



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

---

VOLUME 145 • NUMBER 098 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

---

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, November 17, 2010**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

The House met at 2 p.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

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

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### DIRECT SELLING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw members' attention to an industry that touches the lives of many of our constituents: direct selling. Direct selling provides flexible and convenient earnings and opportunities for over 900,000 of our constituents, 91% of whom are women. Direct selling in Canada generates \$2.2 billion in sales, almost \$800 million in personal income and contributes almost \$1 billion in taxes.

Direct selling companies give back to their communities, contributing almost \$8 million in charitable causes and that does not include the millions in contributions that individual direct sellers make every year.

I encourage members to learn more about this dynamic and important industry at a reception this evening with the Direct Sellers Association of Canada at the Government Conference Centre.

\* \* \*

### YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to ask the government to support my motion now before this House to declare November 17 as national youth homelessness awareness day.

Canada has an estimated 65,000 homeless youth, which is embarrassing for a country as rich as Canada.

[*Translation*]

We cannot stand by and refuse to take action when the well-being of Canada's future generations is at stake.

At the end of last month, I had the pleasure of joining Richard Branson and representatives from Virgin and Raising the Roof in serving breakfast to young people at Eva's Phoenix, a transitional housing facility in Toronto.

I thank Virgin and Raising the Roof for all that they have done to bring attention to the issue of homeless youth in Canada. I think it is time to give a voice to those who cannot be heard, because the issue of youth homelessness in Canada is a fundamental problem to which we need a solution.

[*English*]

We ask the government to do no less.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### ORDER OF SAINT-EUSTACHE

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to three constituents from my riding.

During an achievement ceremony on October 20, three prominent individuals were presented with the prestigious Order of Saint-Eustache, which is the highest honorary distinction bestowed on its residents by the City of Saint-Eustache.

For 24 years, Ginette Bordeleau has been putting her heart and soul into helping seniors. Constance Joannette, pianist and singer, founded the Saint-Eustache choral ensemble. And for 20 years, Pierre Therrien has been at the helm of Prisme, an organization dedicated to addiction prevention.

My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I offer them our congratulations and best wishes for their future projects.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week, mayors and councillors from across Canada are here on the Hill bringing the concerns of their residents to the members of this House. Tomorrow morning, just down the hall in room 238-S, I am hosting a reception for northern mayors and councillors and invite members to come by.

*Statements by Members*

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has seen increased co-operation between municipalities and the federal government. One of the best examples is the gas tax transfer, which was originated by the FCM and, after continuous New Democratic pressure, it was made permanent in the 2008 budget. The NDP called for a permanent gas tax transfer in both the 2004 and 2006 elections and secured \$900 million in gas tax transfers to municipalities in its amendments to the 2005 budget.

Now municipalities face the March 31 deadline for ending the infrastructure stimulus funding, which will create problems for some. As well, there still exists a major infrastructure deficit across Canada.

We need more co-operation between municipalities and Ottawa so Canadians are better served.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I wish to express my indignation at the news of the unlawful detention of Saeed Malekpour who is an Iranian citizen and a permanent resident of Canada. He returned to Iran in October 2008 to see his terminally ill father and was arrested. Currently in jail, he faces several allegations, including agitation against the Iranian government, and he has not had access to a lawyer.

Mr. Malekpour's case is but one of the many cases in which someone in Iran is facing a death sentence after a highly questionable process. The Canadian government, along with the international community, is committed to holding Iran to account for this and other violations of human rights. We continue to call on Iran to respect its domestic and international obligations and ensure fairness and due process to all its citizens and others.

\* \* \*

**HOLY ANGELS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments to talk about a great Canadian educational institution.

Holy Angels High School in Sydney has been educating young women for over 126 years. It has produced community leaders and national leaders, including Nova Scotia senator, Jane Cordy, and the hon. Minister of Labour.

The only public girls' school east of Montreal, Holy Angels has educated young women from all parts of my riding. Their experience gives them the confidence to do whatever they want in life, from working to build their own communities to becoming a senator or a federal cabinet minister.

Unfortunately, the school is in danger of closing. The school board is looking for solutions and I support its efforts.

I therefore call upon all members of the House to recognize Holy Angels High School as a great Canadian institution of learning that deserves to remain open so it can educate young women for another 126 years.

● (1410)

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is on the threshold of a new partnership with India. Yesterday, the Minister of International Trade launched free trade negotiations with India, one of the world's fastest growing markets.

Enhancing and securing trade opportunities for Canadian businesses is a key initiative for our government. Over the last four years we have negotiated new trade agreements with eight countries and we are holding negotiations with close to 50 others.

The Canada-India partnership holds great promise for workers and businesses. A free trade agreement has the potential to boost Canada's economy by \$6 billion to \$15 billion and increase bilateral trade by 50%.

I have long promoted stronger ties and better trade relations with India. We must capitalize on our common ties and the large and thriving Indian community in Canada to create new jobs and new opportunities.

Free trade is both logical and a win-win situation for both countries and should be applauded.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**YVES LAMONTAGNE**

**Mr. Luc Malo (Verchères—Les Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after 16 years with the Collège des médecins du Québec, including 12 years as its president and CEO, Dr. Yves Lamontagne chaired his last board meeting on October 21, 2010. According to Dr. Lamontagne himself, his time in that role was the most stimulating and enjoyable part of his career.

Yves Lamontagne began his medical practice caring for Biafran refugee children in Ivory Coast. A former clinical researcher and professor with the faculty of medicine at the Université de Montréal, he also founded the Fernand-Seguin Research Centre at the Louis-H. Lafontaine Hospital and was the founding president of Quebec's Mental Illness Foundation. He was made a knight of the National Order of Quebec in 1996 and a member of the Order of Canada in 2002. This psychiatrist, who also happens to be an excellent singer, is well known for his disarming frankness and his candour.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to commend his exemplary commitment, sincerely thank him and wish him continued success in all his endeavours.

*Statements by Members*

[English]

**NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD CRASH VICTIMS**

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and congratulate and thank it for the great partnership it has with this Conservative government. We have worked together to keep Canadians safe and the quality of life for Canadians better.

Actually, today is also the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims. Nearly 2,800 people are killed each year on Canada's roads and highways and another 195,000 people are hurt.

We must encourage all Canadians to drive safely and reduce the number of fatalities and injuries. Every member in the House is united today as we pay our respects to road crash victims and their families.

Our government, through the economic action plan, has partnered with the provinces and municipalities across Canada to make our highways and roads safer. We need drivers educated to keep themselves and others safe, and we look forward to a new year of safer driving for all Canadians and their families.

\* \* \*

**EID AL-ADHA**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker I rise today to wish Eid Mubarak to all Muslims celebrating the festival of Eid al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice.

Eid al-Adha is one of the oldest Islamic celebrations in commemoration of the great trials of faith in the lives of both Prophet Ibrahim, as well as his son Ishmael.

Through the remembrance of Prophet Ibrahim, who is venerated in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Eid al-Adha also celebrates the common humanity and ethical heritage shared by the People of the Book.

Canada is a beacon to the world on how to live in harmony. This is an asset of enormous global value.

In today's environment, our challenge or sacrifice is how we move forward as a society to ensure that pluralism flourishes and that we overcome divisive forces. Canada has the unique opportunity to provide hope to the world on how to live in harmony.

On this blessed occasion, I wish each member peace, happiness and prosperity and a happy Eid.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**EFFECTS OF DRUG USE**

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we support parents in their efforts to keep their kids off and away from drugs. We know that parents need help in explaining the devastating effects of drugs to their kids. Today we launched an edgy new advertising campaign to demonstrate to teenagers the devastating effects of drugs.

We believe in supporting parents in their efforts to protect their families from the effects of drug use. We will not undermine parents by sending kids the signal that it is okay to do drugs, as the Liberal leader did this week in Vancouver. This kind of irresponsible commentary is the last thing parents need as they try to raise their kids.

\* \* \*

**SHANNEN'S DREAM**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 15-year-old Shannen Koostachin had a dream. She dreamt that all first nations children should be entitled to an education in a healthy and safe environment, just as non-aboriginal children. Sadly, Shannen did not live to see others carry on the fight to realize her dream.

My colleagues from Timmins—James Bay and Nanaimo—Cowichan have put forward a motion to push the government to close the funding gap for schools on reserve.

Today, in Ottawa, leaders, activists and children in our communities came together to launch the Shannen's Dream campaign and to call on the government to act on this national disgrace. In my region, the government has ignored the plight of children in Oxford House, Gods River and Gods Lake Narrows, as well as other first nations across Canada.

Today we would like to honour Shannen, her family and her community. Let us fulfill Shannen's dream.

\* \* \*

**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party continues to make insulting and offensive comments.

Recently, the Liberal leader insinuated that Julie Javier, a Filipino Canadian with an impressive professional and community background, was only running so she could steal votes from the Liberal candidate in the Filipino community because of her heritage. He implied that the campaign was not being straight-up, that only his candidate was the real choice and that Conservatives were playing political games.

This is not the first time the Liberal leader has made insulting comments such as these to an ethnic group. In the Liberal leaders' book *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, he says:

My difficulty in taking Ukraine seriously goes deeper than just my cosmopolitan suspicion of nationalists everywhere. Somewhere inside, I'm also what Ukrainians would call a Great Russian, and there is just a trace of old Russian disdain for these 'little Russians'.

How can the Liberal candidate, Kevin Lamoureux, stand behind his leader and why does he support these insulting and offensive comments?

The Liberal leader and his candidate need to apologize to the Filipino and Ukrainian communities in Winnipeg North.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT DECISIONS**

**Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, all the people I am about to name have one thing in common. In one way or another, they have all been victims of the Conservatives' arbitrariness because they chose to stand up rather than suffer undue pressure from the Conservatives in silence. Some lost their jobs or were forced to resign, others did not have their contracts renewed and still others continue to fight for the resources they need to properly do the job for which they were appointed.

In naming some of them publicly, I want to underscore the courage, determination and decency all these people demonstrated by criticizing a number of unfair, abusive decisions made by the Conservatives. In so doing, they showed us that even in a democracy, freedom of speech and thought are not safe from the whims of those in power.

They are Linda Keen, Arthur Carty, Bernard Shapiro, Kevin Page, Peter Tinsley, Richard Colvin, Marc Mayrand, Paul Kennedy, Robert Marleau, Marty Cheliak, Munir Sheikh and Patrick Stogran. To all these people, I say thank you.

\* \* \*

[English]

**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* is a misrepresentation of comments made by the leader of the official opposition while in Winnipeg to campaign for our candidate, Kevin Lamoureux.

The media asked the Liberal leader if he thought the Conservatives were playing political games by running Julie Javier to steal votes from Mr. Lamoureux. The Liberal leader dismissed this question and said that the people of Winnipeg North were not interested in political games, that they were interested in a clear choice.

The newspaper, without question, swallowed the Conservative spin on the leader's comments. Its editorial wrongly claimed that he was criticizing the Conservatives' choice of candidate for the riding. It has since promised a retraction of the editorial and an apology.

The Conservatives followed their usual practice of twisting the words of their political opponents and trying to divide Canadians.

We want to give the voters a clear choice. With Kevin Lamoureux's 18 years of experience serving the people of Winnipeg North, we believe he is just what the House of Commons needs.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**BILL C-343**

**Mr. Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon—Wanuskewin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal-Bloc-NDP coalition proved once again that it is soft on crime and cares more about criminals than victims and law-abiding Canadians. The Liberals, the Bloc and the NDP banded together yesterday at the HUMA committee and

supported and passed Bloc Bill C-343 that would reward youth criminals.

Bill C-343 would provide thousands of dollars from EI for parents to stay home and take care of youth criminals who were injured while committing a crime, such as robbery, arson, gang activity or other criminal acts. The bill would result in increased EI premiums for law-abiding Canadian families and business owners who would be forced to pay even more money to these criminals. It is shocking.

The bill is offensive to victims and to law-abiding Canadians. Our Conservative government will never support a bill that rewards criminals. Unlike the coalition, our government will continue to stand up for victims and for hard-working Canadian families.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the F-35 fighter jets, the Conservatives are ignoring the Auditor General's report, they are ignoring the Pentagon, they are ignoring U.S. senators, they are ignoring everyone, especially Canadians who are wondering how the government can buy planes to the tune of \$16 billion without a competitive bidding process.

When will the Prime Minister stop ignoring everyone, start listening to Canadians and give us a competitive bidding process for these planes?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this plane was selected through a competitive process under the previous Liberal government. We know with certainty that this is the preferred plane of experts in the field and of industry. I encourage the leader of the opposition to listen to the air force and the aerospace industry.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are indeed listening to the aerospace industry. They are saying that there would be more economic and industrial spinoffs with a competitive bidding process.

