mental health and addictions crisis in our prisons. We need more funding for front line mental health services in our communities. We need to focus on crime prevention and youth diversion programs, which are proven to reduce the crime rate, in addition to dealing with punitive measures.

On the other hand, not one expert I have met with believes that building more prisons and locking up more Canadians will do anything to support victims or make our communities safe.

Will the government listen and join with New Democrats in working toward practical and effective crime prevention to keep all Canadians safe?

Mr. Dave MacKenzie: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague wants to talk about the cost. He does not talk about the cost to victims when they are reoffended against. This law, and what the government has committed itself to, is aimed at making Canadian communities safe and providing justice to the victims of crime.

In the case of the Truth in Sentencing Act, the goal of this government and of opposition members who supported it was to ensure that criminals did not escape the full duration and consequence of the sentence that Canadian law deemed appropriate.

The government's responsibility to the Canadian people did not end with royal assent. The government must implement that bill so the law exists in reality and not just on paper. This requires adequate resources, planning and consultation.

Public safety must remain paramount. We accept that public safety comes at a cost and Canadians accept that.

[*Translation*]

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on April 19, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages a question in this House about royalties on MP3s and copyrights. The minister told me to wait to see his bill in order to discuss it with full knowledge of the facts. I can now discuss it with full knowledge of the facts, for we have seen the bill.

The minister was tweeting again today on Twitter. He said that Bill C-32 was fair and had broad and deep support from across Canada, including from consumers, provincial ministers, the software industry, the music, film and television industries, small businesses, chambers of commerce and photographers.

Nothing could be further from the truth. We have seen that creators, artists, cultural organizations and the publishing community do not support this bill. Only businesses support it. I do not know what planet he lives on if he really believes that the bill has broad support across Canada.

Every day we receive press releases, open letters and opinion pieces criticizing this bill. I receive them from people not only from Quebec, but from the rest of Canada.

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Today, the Canadian Consumer Initiative wrote to the minister to tell him that he was completely out to lunch on Monday, when, in answer to a question, he told me that this bill had the support of consumers and that the Canadian Chamber of Commerce acts in the best interests of the Conservatives, I mean consumers. That was a Freudian slip. It acts in the best interests of the Conservatives, not consumers.

The Canadian Consumer Initiative set the record straight and again condemned the protection of digital locks and the anti-circumvention provisions in the current bill. The letter goes on to say that, in the opinion of the initiative's members, the bill's provisions undermine Canadian consumer interests. I am not the one saying this; it is the Canadian Consumer Initiative, which is made up of four of Canada's largest consumer associations: the Consumers Council of Canada, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Option consommateurs and the Union des consommateurs.

When the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages confuses a chamber of commerce with a consumer advocacy group, we wonder where we are going with this sort of argument. We wonder whether it is really worthwhile talking to someone who does not know what he is talking about.

Today, the Association nationale des éditeurs de livres, ANEL, weighed in on this issue. It said that its board of directors had voted on a strong resolution against Bill C-32. According to ANEL, which is a Canada-wide association, new exceptions to fair use will deprive copyright holders of income they would normally receive. After examining all the provisions as a whole, in an attempt to anticipate the effects of the marketplace, the ANEL board of directors concluded that the bill would lead to the collapse of educational publishing, create serious difficulties for their collective and represent an obstacle to the development of its digital strategy. ANEL also concluded that it was a direct attack on traditional Quebec values of support for creators.

I would like to take a few moments to talk about AGAMM, which includes almost every big name in the Quebec music industry. This organization proposed that the minister have Internet service providers make a financial contribution consisting of a percentage of their sales revenues to music rights holders.

I do not have time to talk about ADISQ. I will let my colleague answer and come back to that.

● (2020)

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was remarkable. The member jumped back and forth between both groups on both sides and talked both in favour of stronger, more prohibitive copyright legislation and weaker copyright legislation in the exact same speech. It is remarkable.

When we write a copyright bill, such as Bill C-32, it is about the appropriate balance.

The member is going to get angry when I say this. She has advocated on behalf of a tax on iPods, MP3s, laptops, PDAs, and BlackBerrys. She wants to put a tax on them. She wants consumers

to pay this tax into some conglomerate fund which would then trickle down to the artists. We do not want to tax consumers.

She talked about how consumer groups are upset about digital locks. It is interesting. I gather from the member's speech that she is in favour of circumvention of digital locks. These are the technological protection measures that would protect against people buying a DVD, putting it on their computer and then sending it out to the Internet.

Under her provision, she is saying that they should be able to do that. It would not pay actors and it certainly would not pay the movie companies, but she is saying that she would put a levy on iPods and so forth so that she could then give the money to music artists for people who break the digital locks on movies and then send them out to the Internet. This does not make any sense at all. The people at home have to be confused. As I talk this out, her positions are in complete contrast with one another.

Bill C-32 is about balance. It is about balancing the rights of consumers and the rights of rights holders. That is why groups across the spectrum, musicians, actors, film companies, students, schools, have come forward and said that it is a balanced bill. Is it perfect? It is pretty tough to write a perfect copyright bill by its very nature. People are going to say they would really like to have just a little bit more rights one way or the other. Consumers would like just a bit more liberty in some ways and rights holders would like to have a bit more protection in some ways. It is about balancing the two.

What people cannot do is argue both in favour of stronger copyright rules and weaker copyright rules and somehow come out with a bill at the other end.

What she has proposed in her speech just a few minutes ago would anger artists and consumers at the exact same time. The member comes from Quebec. I am sure she knows that Montreal is the number three destination for the creation of video games in the world. The position the member is arguing is contrary to those software creators. They are the ones who are asking for technological protection measures to protect the work they are doing in the video game software industry. I cannot believe she would argue that we should not have digital locks on these things.

● (2025)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carole Lavallée: Mr. Speaker, I propose that every sentence the hon. member for Peterborough began with “she”, be dropped. He is using his own theories and preconceived notions to put words in my mouth. I have never said or thought such things.

In fact, I think copyright legislation should protect the author and not give everyone the right to make copies, as is currently the case. I am not at all against digital media, but there is a way to use it. I certainly do not think this should be at the heart of a bill. It is incidental and we cannot say that it will protect artists. Maintaining the system of copying for personal use is what will really protect artists and allow them to be paid for their work.

Currently, this bill is not balanced. Artists are getting absolutely nothing. What is more, they are all against this idea, as the minister himself pointed out.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Speaker, once again, I am going to point out the contradiction in the member's very first statement. She started out by saying that she is opposed to copying, but then she wants to put on a digital copying levy. If we are opposed to copying, then we support stronger copyright rules that do not allow copying at all. We certainly do not propose an iPod tax or a digital levy that encourages people to copy. This does not make any sense. She is on both sides of the argument.

Writing a copyright bill is about balance. There is not a consumer group in the country that would support a tax on digital devices, such

as iPods and PDAs. She talked about consumer groups. That proposal does not have the support of a single consumer group in this country, and it certainly does not have the support of our Conservative government.

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

(The House adjourned at 8:28 p.m.)

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