[English]

I have done a lot of town halls this year. The Prime Minister does not hold open town halls, but if he did, he would listen to Canadians. What Canadians are saying is this does not make sense. We cannot persuade a small business person across the country that it makes sense to buy 16 billion dollars' worth of equipment without a competitive bid. We would not run a small business like that, so we cannot run the Department of National Defence that way.

How can the Prime Minister stand and assure business people across the—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, there was a competitive process held under the previous government to choose this plane. In fact, the Government of Canada, under the previous government, has funded the development of this aircraft. What are we to do when the CF-18 reaches the end of its useful life: simply ground the air force or spend more money on a second set of planes?

The government's position is clear. It is straightforward. The opposition is simply playing politics with the lives of air force members and with jobs in the Canadian aerospace industry.

**Hon. Michael Ignatieff (Leader of the Opposition, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should get out around the country and listen to what Canadians are saying. He should have an open town hall and he should listen because they think this is a \$16 billion mistake. Nobody wants to ground the air force. The issue is about getting value for money, getting our priorities straight, digging us out of a \$56 billion deficit, attaching our priorities to what matters to Canadians.

We can have a competitive bid, save the money and use it to help families take care of their loved ones. Why not?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party always tries to play these political games with military purchases. We saw what it did with the helicopters, and we are still paying for that.

If the Leader of the Opposition is serious about talking to Canadians, he can go to Montreal or he can go to Winnipeg, like I did. He can go to the shop floors of the aerospace industry and tell those people he is going to tear up their jobs by tearing up the contract because he does not care about them.

\* \* \*

• (1425)

**G8 AND G20 SUMMITS**

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the chair of the government operations and estimates committee.

The committee has learned about spending on glow sticks for the RCMP and money wasted draining a quarry to build temporary police headquarters, but we have no details on spending for the Ontario Provincial Police.

Could the chair tell the House if the upcoming agenda for the committee will include looking at and reviewing detailed spending of the OPP at the G8 and G20 summits?

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP and the city of Toronto police force have submitted their costs for review to the committee. To date, we have not received any similar costing from the government for the \$100 million allocated to the OPP. Until such time as the government is willing to submit these documents, the committee will be unable to complete its study on behalf of Canadians.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, why will the Conservative government not release these documents to the committee?

Would the government have us believe it signed a \$100 million blank cheque and almost six months later it still does not have the details on how it was spent?

We have already seen the government's lavish spending on frosted glasses and posh centrepieces. Are there more embarrassing items it wishes to hide?

Are the Conservatives trying to protect themselves or their candidate in Vaughan, Julian Fantino, or both?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the arrangement with the OPP is that it has until December 1 of this year to submit all of their G8 and G20 expenses. This is significantly shorter than the deadline for other security events, indeed years shorter.

The member opposite knows that the deadline has been in place from the beginning of our agreement with the OPP. That said, we understand from public statements by the OPP that its costs are expected to come in well under budget.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a clear commitment in his 2005 election platform and in the 2007 Speech from the Throne to hold a vote in the House on any foreign military operation. In January 2010, the Prime Minister went even further when he said that there would be no military presence in Afghanistan beyond 2011 other than that required for the security of the Canadian embassy.

By extending the military mission in Afghanistan beyond 2011, does the Prime Minister realize that he is absolutely renegeing on his promise?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, we have never voted on a non-combat military mission. With regard to the extension of the mission in Afghanistan, the government is clear: it will be a non-combat mission.

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is not the opinion of the former Chief of the Defence Staff, Rick Hillier, who said that it is impossible to train soldiers without monitoring them on the ground, that is, in the combat zone.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the "new" Afghan mission will not be a humanitarian or training mission, as he claims and as he would like us to believe, but rather a military mission because Canadian soldiers will have to go into the combat zone to do their job?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is very clear. The training will take place on military bases and in classrooms. The government is very clear on the scope of this mission.

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, without a debate and without a vote in Parliament, the government wants to extend our military mission in Afghanistan at a cost of \$500 million a year. It is also planning to cut our development assistance to the country in half. For every dollar in assistance, \$5 will go to the military. That makes no sense.

Does the government realize that such an imbalance in the allocation of funding to the military and to development assistance just proves that the mission in Afghanistan truly is a combat mission?

[*English*]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has made a significant difference to the lives of the people in Afghanistan.

We will be building on our successes by focusing on children and youth in the future, primarily by focusing on education. In fact, our signature projects have improved the lives of children. We now have more than two million girls in school. We have educated and trained over 3,000 female teachers. We have seven million children with polio vaccinations.

We will be building on that kind of difference.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government wants to extend our military mission in Afghanistan: 950 soldiers will remain in the country and the military component will gobble up five times as many resources as development assistance. We need a real debate to ensure that the Afghan mission is truly a civilian mission. Talks between the Conservatives and Liberals behind closed doors are not enough.

Why is the government refusing to have a real debate and a vote in the House on this issue?

[*English*]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our plan going forward is to ensure that the Afghan people and the world are more secure by not enabling Afghanistan to be a home for terrorists.

Also, at the same time as we are supporting their increased security efforts, we will be building on the successes we have achieved. In fact, these are accomplishments that do make a difference.

Sixty-six per cent of the population now have access to primary health care. Canada's efforts with mothers and children will—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that the Prime Minister is not allowing a vote on the extension of our military mission in Afghanistan.

Their election platform stated the following:

A Conservative government will: ...

Make Parliament responsible for exercising oversight over the conduct of Canadian foreign policy and the commitment of Canadian Forces to foreign operations.

Why is the Prime Minister breaking this promise?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has never voted on a non-combat mission such as this. As I said, the future mission in Afghanistan will be a non-combat mission.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did what he promised he would never do, which is to appoint and then use unelected senators to block the will of the House of Commons. He said he would never do that.

Canadians are asking for action on climate change and we adopted a climate change accountability act right here last spring.

“The Prime Minister has the moral responsibility to respect the will of the House”. That is what he said. So why did he order his senators in the other place to kill the climate change bill that was adopted by the majority of MPs in this House?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been very consistent and very clear in their opposition to Bill C-311, a completely irresponsible bill. It sets irresponsible targets, does not lay out any measure of achieving them, other than by shutting down sections of the Canadian economy and throwing hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of people out of work.

Of course, we will never support such legislation.

**Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, he has no right to use his unelected senator friends to kill the will of this House. He has lost his moral centre. He is fundamentally undemocratic. Let us be clear about it. That is the truth.

He broke his promise to bring our troops home, which the House asked for. He broke his promise to have votes on the use of our troops in foreign wars. He broke his promise never to appoint unelected senators and now he is using them to subvert the will of the House. It has never happened before. It should not be permitted.

Where is his democratic impulse? Has it gone? Has he lost any sense of his responsibilities?

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, as I have been very clear, we have a responsibility to the Canadian public and to Canadian workers to protect their jobs.

At the same time, when we talk about democracy and the leader of the NDP, this is a man who after the election set out to form a coalition to overturn the results of that election so he could appoint members to the Senate.

If the leader of the NDP is serious about Senate reform, he can support the government's Senate reform bills that are before the House.



*Oral Questions*

●(1435)

*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance found another way to waste taxpayers' money. The Conservatives spent no less than \$130 million on government advertising in just one year. The entire beer industry spent only \$97 million. The Conservatives are just full of hot air.

Does the Prime Minister believe that devoting \$130 million to completely useless advertising makes his record less mediocre?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has always believed that it is important to inform Canadians of its accomplishments. It is always important to let people know about the tools available to them. That is what we did with our excellent economic action plan, which created over 430,000 jobs.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about taxpayers' money. One hundred and thirty million dollars squandered on Conservative Party advertising.

Let us talk about programs. The Conservatives are spending an additional 25% on self-congratulatory advertisements for victim support programs rather than putting that money toward the programs themselves. If that does not constitute self-promotion, then I do not know what does.

How is it that the Prime Minister is spending so much money on self-promotion when he has not put a cent toward an inquiry on the 600 missing aboriginal women?

These women and their families are victims.

*[English]*

**Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there has been unprecedented pressure and incidents over the last year or two years, whether we are talking about the H1N1 crisis or whether we are talking about communicating on vast amounts of infrastructure projects, on and on it goes. There have been increased pressures.

What the opposition members fail to point out every single time when they raise this issue and we give the very clear accounting that is provided for by the Auditor General, is that this year there is not only a freeze, there is an \$11 million reduction on advertising pertaining to these ministers' offices.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in a time of economic restraint when Canadians are losing their jobs and are hard hit by a recession, this Conservative government spent the highest amount in Canadian history on advertising. To put it in perspective, the amount was more than all the beer companies combined spent last year.

That is an outrageous amount of spending on advertisements which many Canadians, when surveyed, associated with Conservative Party propaganda.

When will the Conservatives stop wasting taxpayers' money and start doing something about the \$56 billion deficit?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, most Canadians think it is a valid expenditure when we have something like a pandemic of H1N1, to inform Canadians about that. When we have a variety of tax measures that involve not only tax reductions, but also credits to families for a variety of programs, we think we should be informing Canadians about it.

We can understand the Liberals are sensitive, especially when we are talking about reducing the tax load on people and providing credits for families. We understand that is so far from their policy that they are sensitive about it, but we think we should be informing Canadians about these initiatives.

**Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives spent \$33 million more on advertising last year than the entire Canadian beer industry combined spent. That is over \$130 million on billboards and TV ads during a recession. Is the government under the influence?

While Canadian families were tightening their belts, this government was spending "like it was Christmas". The Conservatives' advertising budget last year was so big that the same amount of money could have helped 100,000 Canadian caregivers.

How is it that the Conservatives can so easily waste taxpayers' money?

**Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the Liberals' fascination is with raising the bar related to the beer industry. These are private sector decisions. I know it is of some concern. There are ways where they can find out about the availability of those products and where they are sold. I do not know why they are upset about that expenditure.

However, we are concerned about Canadians being informed about issues that are of great importance to them. We do not apologize for that. We are actually quite pleased with the way we have put a freeze for the next three years on government operational spending, including on ministerial offices, an \$11 million reduction this year.

\* \* \*

●(1440)

*[Translation]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the government and the Minister of the Environment have no interest in fighting climate change. In the past, the minister has shown that he would rather torpedo the work of conferences on climate change than work constructively to ensure their success.

### Oral Questions

In light of the Conservatives' obvious lack of interest in environmental issues, can the Prime Minister guarantee that the Minister of the Environment will attend the 16th Conference of the Parties, which will be held in Cancun?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at COP 16, Canada seeks an outcome that includes commitments from all the major emitters and reflects the balance achieved with the Copenhagen accord.

Copenhagen has the support of 139 signatory countries representing 85% of greenhouse gas emissions. Canada is on the right track.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the parliamentary secretary understood my question, and the Prime Minister was not listening either. Today the question is clear. What we want to know is whether the Minister of the Environment will fulfill his international responsibilities and go directly to Cancun for the next conference on climate change. Yes or no?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been very clear. Canada's desired outcome in Cancun is to build upon the success of the Copenhagen accord. It is the only accord that includes all the major emitters. Canada will continue to work toward outcomes that include funding, deforestation, adaptation, technology, mitigation commitments from all the major emitters. measured reporting and verification. We are getting it done.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SECURITIES INDUSTRY

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this week, in response to a question I asked him, the Minister of Finance said that the Government of Canada had conducted discussions with the China Insurance Regulatory Commission to allow Chinese insurance companies to invest in Canadian products. What is important is not who held talks and discussions during the summer, but who negotiated the agreement and signed it on November 10. Who signed this agreement?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, discussions took place when I visited with the regulatory commission in June of this year, in Beijing. In fact, those discussions also took place when I was there previously, in 2007, and the agreements were signed with the appropriate regulatory authorities in Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Paillé (Hochelaga, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, now the cat is out of the bag. The minister is finally acknowledging that it is the regulatory authorities in Quebec and the other provinces that have jurisdiction in this area. They are the ones who signed the agreement on November 10. There were no federal officials involved, because this does not come under federal jurisdiction.

When will the federal government understand that it has no business getting involved in this, that it should butt out and that it should not impose its will to favour Toronto? Get out of that.

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have always said, participation in this initiative is voluntary for Quebec and the other provinces.

[English]

The Supreme Court of Canada will deal with the jurisdictional issue in April of next year and then we will have confirmation with respect to the legislative authority of Parliament on this subject.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are just days away from the international climate change negotiations in Cancun and under the current government, Canada has no position, no action, and no plan. For five years, the Prime Minister's long series of ministers have posed and postured and have done nothing. Every week that goes by, the government is creating a steeper hill for Canadians to climb in the future, which will make it tougher for Canadians and tougher for Canadian business.

Would the Prime Minister or his part-time minister care to tell us today when they plan to stand up for Canadians' interests on climate change?

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is this government that always stands up for a cleaner environment and is cleaning up the mess left by the previous Liberal government.

Our government supports the new global climate change regime, based on the Copenhagen accord, that recognizes the importance of greening the economy for tomorrow and protecting jobs today. We are getting it done.

● (1445)

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in that answer, which I assume was given to him by the minister, we are reminded that Canada not only has a part-time environment minister but a retreaded failed minister, clearly one instance where recycling should have been avoided.

In Japan last month, on biodiversity, and in Copenhagen on climate change, the government has stocked the trophy case with fossil and dodo booby prizes for its poor international performance.

Canadians are looking for leadership, while the Prime Minister is surrendering to the U.S. Congress to look after our interests on climate change.

When will the government admit that it has failed Canadians on one of the biggest challenges our country faces?

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is distorting the facts. The facts are that, under the previous Liberal government, emissions went up. Under this government, emissions are already going down.

*Oral Questions*

Regarding biodiversity, we are very pleased with the outcome in Nagoya. It is very unfortunate that the member did not attend the meetings that he was supposed to attend.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, why is it so difficult to get the government to protect the environment, especially where the oil industry is concerned?

It took a two-year Liberal-initiated study to get the government to admit that it has a water problem in the oil sands; it took complaints by aboriginal leaders to get the government to dispatch officials to look at the mess at the Horizon tailings pond; and the government still has not set emission targets for the oil industry.

Why is it taking so long for the government to name a real, full-time environment minister?

Then again, at least a part-time minister can only do half the damage.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making sure that the oil sands are developed in the most environmentally sensitive and responsible way. That is why we created a panel of leading scientists from Canada on water monitoring, chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Dowdeswell. That panel will report whether what we are doing is world class, and if it is not, it will be improved.

[Translation]

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of water, when will the government protect the Athabasca River and the first nations that depend on those waters? When will it set a minimum water level below which any water removal by the oil sands industry would be prohibited?

The federal government has jurisdiction over this, but it does not have the will to take action. Why not?

[English]

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is well aware of the panel of leading scientists. I just answered that question.

The member may not be aware that we have new technologies for chemical fingerprinting. We are going to find out where the toxins are coming from, whether they are naturally occurring or whether they are coming from the oil sands.

This government is committed to making sure that the oil sands are developed in the most environmentally sensitive way.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MEMBER FOR MARC-AURÈLE-FORTIN**

**Mr. Steven Blaney (Lévis—Bellechasse, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the Bloc member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin was Quebec's justice minister, he used his own Law 86 to force police to report illegal activities. Apparently this principle did not apply to him for 17 years. His irresponsible and reckless behaviour clearly makes him unfit to carry out his duties as justice critic.

Now that the Bloc leader has returned from his European vacation on a salary paid by Canadian taxpayers, will he force the member to resign immediately, and can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue tell us what our government is doing to fight corruption?

**The Speaker:** The question is unacceptable. This does not concern the government's roles or responsibilities.

\* \* \*

[English]

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister came to office campaigning on accountability and promising to bring decisions on military engagements to Parliament for a vote. Time and again, the Prime Minister has assured this House and Canadians that our soldiers would be out of Afghanistan in 2011. These promises and principles are now out the window.

Why is this government breaking its promise to bring our soldiers home in 2011? Why is it breaking its promise to put such important matters to a vote?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister has been clear. Obviously this is an issue of great importance to Canada and to the international community.

We have contributed mightily over the last number of years in Afghanistan. Now we will move to a new phase that involves training. We will continue with the reconstruction and development. We will continue to invest in all the good programs there, such as immunizing children, educating children, democracy building and infrastructure.

The reality is that this is now a non-combat role, thus not requiring the same type of resolution that we saw in the previous Parliament.

● (1450)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, among all the broken promises this week, the most devastating for Afghans was the Conservatives' cutting of development commitments to the people of Kandahar. We promised to build 50 schools, but only 19 have been built. We promised to train 3,000 teachers, but we have not even reached half that target. We committed to be partners in Afghan reconciliation, but the government has no progress to show there.

Can the Conservatives explain why they broke their word to the people of Canada, and most importantly, why they broke their word to the people of Afghanistan?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are keeping our promise to the Afghan people, particularly to the children and youth of Afghanistan. In fact, we have now completed 26 schools and the remaining schools are currently under construction. Seven million children will receive polio vaccinations. Where there were no schools for girls before, there are now and two million girls are attending. There have been 158 teachers trained, with better curriculums that Canada is supporting to improve.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FAMILIES OF VICTIMS OF CRIME**

**Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this government lacks all credibility when it comes to supporting the families of victims of crime. At the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the Conservative members were the only ones who voted against Bill C-343, which provides financial support to victims' loved ones. The AFPAD, the murdered or missing persons' families' association of Quebec, has been calling for this kind of financial assistance.

Will the minister have the courage to tell us why her government opposed the Bloc Québécois bill meant to help the families of victims of crime?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we would never support such a bill that rewards criminals.

It is important to note that, under that bill, if a criminal is injured while committing a crime, his or her family would be eligible for employment insurance benefits to care for that criminal. It is unfair and offensive to victims and their families.

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, everyone must pay for those people, even the families.

While the government continues to grandstand and boast that it is helping victims of crime, the budget of the ombudsman for the victims of crime is about to be cut and half of the money in the criminal injuries compensation fund was not distributed in 2009-10, despite the tremendous needs of families, support groups and non-government organizations.

Why is this government spending so much on criminals and so little on resources to help victims and their families?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc would use every opportunity to block every attempt to help victims in this country.

While the member is on her feet, maybe she could explain why those members support mandatory minimum sentences for white collar crime, but they voted against mandatory sentencing for the people who are convicted of trafficking children. Are they not victims too? Why does the Bloc not stand up for children?

[Translation]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, documents show that last year, Infrastructure Canada disbursed less than 25% of the money allocated in the economic action plan.

Not only did it not invest the amount promised, but now it wants to impose an arbitrary deadline that is jeopardizing hundreds of projects. It did not release the money on time and now they want to cut it off early.

Is this a matter of incompetence or bad faith?

[English]

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no money has been cut off at all.

Let me walk my colleague through the way the system works. The jobs start right away, people get employed, and the economy gets stimulated, 430,000 new jobs. The jobs are in place, the money is in place, but the bills have to be submitted by the provinces. As they submit the bills, we are eager to pay them.

The provinces have to submit the bills. The economic activity and the stimulus is already taking place.

● (1455)

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is still missing 115,000 full-time jobs compared to October 2008.

The government had no trouble shovelling \$1 billion out the door in record time for a 72-hour summit, but it only managed to invest 3% of its green infrastructure fund last year and only one-quarter of the infrastructure stimulus fund.

Can the Conservatives not understand that money that does not get out the door fails to create or save a single job?

**Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we can see why the member is a trained economist.

Let me explain again. Say, for example, someone is going to replace the roof on his or her house. That individual employs a contractor. The people go to work on the house. They buy the materials. The engineers do their job. The inspectors do their work. Who in that house would pay the bill before the job was done or the bills were submitted or the inspection was done? I will tell the House who would do that. The Liberal Party of Canada would do it.

\* \* \*

**MINING INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have been born and raised in Thompson, Manitoba. Thompson and communities like it are the heart and soul of our country.

Three years ago, the government allowed Vale to take over Inco, claiming this would benefit Canada. Today, Vale ripped the heart out of Thompson. It announced the closure of surface operations. Where is the net benefit for my home community?

*Oral Questions*

What is the government going to do to stand by these Canadians, people in my hometown, and save the 600 jobs that are being cut by this foreign-owned company?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that today Vale made an announcement about a \$10 billion, that is billion with a “b”, further investment throughout Canada, where it has Canadian operations. That includes investments in Saskatchewan, and I am sure the member for Wascana would like to know that. It also includes investments in Sudbury, Voisey's Bay, and throughout the country.

There are certain operations that it is now centralizing and it apparently affects the hon. member's riding. I can understand why she is upset. But I would like hon. members to know that this happened on a day when the company is making 10 billion dollars' worth of future investments.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I invite the minister to come to my hometown in Thompson and explain his position to the Canadians who are losing their jobs.

The government allowed the takeover of Inco and is directly responsible for today's announcement, an announcement that it said would not happen because it would bring jobs, not take them away. What the Conservatives need to do is admit that they dropped the ball on foreign takeovers and are taking advantage of communities like mine.

When will the government commit to a meeting with the people of Thompson, the City of Thompson, the steelworkers, and the stakeholders? When will the government commit to being part of the solution and help to save our jobs?

**Hon. Tony Clement (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that the hon. member is upset, and I understand that she is seeking to defend her community. The fact of the matter is that this announcement today is \$10 billion of future investment in this country, throughout this country. That is good news for Canada.

The hon. member talks about helping Thompson, Manitoba, yet she voted with her caucus and with her party. Every time we wanted to cut taxes, every time we wanted to help communities, every time we wanted to stimulate the economy, she and her caucus voted against it.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Dona Cadman (Surrey North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday at committee I was shocked to see the Liberal-Bloc-NDP coalition band together yet again to support Bill C-343. This bill would provide thousands of dollars through EI to pay for parents to stay home with youth criminals who have been injured while committing a crime such as robbery or gang activity.

Can the minister state our Conservative government's position on this coalition bill that would reward young criminals?

• (1500)

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will never, ever, support a bill that rewards criminals, as this coalition bill does. Not only would it reward criminals, it would also increase EI premiums paid by law-

abiding citizens, hard-working Canadians, and their employers to pay for the care of youth criminals. This is unjust, and it is offensive to real victims and their families. We will only support bills that support the victims of crime, not the criminals who terrorize those victims.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food continues to fail farmers, especially those faced with market and weather turmoil. Beef and hog producers are being driven into default by unrealistic repayment terms on emergency advances. These repayments are being demanded by the government itself.

The minister stated when introducing the emergency advance that payments would not be required until such time as prices improve. Prices have not improved substantially. Farmers cannot afford the government's demand. Why is the government breaking trust with farmers?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. I had a great meeting this afternoon with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, and I am meeting with the pork farmers later today. They are both excited about the extensions we have given them on the cash advances.

Of course, I have some tremendous quotes here. If the member opposite has a second question, I would be happy to read them to him.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, a number of anomalies were detected in a major information technology contract renewal by public works and government services Canada. As soon as the company questioned the practices of Public Works and Government Services Canada, the Conservative government threatened to bar the company for three years.

Can the former minister of Public Works and Government Services and current Minister of Natural Resources tell us whether he approved this strategy to silence a company for criticizing a bidding process that it felt favoured a firm full of Conservative party donors?

When will there be an impartial public inquiry?

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to any contracts that we deal with at Public Works, we always follow all of the contracting regulations in place with the Government of Canada.

\* \* \*

**EXPO 2017**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, by not yet endorsing Edmonton's bid to host Expo 2017, the government is putting Canada's only bid at risk. Edmonton's Expo theme is energy and our planet. It would showcase innovations in clean energy technology and sustainability, initiatives the government claims are among its priorities. Supporting this bid would help deliver on the government's stated clean energy policy.

Where are the Edmonton Conservative MPs? Will the government immediately endorse Edmonton's bid to host Expo 2017 for Canada?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the City of Edmonton has put together a proposal to host Expo in 2017. As a matter of fact, Mayor Mandel was in Ottawa last week, and the Minister of Finance and I met with him.

I should let the member know that we are doing our due diligence on this project. We are concerned about the large price tag associated with this. We are doing our due diligence and we will give our response to the city very soon.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have clearly shown a desire for reform of the Senate. Our government has taken steps to bring forth Senate legislation, to modernize the Senate so it can better reflect a 21st century democracy.

Today Bill C-10, the Senate term limits bill, will resume debate. Could the Minister of State for Democratic Reform tell this House the importance of passing this bill?

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians feel that term limits of up to 45 years are just too long, and since forming the government, we have pursued Senate term limits. Today the Senate term limit legislation is up for debate, and if the opposition parties were keen on Senate reform, they would support our motion. I ask the opposition to support the will of Canadians, to support democracy, and to support our Senate term legislation.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister's previous answer makes a mockery of so-called putting farmers first. Not only are Canada's livestock producers in serious trouble, but there are added problems in the Interlake area of Manitoba and Saskatchewan for both cash crop and livestock

producers facing lost crops, ruined pasture land, and swamped feedlots.

The minister has turned his back on farmers in trouble. Those farmers require assistance. Will the minister act today with dollars? Farmers need action, not excuses by the organization's bureaucrats in Ottawa.

• (1505)

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member thinks he can decry the bureaucrats by putting on a ridiculous disguise, but he cannot get away with it.

Here are some great quotes.

Jurgen Preugschas from the Canadian Pork Council said, "This will strengthen our industry by providing producers the opportunity of time to review their cash flow, manage their financial obligations, and focus on farming."

Travis Toews, president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, said, "This flexibility strikes a good balance of working to clear up outstanding amounts while allowing producers to focus on the future".

We are helping them out.

---

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with leave of the House and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I would like to table, in both official languages, three agreements.

The first is the agreement between Canada and the Slovak Republic on Youth Mobility, done in Bratislava on July 20, 2010. The second is the Protocol amending the Convention between the Government of Canada and the Swiss Federal Council for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital, done at Berne on 5 May 1997, signed on October 22, 2010. The third is the Agreement concerning the Protocol amending the Convention between the Government of Canada and the Swiss Federal Council for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital, done at Berne on 5 May 1997, signed on October 21, 2010.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ENHANCED NEW VETERANS CHARTER ACT**

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Blackburn (Jonquière—Alma, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce bill C-55, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act and the Pension Act.

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

\* \* \*

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association respecting its bilateral visits to Cotonou, Benin, and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from September 5 to 12, 2010.

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union concerning its participation in the parliamentary panel within the framework of the World Trade Organization Public Forum 2010 and the 22nd session of the Committee of the Parliamentary Conference, held in Geneva, Switzerland, on September 16, 2010.

\* \* \*

● (1510)

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE****HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-343, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Employment Insurance Act (family leave). The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to the committee's study of the federal contribution to reducing poverty in Canada.

This study started during the 2nd session of the 39th Parliament. The committee, over the years, has held numerous meetings across the country and has finally completed its work.

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

I wish to thank all the members of the committee, past and present, from both sides of the House, for their hard work, contributions, support, and collaboration during this long study. I also want to thank the committee staff, past and present, for its professional and excellent support.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL BRAIN HEALTH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS MONTH ACT**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-595, An Act respecting a National Brain Health Education and Awareness Month.

She said: Mr. Speaker, five million Canadians are living with a neurological condition today. This bill would designate the month of March as National Brain Awareness Month in order to help raise awareness about neurological disease and injuries.

Designating the month of March as National Brain Awareness Month would educate the people of Canada to enhance their understanding of brain health, including brain diseases, disorders and injuries. It would ensure that brain health research was fully funded and that preventive measures, treatment and support were universally accessible. It would confirm the government's commitment to improving the quality of life of all persons who live with a brain condition and of their families and informal caregivers.

It is my hope that hon. members will support the bill. It is my hope that the introduction of the bill will help raise awareness about brain health, the need for a national brain strategy and lay the foundation for that national brain strategy to which our party has already committed.

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

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS****PASSPORT FEES**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition signed by dozens of Canadians. The petition calls on the Canadian government to negotiate with the United States government to reduce the United States and Canadian passport fees.

The number of American tourists visiting Canada is at its lowest level since 1972. It has fallen by five million visits in the last seven years alone, from 16 million in 2002 to only 11 million in 2009.

Passport fees for an American family of four could be over \$500 U.S. In fact, 50% of Canadians have passports but only 25% of Americans have passports.

*Routine Proceedings*

At a recent Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, which comprises the 11 border states from North Dakota to Illinois and three Canadian provinces, the following resolution was passed unanimously:

RESOLVED, that the Midwestern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments calls on President Barack Obama and [the Canadian] Prime Minister... to immediately examine a reduced fee for passports to facilitate cross-border tourism; and be it further

RESOLVED, that [the Conference] encourage the governments to examine the idea of a limited time two-for-one passport renewal or new application.

To be a fair process the passport fees must be reduced on both sides of the border. Therefore, the petitioners call on the government to work with the American government to examine a mutual reduction in passport fees to facilitate tourism and to promote a limited time two for one passport renewal or new application fee on a mutual basis with the United States.

• (1515)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to present a petition once again about the EI pilot projects started in 2005 for areas of unemployment higher than 10%. There were three pilot projects. One allowed people to earn up to 40% of their income before being clawed back. Another was the extension of five weeks. The third one, which will affect most of the people not just in my area but in all areas of the country affected by areas of high unemployment, is the best 14 weeks option.

In that option people can use their best 14 weeks on which to base their benefits from employment insurance as opposed to using the last 14 weeks. This means that people can now work two or three days a week when asked without being penalized when it comes to their benefits because it actually ruins their average. By using the best 14 weeks it means that over that longer period of the winter, especially for seasonal workers, they get to achieve more benefits and therefore the system can eliminate disincentives for work.

This is for the employees in many areas of Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor as well as the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition from the people in my riding of Beauce. They are calling on the Government of Canada to maintain the moratorium on closing rural post offices. They are also asking that the government enable Canada Post to maintain, enhance and improve postal services.

I am pleased to present this petition.

USE OF WOOD IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS

**Mr. Gérard Asselin (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am presenting a petition in the House in support of Bill C-429, which I introduced in June 2009. The petitioners note that the bill would provide immediate assistance to forestry companies and would also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The use of wood in federal buildings will help our businesses develop new secondary and tertiary products and find new markets for our products. Furthermore, timber products are alternatives to energy-inefficient products and products that require a lot of energy to produce. They can also be a green alternative to energy-intensive construction materials.

The petitioners are calling on the government to pass Bill C-429, which would promote the use of wood in repairing and constructing federal buildings.

[*English*]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition that is signed by people from all over the greater Hamilton area in support of my Bill C-527. Members can imagine how outraged people were when they discovered that it is possible for someone convicted of killing his or her spouse to collect full CPP and CPPD survivor benefits and/or death benefits.

They believed, as I did, that it was a long-established principle in law that no one should be able to benefit from the commission of a crime and that principle must be enshrined in the eligibility criteria for government benefit programs.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to immediately pass Bill C-527, which amends the Canada pension plan to prohibit the payment of a survivor's pension, orphan's benefit or death benefit to a survivor or orphan of a deceased contributor if the survivor or orphan has been convicted of the murder or manslaughter of the deceased contributor.

[*Translation*]

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by constituents of mine from Pierrefonds—Dollard concerning the protection of children. The petitioners are calling on the Parliament of Canada to take all necessary steps to prevent children from being exploited on the Internet through the distribution of child pornography. I fully support their opinion, just as I strongly oppose child labour.



*Routine Proceedings*

## PUBLIC TRANSIT SAFETY

[English]

## CANADA-U.S. BORDER CROSSING

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition signed by residents of the province of Saskatchewan who draw to the attention of the government the following: The Canadian port of entry, Big Beaver, at the southernmost point of Highway 34 along the Saskatchewan-Montana U.S.A. border is scheduled for closure in April 2011. This historic cross-border commerce corridor is still intrinsic to the economic health of the Big Muddy district and southern Saskatchewan in general. This area's remoteness requires that residents on both sides of the border be able to access and share as neighbours the business services, the goods and emergency services, health, fire protection, law enforcement, offered within a 150 mile radius of the Big Beaver port.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to refrain from the closure of the Canadian port of entry, Big Beaver, and signed the petition in favour of keeping it open.

• (1520)

## HOUSING

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present three petitions.

The first petition is signed by residents in the metro Vancouver area. They are calling on the federal government and Parliament to work with all levels of government to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for all Canadians. They are also asking that new moneys go beyond the 2009 budget and that Parliament ensure the swift passage of my private member's bill, Bill C-304, An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians.

## G20 SUMMIT

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is also from folks in Vancouver, Burnaby and the Lower Mainland. They are very concerned about the harmful and anti-democratic actions of the government and the police during the G20 summit that took place in June. They are calling for a public inquiry. They are very concerned about the mass detention and mass arrests of people in Toronto who were legitimately protesting.

They are also calling for law reform to ensure that the Criminal Code provisions relating to breach of the peace, unlawful assemblies and riots are brought into line with constitutional standards.

## MIDDLE EAST

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by people in the Toronto area, Mississauga, who are very concerned about Canada's policy concerning the Middle East. They want to see us return to a more even-handed policy on the Middle East, including the bringing of pressure upon the State of Israel to stop all settlement expansion in the occupied territories, including expansion in East Jerusalem, as well as insisting upon the removal of the wall in occupied territories, and to stop the siege of Gaza in order to allow for reconstruction and the return of hope for the people of Gaza.

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting three petitions today.

The first petition regards the safety of our transit employees. This petition, signed by 270 Canadians, raises concerns about the alarming statistic that up to 40% of bus operators have been assaulted while on the job. Of course, that means an assault and danger not only to the operator, but to passengers, as well as the public in the vicinity of the vehicle.

The petitioners are calling on the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to provide stronger protection under federal laws.

These Canadians provide an invaluable service to the public. I submit this petition in their name and in agreement.

## FOOD SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by more than 200 students and faculty of the Bishop Allen School. They draw the attention of the House to some staggering facts about the cost of biofuels, the connection with food shortages and the risk of millions of families going hungry. A World Bank report showed a 75% increase a few years ago and food prices were in some way connected to biofuels development and their related consequences.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons and the Government of Canada to take a leading role in the principle of food sovereignty, a right to adequate food for all.

## CANADA POST

**Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the third petition is in regard to the closure of public post offices. The petitioners are concerned that far too often post offices are closed with little notice, leaving local business without the necessary infrastructure to grow and leaving the surrounding communities in limbo.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to instruct Canada Post to maintain and improve its network of post offices and develop a uniform and democratic way of deciding what changes are to be made to this network.

I had the recent experience of helping an outlet to stay open in my riding and I would say that some instruction from the government would be in order.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 403 will be answered today.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Text]

Question No. 403—**Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:**

With regard to the total budget reserved for the Temporary Initiative for the Strengthening of Quebec's Forest Economies (TISQFE): (a) what amount of the total budget is reserved for the fiscal years (i) 2010-2011, (ii) 2011-2012, (iii) 2012-2013; (b) of the total amount reserved for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, what amount does the government project will be allotted to each of the (i) 17 targeted communities listed under the TISQFE, (ii) five programs covered under the TISQFE, (iii) three initiatives covered under the TISQFE; (c) of the total amount reserved for the 2011-2012 fiscal year, what amount does the government project will be allotted for each of the (i) 17 targeted communities listed under the TISQFE, (ii) five programs covered under the TISQFE, (iii) three initiatives covered under the TISQFE; and (d) of the total amount reserved for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, what amount does the government project will be allotted for each of the (i) 17 targeted communities listed under the TISQFE, (ii) five programs covered under the TISQFE, (iii) three initiatives covered under the TISQFE?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) (i), 2010-11, \$49 million; (ii), 2011-12, \$25 million; and (iii) 2012-13, \$25 million.

In response to parts (b), (c) and (d), we are unable to answer the questions regarding the amount of funding set aside for 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13, since our funding allocations are not based on the established criteria, i.e., "the 17 targeted communities, the five programs and the three initiatives".

Instead, projects submitted are evaluated based on merit, according to the terms and conditions of the initiative and the available budgets in the 12 business offices involved in the delivery of the TISQFE.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Question Nos. 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402 and 404 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 397—**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:**

With respect to initiatives and programs run by the Department of National Defence (DND) and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) in relation to veterans' health and welfare: (a) what are the issues affecting (i) Canada's traditional war veteran population, (ii) Canadian Forces (CF) veterans; (b) for each group of veterans in (a), how many cases were there per identified issue, per year, over the last five years; (c) for each group of veterans in (a), what changes have occurred in the issues over the last five years; (d) for CF veterans, what key issues are anticipated following the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2011, and for each anticipated issue, what are the (i) challenges, (ii) changes necessary to VAC, (iii) actions taken to date; (e) what recommendations, if any, have been made to improve the quality of life for veterans identified in (a) and what steps, if any, have been taken to address these recommendations; (f) what specific measures are being taken to ensure that VAC (i) responds quickly to emerging research, such as the possible link between combat and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and combat and dementia, (ii) implements research recommendations in a timely manner; (g) what are the categories of injuries sustained by the Canadian troops in Afghanistan; (h) what specific rehabilitation is provided for each injury category, by region; (i) what reviews of rehabilitation procedures have been undertaken, by date and region; (j) for each injury category identified in (g), what percentage of veterans are able to return to civilian work; (k) what specific

measures are undertaken by region to help veterans normalize to civilian life; (l) what specific measures are used to ensure veterans returning from Afghanistan are informed of veterans' benefits; (m) what is the process for acquiring the help of a case manager; (n) what are the specific steps a veteran needs to take following a release or a medical release in order to gain access to (i) financial benefits programs, (ii) health benefit programs, (iii) rehabilitation programs, (iv) other program; (o) what are the rules regarding the privacy of veterans' medical files, specifically (i) who has clearance to review medical files, (ii) what checks and balances exist to prevent a veteran's file from being shared, (iii) what, if any, reviews have ever been undertaken to ensure privacy; (p) how is "benefit of the doubt" defined by VAC and the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB); (q) what specific criteria are used to assess "benefit of the doubt"; (r) what monitoring is undertaken to ensure that the "benefit of the doubt" concept is interpreted correctly by VAC and VRAB; (s) how do legal advantages compare for workers' compensation board (WCB) cases and veterans' cases; (t) what are the specific steps a survivor or dependent need to take following the death of a CF member; (u) in the event of the death of a CF member, is a case worker assigned; (v) what is the average time from the death to receipt of payment for (i) death benefits, (ii) supplementary death benefit, (iii) pensions, (iv) any support for a dependent's education; (w) what was the government's response to the 2009 report, "Serve with Honour, Depart with Dignity", and for each of the seven issues of concern, does the government accept or reject the concern, and what, if any, action has been taken to date for each of the concerns; (x) how many CF members are expected to become veterans following deployment to Afghanistan by quarter for each of the years 2011 and 2012; (y) what, if any, increases in case managers are required for the same time period and, if increases are required, when will case managers be hired and trained; (z) what, if any, specific decompression measures will be undertaken for veterans in Canada and who will oversee them; (aa) what, if any, follow-up is undertaken with veterans, and at what time intervals; (bb) what analyses are planned and over what timeline, to ensure that (i) CF and VAC programs are working well together, and what measures will be used to assess the interrelationship, (ii) veterans know what programs they are eligible for, (iii) veterans are applying to these programs and what measures will be used to monitor progress, (iv) veterans are in good health, including economic, financial, and mental health, and how will each be monitored and reported, (v) veterans are not suffering from such difficulties as alcohol or drug abuse, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), family loss, financial or home loss, and legal problems without the benefit of care, services, and support, (vi) veterans who enter either the criminal system or become homeless are tracked and given the support they require, particularly if they have suffered either PTSD or a traumatic brain injury; (cc) what percentage of the Estimates is needed for both DND and VAC, by year and for the next five years, to ensure returning CF members have the necessary programming and field staff; (dd) what, if any, actuarial analysis has been undertaken regarding the present values of benefits through the New Veterans Charter (NVC), compared to the actuarial present values of benefits under the Pension Act and for what groups of veterans does the NVC produce lower actuarial present values; and (ee) what are the advantages and disadvantages of the lump-sum payment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 398—**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi:**

With regard to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) payments: (a) how many recipients of CPP payments reside (i) in Canada, (ii) outside Canada; (b) how many recipients of CPP payments over the age of 100 years reside (i) in Canada, (ii) outside Canada; (c) what is the distribution by country (i) of CPP payment recipients, (ii) of CPP payment recipients over the age of 100 years; (d) for the past ten years, what is the breakdown by country of the total value of (i) CPP payments, (ii) CPP payments to recipients over the age of 100 years; and (e) what measures, apart from disclosure by relatives of the recipient, are in place to ensure that those collecting CPP payments are in fact living?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

**Question No. 399—Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

With regard to questions on “ethnic origin and visible minorities” and “immigration and citizenship” contained in the long form census: (a) what individuals, businesses, organizations, governments, crown corporations and government departments purchased data or reports based on these questions in the 2006 census; (b) which government programs used data or analysis from these questions for planning purposes or to determine funds, grants or loans and, in detail, how was the data used; (c) what impact does the government project the change to a voluntary household survey will have on these programs and benefits; (d) what steps will be taken to minimize the non-response bias and ensure good response rates with the voluntary household survey; and (e) what is the estimated cost of these steps?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 400—Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

With regard to government action on HIV/AIDS since January 2006: (a) what national and international programs are run by the government to combat the disease; (b) how much has the government spent on those programs in each year since January 2006; (c) what is the infection rate of HIV/AIDS in Canada for each month since January 2006; (d) what is the mortality rate for HIV/AIDS in Canada for each year since January 2006; and (e) what research to combat the disease is being funded by the government?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 401—Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

With regard to government action to address the issue of suicide: (a) what programs or organizations have been funded by the federal government to raise awareness about or prevent suicides; (b) how much funding was provided for each program or organization in (a); (c) what partnerships have been made with the provinces or aboriginal communities to address this issue; and (d) what statistics are available regarding suicide and attempted suicides in Canada since 1980?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 402—Ms. Ruby Dhalla:**

With respect to official requests for attendance at events received by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages from organizations since January 2008: (a) what were the names of the organizations, the names of the events, the organizers, the dates, times, and locations; and (b) did the Minister attend the event and, if not, what is the name of the government representative who attended the event in lieu of the Minister?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 404—Mrs. Alexandra Mendes:**

Mrs. Mendes (Brossard—La Prairie) — With regard to the government’s 2008 report, “A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety”, aimed at reviewing the operations of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC): (a) how much of the \$478.8 million over five years set aside in the government’s 2008 Budget has thus far been allotted to the CSC with regards to implementing each of the Roadmap’s five recommendations; (b) of the amount that has thus far been allotted to the CSC since Budget 2008 for the purposes of implementing the Roadmap’s recommendations, what is the breakdown of funding allocated to each of the programs, initiatives, services, inquiries or other undertakings for the 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 fiscal years; (c) what is the amount reserved for programs, initiatives, services, inquiries or other undertakings for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 fiscal years; (d) what is the amount reserved for each of the Roadmap’s five recommendations for the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 fiscal years; (e) since the first increment of government funding to the CSC for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Roadmap, is there any empirical (statistical or otherwise) evidence indicating that eliminating statutory release will result in greater rehabilitation of prisoners; (f) what are the projected financial costs of eliminating statutory release in Canada; (g) of the total estimated financial costs of eliminating statutory release, how much funding has the government set aside to pay for the costs; (h) what is the criterion used by the government to determine whether the implementation of the Roadmap’s recommendations is successful or reaches its intended results; (i) since the first increment of government funding to the CSC for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Roadmap, what available statistical indicators permit an objective assessment of the success or failure of each of the programs, initiatives, services, inquiries or other undertakings; (j) since

the first increment of government funding to the CSC for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Roadmap, what has been the amount allotted to correctional programs aimed at the rehabilitational needs of Aboriginal offenders; (k) what are the statistical indicators permitting an objective evaluation assessing whether the building of regional complexes will provide superior results for offender rehabilitation and accountability than the facilities currently used to house offenders; (l) of the amount that has thus far been allotted to the CSC since Budget 2008, for the implementation of the Roadmap’s recommendations, how much funding has been allotted to studying the building of regional complexes, their benefits, and the geographical locations in which these complexes would be situated; (m) what is the anticipated cost of implementing the Roadmap’s recommendation of building regional complexes, and how does the government intend to pay for the construction of these complexes; and (n) since the first increment of government funding to the CSC for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Roadmap, what progress has the government made towards the construction of regional correctional complexes?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

● (1525)

**MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE**

REJECTION OF BILL C-311 BY THE OTHER PLACE

**Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was dismayed to learn last night that just days before Canada attends international climate change negotiations in Cancun, Mexico, the government’s unelected appointees in the other place have ambushed this country’s only federal climate change legislation and killed it without hearing evidence or giving it due consideration.

I am asking for an emergency debate of this urgent situation for two reasons.

First, Canada will show up at the United Nations negotiations without any laws on the books, or now even any legislation before Parliament, to control our rising greenhouse gas pollution. In fact, the government will arrive on the international stage having just killed the country’s only federal climate change legislation in the most undemocratic way possible.

Second, this sets a deeply disturbing precedent for our entire democratic system. When members in this House, elected by the people of Canada, work diligently to pass good legislation, they at least expect the other place to study it carefully and give it due consideration.

*Government Orders*

Unaccountable appointees killing legislation outright, without even hearing evidence, puts our entire parliamentary system into question. Canadians are wondering what just happened to their democracy.

These are fundamental and urgent questions that must be considered without delay.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his diligence in pursuing these matters.

The Chair has considered what he has had to say and, of course, the contents of his letter on this subject indicate he wished to raise it this afternoon.

While I am sure the question of the rejection of a bill in the other place is something that might provoke some discussion, it is not unprecedented and it is part of the legislative process. However much one may disagree with what may happen, I do not believe it constitutes an emergency within the meaning of the Standing Order. Accordingly, I do not feel I can accept the hon. member's request at this time.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

ROYAL RECOMMENDATION—BILL C-449

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on October 7, you made a statement with respect to the management of private members' business. In particular, you raised concerns about four bills that, in your view, appear to impinge on the financial prerogative of the Crown. One of the bills you mentioned was Bill C-449.

I am, therefore, rising on a point of order regarding Bill C-449, An Act regarding free public transit for seniors.

Without commenting on the merits of the bill, I submit that Bill C-449 effects an appropriation by spending or authorizing the spending of public funds in a manner not currently authorized in legislation and, therefore, requires a royal recommendation.

Bill C-449 would allow the Minister of Finance to make direct payments to a trust established to help provinces, territories and municipalities to offer seniors free local public transit, anywhere in Canada, during off-peak hours.

Page 834 of the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states:

A royal recommendation not only fixes the allowable charge, but also its objects, purposes, conditions and qualifications. For this reason, a royal recommendation is required not only in the case where money is being appropriated, but also in the case where the authorization to spend for a specific purpose is significantly altered.

Precedents demonstrate that a royal recommendation is required for the creation of a new fund outside the consolidated revenue fund.

On June 13, 2005, the Speaker ruled, in the case of Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act, that:

...Bill C-280 effects an appropriation by spending or authorizing the spending of public funds by transfer of the funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to a separate EI Fund with the result that these monies are no longer available for other appropriations Parliament may make. ... Such a transfer...constitutes an

appropriation within the meaning of section 54 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and for this reason a royal recommendation is required...

Bill C-449 seeks to accomplish by similar means proposed in Bill C-280, which was found to require a royal recommendation. Therefore, I submit Bill C-449 must also be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

•(1530)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his submissions on this matter and will return to the House in due course with a ruling.

---

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**CONSTITUTION ACT, 2010 (SENATE TERM LIMITS)**

The House resumed from May 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (Senate term limits), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** When the bill was last before the House, the hon. member for Sherbrooke had the floor. He has six minutes to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Serge Cardin (Sherbrooke, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, you are most generous to give me six minutes for my speech and ten minutes for questions. I will not let them go to waste.

On May 25, I spoke about Bill C-10, which aims to limit the term of senators appointed after October 10, 2008, to eight years. It would be retroactive for two years since it is now November 2010.

The Canadian Constitution is a federal constitution. Accordingly, there are reasons why changes affecting the essential characteristics of the Senate cannot be made unilaterally by Parliament and must instead be part of the constitutional process involving Quebec and the provinces.

The Conservatives want to strengthen the Constitution by ignoring the provinces and Quebec. In the late 1970s, the Supreme Court of Canada considered the capacity of Parliament to independently amend constitutional provisions relating to the Senate. According to the ruling it handed down, decisions pertaining to major changes affecting the Senate's essential characteristics cannot be made unilaterally.

In 2007, Quebec's National Assembly unanimously adopted the following motion:

That the National Assembly of Québec reaffirm to the Federal Government and to the Parliament of Canada that no modification to the Canadian Senate may be carried out without the consent of the Government of Québec and the National Assembly.

The government has to amend the Constitution to make these sorts of changes to the Senate. The Senate itself and other issues could potentially be on the table. Quebec would be prepared to discuss an even wider range of issues, but we know that that is not likely to happen any time soon.

*Government Orders*

It would be simpler to propose that the Senate be abolished. We all know that the Senate serves only the interests of the party in power, the Conservative Party. Senators are appointed, not elected. If we were forced to keep the Senate in perpetuity, I would strongly advise that the Senate be elected and that the senators have no connection with the other parties in the House of Commons.

Senators are appointed to serve the government's interests. Let us look at my riding, for example. One of the senators lives in Sherbrooke, but he is not the senator for Sherbrooke. The senator who represents Sherbrooke does not live there. So there is a problem right from the start.

In 1867, it was probably called a senate duchy. Now, it is called a senate division. Sherbrooke is in the senate division of Wellington. Léo Housakos is the senator for that senate division. The senator who lives in Sherbrooke is Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, who represents the senate division of Lasalle.

There is no sense of belonging, aside from the basic connection the senators have with the government. I have two quick examples.

● (1535)

The first example concerns Mr. Housakos, a big financier who gets money for the government. The newspapers have given a fair bit of coverage to his connections in the financial community.

The second example concerns Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu from Sherbrooke. This man has suffered some devastating losses in his lifetime. He was an advocate for victims' rights and victim protection, but unfortunately, now he is an advocate for law and order and the government's "tough on crime" agenda.

We can see that this has nothing to do with real life. The senators exist only to serve the government and the party in power. To paraphrase Quebec humorist and realist Yvon Deschamps, what is the point of the Senate?

It should just be abolished.

[*English*]

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the latter part of the member's comments. He concluded by stating that the Senate should be abolished. That would take a significant constitutional change. However, I think the member also recognizes that it is within the ability of this chamber, the House of Commons, to limit the Senate term, which was done in 1967 when it went from a lifetime term to a limit of age 75.

We are now looking at creating a proposal for an eight-year, non-renewable term. The people of Quebec support term limits. In fact, 71% of Quebecers support a term limit of eight years. If the member would take this eight-year term limit in conjunction with our other Senate reform legislation, Bill S-8, Senatorial Selection Act, which empowers provinces to select senators any way they want, as long as it is in direct consultation with the citizens of that province, we could have a democratically elected Senate with eight-year terms.

It is pretty reasonable. The people of Quebec seem to support it. Will the member support it?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cardin:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned the age limit of 75. In 1867, senators were appointed for life, which truly meant "for life". A multitude of caricatures in various newspapers ensued over the years. It was only relatively recently that the age limit was set at 75. This is a perfect example of something that did not require the Constitution to be reopened. Nonetheless, if the Constitution were to be reopened, it would be for more reasons than just limiting Senate terms to eight years.

What exactly is the government hoping to achieve by limiting the terms to eight years and what does that have to do with the age limit of 75? Does the government want to appoint older senators with more experience?

Something does not add up. We know full well, and many agree, that this would take a constitutional change and that the government does not have the right to go over the head of Quebec and provinces.

The hon. member also referred to polls in Quebec. In fact, the majority of Quebecers think that the Senate has no worth in its current form and even more Quebecers are in favour of abolishing the Senate. If they were asked specifically whether they prefer an eight-year term over an age limit of 75, they would definitely say yes. However, the best move would be to abolish the Senate.

● (1540)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question. Last night, there was a vote in the Senate on a bill that came from the House of Commons, which is comprised of elected officials. It was a surprise and a disaster; it was absurd. The Senate killed a bill passed by people elected by Canadian citizens.

If the Senate was able to do such a thing to a bill on climate change—critical for the environment, the economy and the future—what bill, concept or subject that is very important to Canadians will the Senate vote down next? The Senate will oppose anything at the behest of the Prime Minister.

These are the issues surrounding Bill C-10. The House must do something to improve the Senate. What we would all really like to know now is which bill the Senate will defeat next.

**Mr. Serge Cardin:** Mr. Speaker, the fundamental question is this: what is the purpose of the Senate? Originally, those who created our Constitution intended the Senate to be a safeguard or an element of protection. It is meant to guard against foolish decisions. There may have been some aberrations at some point. The Senate was intended to be a chamber of sober second thought, a chamber of people who could make wise decisions about whether what the House of Commons was doing was acceptable for the public.

*Government Orders*

Now, the government wants to set senate term limits. As the member said, the Senate has a specific affiliation; it has specific interests to defend, which are normally those of the government and the political party in power. Senators are appointed along party lines, with a specific affiliation. All the Senate does is support the party in power. The opposition is no longer able to strongly oppose bills that the government wants to pass. Some members give in and do not express public opposition to a bill, since the Senate would support it regardless, even if it goes against the wishes of the public.

That said, we would be better off to abolish the Senate and to find other safeguards.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has just spoken about Senate term limits; however I would like to further discuss the point raised by my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley. We are debating a bill that will be sent to the Senate. I wonder if the Senate will pass it. What guarantee is there? Changes really must be made to the Senate.

Look at what happened yesterday. We decided that a bill on climate change should move forward. Some senators did not even want to examine or discuss the bill. They voted against the will of the House.

This is troubling. Does the government really want this bill to be passed if it gets to the Senate?

• (1545)

**Mr. Serge Cardin:** Mr. Speaker, I thought I had addressed this in my previous statement. Clearly, we cannot be certain that the Senate will take the same direction as the House of Commons. The Senate majority makes all the difference. The goal of every successive government is to obtain a majority. Currently, the Senate must approve the decisions of the House. If the Senate blocks a bill, something is not working. If a bill is passed by a majority of the 308 elected members of the House, which is the ideal situation, the Senate should approve that bill unless the Senate finds that the bill contains fundamental technical errors that the members of the House did not see and that could be corrected through amendments by the Senate.

Given the potential for abuse, as mentioned by the hon. members of the NDP, Canada may have to look into a new way of doing things. In our opinion, the Senate should be abolished.

[English]

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (Senate term limits), raises serious questions for the House just through its very title.

Bill C-10 limits the tenure of senators appointed after the bill becomes law to one non-renewable eight-year term. At the same time, it preserves the existing retirement age of 75 for current senators. It further allows a senator whose term has been interrupted to return to the Senate and complete his or her term. The bill also contains a provision for senators summoned to the Senate after October 14, 2008, but, before the coming into force of the act, they remain a senator for one term which expires eight years after the coming into force of this act. That is just a little bit of background.

The Liberal Party has repeatedly made it clear to Canadians that we support and have a continued interest in Senate reform. We also have adamantly insisted that any such reforms must reflect sound public policy and respect our most sacred of documents, the Constitution.

It is our hope that the committee will study and amend this bill before us today and return something to this House that respects the Constitution and the role of the provinces in democratic reform.

The bill is another attempt by the Prime Minister's Conservative government to dismantle the Senate piece by piece. What needs to be clear for all of my colleagues in the House, in the Senate and all Canadians is that this is not simply a cosmetic tweak of an old but venerable institution. The legislation before us today amounts to parliamentary reform, reform that arrived today without consultation with provincial or territorial governments.

We must make no mistake that this is nothing short of another attempt by the Conservative government to unilaterally transform our system of parliamentary democracy. The government has shown a blatant contempt for the Constitution and the federation to which it speaks.

This is not the first time that the government has targeted the Senate and, by extension, Parliament, with its so-called plans for reform. This bill has come before the House on two previous occasions. We have it today in its third incarnation. Perhaps the Prime Minister and the Conservatives were thinking that three was a lucky number or that the third time would be a charm. However, it is widely accepted that three strikes also means one is out.

The bill was originally introduced in the first session of the 30th Parliament as Bill S-4. At that time, the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs proposed several amendments to the bill. Specifically, the committee proposed that the duration of a Senate term be extended from an eight year term to a fifteen year term. The reason for that is important to the principles of parliamentary democracy within our Constitution.

An eight year term for senators would allow a party that has won two consecutive majorities to appoint virtually a whole team of senators, an entire roster of senators to simply rubber-stamp the party's legislation, instead of having the Senate serve for what it is known to be, the chamber of sober second thought.

The standing committee indicated that a 15 year term would ensure a Senate possesses the experience and expertise to offer that second sober thought as envisioned by the Constitution. The committee also made the important recommendation that this bill and its incarnations be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Liberal Senate caucus echoed this recommendation, asking the government to refer this bill to the Supreme Court to determine whether the legislation requires a constitutional amendment approved by seven of the ten provinces representing 15% of Canada's population, rather than a simple act of Parliament.

This legislation's history underscores the serious nature of the issue that is now before this House.

*Government Orders*

With this third attempt at parliamentary reform, the Prime Minister and the Conservative government once more betray their true feelings toward the Senate.

It seems that the Prime Minister either does not care or simply does not understand the character of the institutions he purports to be steward of. It is easy enough for the Prime Minister to flippantly say that he make the rules when he feels like saying that, but we rarely see evidence that indicates he is in fact committed to bringing forward the so-called rules in the form of sound public policy.

● (1550)

The Senate was established to protect and defend regional and provincial interests and rights. This was necessary to protect the regions against majority governments in the House of Commons. Now the Prime Minister is attempting to circumvent the provinces completely. This is another example of the Prime Minister ignoring the spirit of our federation.

Let it be known that contrary to Conservative spin and ideology, it is the provinces themselves that have expressed passionate concern about Senate reform. The Prime Minister prefers to forget that the provinces are our constitutional partners. Such arrogance and disregard for his provincial counterparts is neither logical nor fair.

Also let it be known that it is not only Liberal senators who have voiced concerns on the issue of Senate reform. Liberal senators and Liberal members of Parliament alike are committed to sensible and rational reforms that reflect the principles and spirit of our Constitution and fully include all provinces as equal partners with equal voices at the table.

No less than four provincial governments have publicly come forward to express their strong objection to the Prime Minister's unilateral interpretation of the Constitution and his unilateral attempt to reform our institutions. Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador have all made it clear that if they are not to be included in this discussion, they will have no recourse but to go to the Supreme Court.

If the Prime Minister insists on creating such discord through his unwillingness to hear opposing views, whether from Parliament, its committees or other provinces, how can he say he is engaged in democratic reform? How can the Prime Minister and the government stand in the House and claim, in good faith, to be undertaking these reforms in the name of democracy when the governments of the two largest provinces in Canada and the two smallest, representing more than 50% of the population of the country and three of the four regions described in our Constitution, have been flatly dismissed and ignored in their objections to these reforms?

The matter is clear. The Prime Minister and his government cannot constitutionally proceed unilaterally now as then. If the Conservative government is truly committed to fair and democratic parliamentary reforms, the Prime Minister must first ask the Supreme Court of Canada, in a constitutional reference, whether he can even undertake such authoritarian reforms. At the very least, the Prime Minister should engage the provinces in a meaningful consultation on Senate reform, as full and equal partners, and secure their consent under the terms of the Constitution.

Frankly, with the bill as it stands before us today, the Prime Minister is spitting in the eye of the spirit of the Constitution with this third time around legislation. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister seems to want nothing to do with either of these options. Here we find ourselves once again.

The House needs to remember that on July 28, 2006, all provincial premiers, through the Council of the Federation, said:

—the Council of the Federation must be involved in any discussion on changes to important features of key Canadian institutions such as the Senate and the Supreme Court of Canada.

Did the Prime Minister not get the memo, or does he simply have no interest in listening to anyone else?

I will reiterate the point I made earlier. What is being proposed here is nothing less than a full reform of our system of parliamentary democracy. Does the Prime Minister think that no one cares, or perhaps no one is paying attention? He made that mistake the last time he prorogued Parliament and we heard loud and clear what Canadians thought about that.

The Liberal Party cares. We care about the Senate because it speaks to the very core of our democracy and the principles of fairness, balance and common sense.

Let me draw the House's attention to section 42(1)(b) of our Constitution. It states, "Such constitutional amendments may not be made by acts of Parliament alone, but also require resolutions of the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the provinces that have an aggregate, at least 50% of the population". As such, this proposed legislation represents nothing less than an attempt to change significantly the powers and the function of the Senate.

It would appear that the government has not even read the Constitution. The changes that the bill proposes are far beyond the powers granted to the Parliament of Canada. The changes proposed require a coordinated constitutional amendment, which in turn must adhere to a specific formula as set out in the Constitution.

● (1555)

We could have had a Supreme Court ruling long ago and have advanced Senate reform in a meaningful, constitutional way. Instead the Prime Minister has elected to simply reintroduce the same bills, the same thing over and over. Instead of listening to his constitutional partners, instead of listening to the provinces or even the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister is choosing to fill the Senate with enough of his own supporters to force his preferred Senate reforms through.

The Prime Minister has tried to present his proposed reforms, such as a change to eight-year tenure terms for senators, as modest changes that would afford no trouble to anyone.

*Government Orders*

However, as numerous witnesses have testified, this change could allow a two-term prime minister to appoint every senator in the chamber, wiping out any opposition voices to any initiative, as the government of Ontario wrote. We know that this is a common event in the country. We know that we had two Liberal governments that had more than eight-year terms. We know that we had a Progressive Conservative government that had more than eight-year terms. Again, the probability exists that in fact every senator could be of that political party persuasion.

Bill C-10, on its own, would dramatically alter the real functioning of the Senate, detracting from its traditional role as an independent chamber of sober second thought. The Prime Minister's new power to appoint every member of the Senate over eight years would significantly expand his appointment power and impair the independent functioning of the upper chamber. The result would be indeed a partisan institution with nearly co-equal powers to the House of Commons and an institution that would be more likely to exercise those powers in order to freeze or obstruct a government, creating an untenable situation.

The Government of Quebec was unequivocal in its assessment of the impact of the reforms to the Senate proposed by the current federal government. Then minister Benoît Pelletier, an acknowledged constitutional law expert, wrote, "The transformation of the Senate raises some fundamental issues for Quebec and the Canadian federation in general...The federal bills on the Senate do not represent a limited change".

The premier of my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Danny Williams, wrote to the Prime Minister to express his government's view that the proposed Senate reform bills. He said that they:

—represent attempts to alter the Constitution of Canada so as to significantly change the powers of the Senate and the method of selecting Senators within the meaning of Section 42(1)(b) of the Constitution Act, 1982. Such constitutional amendments may not be made by acts of Parliament alone, but also require resolutions of the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the provinces that have, in the aggregate, at least fifty per cent of the population

Democracy is all about that. It is involving our constitutional partners. It is making sure that we all have a say in how our country is run, so we do not just have a House of Commons with our elected representatives, but we also have the Senate where people are appointed on the basis that they are there to serve as a sober second thought to decisions that are made in the House of Commons.

The former premier of New Brunswick, Shawn Graham, wrote:

The Government of New Brunswick has carefully considered the proposed amendment...and is not able to support this amendment in its current form...Our review of jurisprudence on this issue, contained in the attached position paper, supports the view that the provinces must give consent to any change that affects representation in the Senate.

Let it be clear. The Liberal Party favours Senate reform. We have said so time and time again, but it is reform that must come through a consultation process. It is consultation with our partners in a democracy. It is reform that reflects sound public policy and respects the Constitution.

The Conservative government continues to try to change the channel from its spending scandals by cutting back on social programs, by having a deficit of \$55.6 billion, by spending money

unnecessarily on the G8 and G20 and by doing things that we all know is unnecessary.

I look at an organization such as KAIROS and the money it needs. The government has ignored it and in fact has said no to it. It is an organization that has worked so well on behalf of so many people, both in our country and throughout the world.

• (1600)

There is a problem when we have a government that does not recognize the importance of doing what is right, but instead focuses on doing away with the Senate or ensuring there are eight year terms that will serve no one's interest in terms of the democracy of the country.

Liberals will continue to demand that the government conduct meaningful conversations with the provinces on this issue. Provinces have been heard loud and clear. They have made their concerns known. What is wrong with listening to our partners? What is wrong with acknowledging that they have a part to play? What is wrong with acknowledging how important their input is into any democracy, especially if we believe they are indeed partners in this Confederation?

What we have today is a Prime Minister who is anti-democratic, who does not believe that the provinces and the territories have a part to play. As he said, "he makes the rules". In making the rules, he is deciding that he wants eight year terms for the Senate. If he had a majority government, he would stock that Senate with people of the same political persuasion to the point where that sober second thought, which is so important to any legislation, any decisions that we make in the House of Commons as elected representatives, would not exist anymore.

There is a serious issue here. The government needs to listen and not just assume that it has all the answers. There are people who can make a contribution. There are people whose experience and expertise are invaluable, both in the House of Commons and in the Senate.

It is true that Canadians' views of democracy have evolved since 1867. As Liberals, we are committed to ensuring that our institutions reflect those changes where appropriate.

The Senate is an essential component of Canada's constitutional democracy and we, as members of Parliament, are here because we have a commitment to improving our country through the democratic institutions of which we are privileged to be a part.

The Senate is an institution with a very proud history, an institution in which the members have done important work over the years. In fact, some of the most important reports that have been produced through the Senate and the senators who work very hard on them have been invaluable to those of us in the House of Commons who take our work seriously.

How we can just turn a blind eye to the Senate and the work it does? How we can just decide that it is not important or that the senators should serve eight year terms, thereby creating a situation where we would lose after that term people with invaluable experience, people with expertise who have so much to contribute, and want to contribute, to our country?



*Government Orders*

However, in order to do that it is our belief that we need to look at 15 year terms, not 8 year terms, where we see a change in individuals, where we do not end up with senators of all one political stripe, where we see some second sober thought. We had that intelligent debate, which used to happen when we had a Liberal majority Senate versus a Conservative majority Senate.

The Liberal Party is committed to a Senate in which the members can make valuable contributions to public life and the public good. Legislation to alter Senate term limits must keep within the spirit of this commitment.

While we are open to the committee's response to the legislation, we will only support a revised version of Bill C-10 if it reflects sound public policy and respects the Constitution.

• (1605)

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's comments and the Liberal Party is really remarkable. In the House, it is only the Liberal Party that supports the status quo. No matter who we talk to from other parties, we all agree that change is necessary, that the Senate in its current form does not reflect the democratic values that Canadians hold dear in the 21st century. That is the debate we are having.

The government has proposed some moderate changes that are fully within the constitutional framework and the powers of this chamber to limit the length of time that a senator can be in office. Forty-five years is too long, most people would agree. The question is where to set that number, and that is what this debate is about.

The Liberal Party seems to want to have it all ways. On January 31, 2010, the leader of the Liberal Party was asked on *Question Period* whether he supports Senate term limits. His response was, "Do we need term limits? Yeah". The previous Liberal critic indicated that term limits were necessary.

Combining Senate term limits and the Prime Minister's willingness to select senators through a democratic process, why will the Liberal Party not enter the 21st century like the rest of the parties in the House?

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the question from my colleague, but again it is a case in point of a government not listening. Liberal members have said we are open to Senate reform. We said the Liberal Party is open to Senate reform. Our issue is with what the government is proposing and the fact that it does not involve any consultation process. It is not listening to the provinces. The provinces are open to Senate reform, but it is a matter of consulting and listening.

What I just heard from my colleague across the way is that he did not listen. He said Liberals are happy with the status quo when in fact we have said pointedly that we are open to reform of the Senate. We need to have an important discussion with our partners throughout this democracy, people who have expertise and experience and can make a sound contribution to this whole debate. Unfortunately, it is those people who are being ignored by the government.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am from the east coast originally, raised in New Brunswick, and one thing I am proud of is that, in 1892, New

Brunswick was the first province in this country to abolish its Senate, followed closely thereafter by P.E.I. in 1893, Nova Scotia in 1928 and Quebec in 1968. Good folks took a look at that so-called place of sober second thought and said it was just not working for Canadians.

My point beyond that is, in regard to the Senate that we have to deal with, for 13 years with a Liberal government it was okay to have a stacked Senate as long as that party got to do the stacking. We have a situation where our system is flawed. Whichever party has the majority government can stack the Senate to meet its needs going forward, and that does not meet the needs of Canadians. We should just abolish the place.

• (1610)

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a question. It was just a comment, I expect, from my colleague.

My experience with the Senate and the good people I know certainly in the Liberal Party who have made up the Senate is that these individuals make a significant contribution to our country. They make a significant contribution because of the work they do, which is something that here in the House of Commons we are able to make use of as well.

I know the senators from my own province of Newfoundland and Labrador who I have had experience working with have done invaluable work and given invaluable service to that province and our country. Liberals believe we need to reform the Senate, but it has to be with a good, sound public policy approach, not just saying it is eight terms and that is it. Let us have the discussion. Let us look at what is available to us in terms of individuals who have so much to offer to our country.

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing my colleague would know is that her province of Newfoundland and Labrador has been blessed with some very good senators over the years. I think of Senator Furey, as well as Senator Rompkey, whose recent book about the Corvettes in World War II shows the quality of people we have in the Senate. I know the hon. member was a dear friend of Senator Cook, who served with great distinction.

I want to read to the hon. member a letter from the opposition leader in the Senate, Senator Cowan, which he sent to the justice minister earlier this year when the justice minister accused the Senate of killing bills. He said in the letter:

Of the five justice bills that passed the House of Commons and came to the Senate:

- two passed the Senate without amendment;
- one...was tabled by your Government in November...but not brought forward for further action...;
- one was passed with four amendments and returned to the House of Commons which did not deal with it before Parliament was prorogued; and
- one was being studied in committee when Parliament was prorogued and all committee work [was] shut down.

I want to ask the hon. member what she thinks about the government and the sort of rhetoric it has about the Senate, but in fact it is its own fault that it has not moved its agenda through both Houses of Parliament.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, it is because of instances such as this that the Senate gets the bad name that it does. When we have people who deliberately hold up legislation, who deliberately avoid dealing with legislation, this is what contributes to the views that some people hold of the Senate.

However, when we have people like Senator Bill Rompkey, like Senator George Furey, like former Senator Joan Cook, like Senator Cowan and Senator Joan Fraser and the list could go on, these are people who make such a significant contribution and believe in what they are doing. To them, being appointed is the same as being elected, because they know that they are there representing the people of Canada.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Liberal member has just demonstrated why we need Senate reform. The member just stated that being appointed to the Senate is just like being elected. That is not the case at all. Elections require accountability. Elections—

•(1615)

**Ms. Judy Foote:** I did not say that. I never said that.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** The member is heckling, saying she did not say that. We will check the record afterwards. The member certainly left the impression that being appointed to the Senate is just like being elected to the Senate.

I understand the Liberal Party's zest in protecting the Senate and the status quo, and they know very well that wholesale change to the Senate would require constitutional negotiations that would never end, hence we would end up with the status quo.

We are proposing incremental changes and the Conservative Prime Minister has said that he will select whoever the people of a province select in an election. That would be a concerned Prime Minister's selection for the Senate. If the people elect an NDP member, a Liberal member, a Conservative or a member of the Green Party, that is who the Prime Minister will select. So the stacking argument that the member presents is completely undermined.

What is really astonishing during this debate is the fact that the Liberal member does not acknowledge what her previous critics have said, that term limits are needed, yet she goes on about Senate reform.

There is only one party that—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. We must go to the answer. The hon. member for Random—Burin—St. George's.

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, the member knows that the point I made is that to those senators who work very hard, their job is as important to them as ours is to us. The point is that they have a job to do, just as we have a job to do.

The problem here is that we have a government that does not even acknowledge that the senators count, that does not even acknowledge that the work they do is important, that thwarts legislation, that holds up legislation in the Senate instead of working to make sure that legislation gets passed in the best interest of all Canadians.

We have a government that has decided on eight-year term limits. If one gets an eight-year term, one can be elected for two majority governments and it can be stacked, and that is exactly where the government is coming from. As the Prime Minister has said, he makes the rules, and he wants to make the rules on everything, including the Senate, not just the House of Commons.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with much anticipation and relish that I enter this debate on Bill C-10, regarding Senate term limits, not so much because what we have before us is something that can actually make things better for our country and for our future but because it gives me and my party an opportunity to talk about some of the worst aspects of our parliamentary system that exist right now and that need to be fixed in order to make this place better, in order to help begin the process of restoring the faith that Canadians need to have in their democratic systems.

I use the word “democratic” very specifically because all the discussion we are having here today in this democratic institution, in this House of Commons, is about some sort of historical relic, and that is what the Prime Minister used to call the Senate, an historical relic, in which being friends with the prime minister of the day is enough to get a person a job that does not end until that person is 75, which has no accountability whatsoever, no constituency at all, and uses up to \$90 million a year of taxpayer money, for what purpose?

To listen to the Liberals talk about the Senate and accuse the Conservatives of stuffing the place with cronies is a bit rich. The entire history of their party seems predicated on the idea that simply being entitled is enough to gain power, that simply being connected, who one knows, is enough to have influence in the country. It is a crying shame, because at a foundation, every political movement, if it stands for nothing else, should stand for that moment when voters walk in to a ballot box and make a decision about their future and the future of their community. That is a sacred moment in our democracy.

In terms of hearing elected members in this place defend a Senate in which none of that happens and a senator simply knows somebody, I would like to read a quote. There are a number of great quotes, but a recent appointment of the Conservative government to the Senate, Senator Gerstein, said something that I think is very important for us to put into some context. On January 27, 2009, the good Senator Gerstein said:

Every one of you knows why you are here. I would ask if you might indulge me and let me tell you why I am here....

Well, I want to tell you that I do not admit to being a bagman; I proclaim it.

He does not want to admit that he has been a bagman for the Conservatives, a fundraiser, and a good fundraiser apparently; he proclaims it. He says that is why he is there, because he helped the government of the day raise money. That is why, not because of his ability to look over legislation or to think about the affairs of state, about where our country needs to go. It is because he can shake money out of the pockets of Conservative supporters better than the next guy. The Prime Minister seems to like that a lot, so he has given him this gravy train of a job. He is accountable to nobody. He gets paid \$140,000 a year for doing virtually nothing if he so pleases, showing up less than 50 days to work.

*Government Orders*

Most Canadians would find this offensive, and do.

The reason we support and ridicule this particular piece of legislation is because it is tinkering around the edges of the fundamental problem, tinkering with the idea that we can somehow write on to an unaccountable place some level of accountability. We know it cannot be done this way. We are certain that when witnesses come forward and say the Constitution dictates this and dictates that, the tinkering around this \$90-million slush fund that happens down the hallway is not going to enable any sort of democratic enhancement of the country.

Here is a sober second thought. There is no sobriety test when senators go into that place. There was no sobriety test last night when they took a piece of legislation that was voted on democratically here and they decided, without any debate, without any discussion at all, without any questions about a piece of legislation passed democratically, that they were just going to simply kill it.

Some of my hon. colleagues may say, "Well, so what? That is just one bill and maybe some of the Conservatives did not particularly like the bill". To them I say, let us follow this through and talk about the future where an unelected, appointed body is able to override the democratic will of the chamber. We all come here with the bond between ourselves and our constituents that we seek through elections. We, parties and individuals, seek a mandate to do things that we hope will improve the lives of ordinary Canadians.

●(1620)

There is the idea that when we grind away on a piece of legislation, make changes, have studies and send that across, these folks are not going to tinker with it or smudge out a few lines; they will just kill it, and there is no recourse to that. The government says that, if it did not get its way in the elected place, it will get its way in the unelected place, and that is fine.

I ask the Conservative members to walk through what the future looks like if one of the fundamental constitutional traditions of parliamentary democracy in Canada begins to unravel, and appointed people with no accountability, no constituencies, no one to report back to, to hold them to a higher regard, are simply able to undermine laws and are simply able to veto the will of this place. What value are we getting for \$90 million?

I wish it was only an irritant. I wish, for the \$90 million we pour in there, that it was just a hassle once in a while. However that is not what we get. In fact, we have created a system and have allowed the system to go on existing in which we fund the erosion of our democratic principles. How utterly obscene is it that Canadians say they are paying people to go to work and undercut the work of elected members?

This allows direct control for the prime minister of the day. We know this. There is an interesting quote from a Conservative spin doctor that came out just after the Prime Minister broke the record on appointments. Canada is a relatively young country, but of many years and many prime ministers and circumstances, this Prime Minister broke the record in appointing 27 senators in one year.

A Conservative spin doctor said that we need Conservatives in the Senate who are loyal to the party, to the cause and to the Prime

Minister. Notice in that list of loyalties that country was not mentioned. That is in fact what these folks are there for. That is why they got there, as Senator Gerstein has so eloquently pointed out. He says he is a bagman and proud of it, and that is how he got there. He was not just talking about himself; there are others, of course, who are there for their fundraising abilities not for their intellectual capacities or their devotion to this country.

I think we as Canadians are quite a forgiving people. We allow our politicians to make mistakes from time to time. There can be redemption. We can do something that we later regret and then correct the error.

What Canadians do not tolerate is outright hypocrisy. I will read a couple more important quotes into the record, because they are important. They are not that old, which I think is also significant.

From January 15, 2004:

Despite the fine work of many individual senators, the upper house remains a dumping ground for the favoured cronies of the Prime Minister.

Who said that? The current Prime Minister. We can only take him at his word, that in breaking the record of dumping-ground cronies he is ensuring that the system continues.

Here is another quote from a little later on, 2006:

A Conservative government will not appoint to the Senate anyone who does not have a mandate from the people.

It was "we will not". It was not "we may not" or "we will consider". That is as broken a promise as there can be. I think the thing that frustrates people who voted Conservative in the previous elections is that they believed these quotes, because they were so clear. They were not nuanced or subtle.

I know my Conservative colleagues sitting in the House today said similar things when the topic came up for them when they were in elections, when they were at all-candidates debates and the issue of the Senate came up. They had seen the Liberal Senate up close. They remembered the Mulroney years of stacking the Senate year after year, and they thought it was an abuse of power. I believed them. I think their constituents believed them. Certainly people who voted for them believed them, but how can they believe them now? How can they believe them now after this many years in power, having broken the record of cronyism?

Here is a last quote, which is a little older. It is from *Hansard*:

They are ashamed the Prime Minister continues the disgraceful, undemocratic appointment of undemocratic Liberals to the undemocratic Senate to pass all too often undemocratic legislation.

That was said by the current Prime Minister on March 7, 1996.

●(1625)

An appointed Senate is a relic of the 19th century. Why would the government come forward with a bill that seems to put a fresh coat of paint on an old relic and say this is brand new, this is something special?

*Government Orders*

New Democrats, because it is in our name, believe that democracy is something so fundamental that we have to fight each and every day for its survival and renewal, because democracy is not something we are entitled to. It was fought over. It was bled over for generations. Its maintenance requires us to sustain it.

There was a most egregious example just last night as we were all shocked to hear that the Senate called a snap vote. I am surprised the senators even bothered to vote. The vote was on a bill named, ironically enough, the climate change accountability act. What does the bill propose to do? The bill says we must set targets for our greenhouse gas emissions to reduce those emissions over the years and that the government must report on its plans and then report back on how those plans worked out. How offensive is that? The government would be accountable. Whether it was Liberal governments or the present Conservative government, there has been no accountability when it comes to climate change.

I can remember my Conservative colleagues railing about this when they were in opposition. They asked: Where is the accountability? Promises were made and promises were broken. This is what the act enshrined into law. It is the only climate change legislation in this place. It was, until the Senate called a vote last night and killed the entire bill.

One must think that the senators must have studied it. They had 191 days with it. They must have studied it. They must have found some fatal flaw, in their debate and discussions and hearing of expert testimony. But there was no testimony. There was no debate. There was no discussion. The senators just simply killed the bill outright with no reason given. A bunch of Liberals stayed away. A bunch of Conservatives voted to kill it, undemocratically. The Conservatives feel fine with this. It undermines all of our work. It undermines our principle of being here. It undermines the last election, the one before that and the next one. The Senate needs to be abolished.

Some will say this cannot be done, yet we know there are no senates at any of the provincial and territorial levels. But there were. In fact there were many. In 1892 New Brunswick said no more senate. Nova Scotia said it in 1928 and Quebec in 1968, in recent living memory. These provinces decided that the so-called sober second thought place was not worth the money or the time. They realized that they could actually be sober and have thoughts. They could do this. They do it all the time.

P.E.I. in 1893 and Manitoba in 1876 said no more senate. They tried senates. They had them. They were constituted. I am sure they thought they were valuable. Those with a vested interest in sitting in those senates thought they were valuable.

Is democracy any less in any of our provinces and territories? Do we concern ourselves in Ontario, P.E.I. or Quebec that democracy is somehow not being done, that sober second thought is missing and bills are going through that ought not to? Of course not.

The next question for Canadians is: If senators can do this with environmental climate change legislation, what else will they do it with? What is the next bill that the Prime Minister happens not to like but cannot win a vote here in the elected place and simply says never mind the election, because he will have the legislation killed down the hallway by his cronies, as he calls them?

The Senate seems to be the place for him to dump his cronies, his bagmen, spin doctors, past presidents of the party and failed candidates. The list is quite specific. One has to have some deep and profound and loyal connection not to country, God nor Queen, but to the Conservative Party. That is the qualification that is needed.

The government is tinkering around the edges and saying it will put limits on Senate terms. It seems to feel that if it puts an 8-year limit, the bagmen, spin doctors, past presidents and failed candidates will only get in for 8 years of patronage as opposed to the 20, 30 or 40 years of patronage. Any patronage is bad.

I remember Conservative-Reform-Alliance members all talking about the patronage gravy train that was the Liberal Party of Canada. The formation of the Reform Party was in response to the Progressive Conservative Brian Mulroney patronage. As he was leaving office, Mulroney could not sign those patronage appointments fast enough. The Reform Party was born. It had had enough. The west wanted in. It wanted some kind of accountability.

• (1630)

The first bill in 70 years that the Senate killed was a bill called the climate change accountability act. These are mere words now. The promises that the Prime Minister can make in the next election mean so much less.

The concern, the sadness that I have over this entire issue, is that it erodes what little faith remains in the Canadian public over what this place is meant to do. Why do they bother to vote? We all lament the low voter turnout. We all lament that young people are not getting involved enough. How can we expect any different if we allow this fundamentally hypocritical action of a government to go untested and unchallenged?

For the people who formed the Conservative Party to say that breaking the all-time record of patronage appointments is a good thing for this Prime Minister to do, spinning in their graves does not quite account for it. The Liberals lament because they could not do it first, that they were not at the trough first. That is the Liberal complaint about this whole process. The people on the list to whom the Liberals promised the Senate now have to wait supposedly until they form office, whenever that tragic day will come again.

Senators have to be loyal to the party, to the cause and to the Prime Minister, those three things.

*Government Orders*

The conflicts of interest that reign supreme in the Senate are also quite staggering. A senator can maintain his or her position on a private corporation board while also being in the Senate. I see no accountability change within this bill for that. Senators can have private interest in a bill that comes before them and not remove themselves from the discussion or from the vote. They can simply vote on it and improve their own lot in life. That is fine. As far as this government is concerned, that is okay too.

This is what we mean by putting a fresh coat of paint on an old broken-down car. It is still broken down. To put a splash of paint on it, say it is new, that the grievances have been fixed, is one thing, but to allow the inherent conflicts of interest to exist within the body and not change those, it seems to me, and to everybody else, is mere tokenism.

Again, Canadians can suffer much and have been asked to suffer much from their elected governments, with the switches, flip-flops and changes of mind. The current government will not allow a free and fair debate on extending a dangerous mission in Afghanistan for another three years. Canadians have been asked to suffer a lot.

When a party campaigns explicitly on accountability, transparency and reform of the place, and then comes in and does this, and says “trust us for another mandate”, then Canadians can be forgiven for doubting. They will doubt and they must doubt because the evidence is before us.

Many of us believe in climate change, although I am sure there are some Conservative members who still think it is a socialist conspiracy, as the Prime Minister used to call it. However, there are those who believe that climate change is a real issue and needs to be addressed, and I think some of my colleagues within the Conservatives do.

When we take an issue like this and simply shred the only bill and offer nothing else, then Canada is going to show up at the next UN meeting in Mexico in a couple of weeks with nothing again. Right now we are spending on green energy at a rate of \$1 to \$22 versus the Americans. The Americans spend \$22 per capita and we spend \$1.

Green energy and technology companies are coming to us saying that we must have certainty when it comes to the pricing of carbon and that we must do something about cap and trade. The government's response is just, “Well, wait for Washington”. Imagine the abrogation of sovereignty at such a fundamental level as our environment and economy.

Finally, I wish to move the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by striking out all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following:

“the House declines to give second reading to Bill C-10, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (Senate term limits) because the term limits do not go far enough in addressing the problems with the Senate of Canada, and do not lead quickly enough to the abolition of the upper chamber, as recent events have shown to be necessary.”

• (1635)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The amendment is in order.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we are proposing as a government is something that is within the purview of this chamber.

I am concerned that the amendment that was just proposed would go beyond what would normally be expected of this chamber.

Having said that, I would also like to reflect on some of the comments that were suggested before. The Prime Minister has said that he will appoint whomever the people of a said province would elect. He is willing to give up that power to ensure that people of the province are represented in the Senate through elections. In this way, we are moving the yardsticks forward.

The member talked a great deal about how the Senate has benefited one party, particularly the Liberal Party, in the past. I wonder if the member could speak to how the Senate as an unelected body has benefited the Liberal Party. What other methods, outside of abolishment, which is simply too difficult, does the member suggest that we adopt for Senate reform? We have the elections going with Bill S-8, and we have term limits.

This is a democracy, and I am open to hearing the member's suggestions.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the minister said that it is going beyond what is expected of us. I think we need to go much further beyond what is expected of us and challenge the very notion that the existence of this place is a good thing.

It is to be noted, and the minister can correct me later, that by doing it this way the Prime Minister remains under no legal obligation. The reason I point this out is this: let us say a province holds an election for a Senate seat that is apparently valid. As we can see in the provinces that have tried this so far, to call them elections is a bit of stretch, and the minister knows it.

However, the Prime Minister is not legally obligated to do any of these things. The reason I raise this is that the Prime Minister has chosen to break promises before.

The last election we had was not meant to be. He made a promise in law, which he broke. He said we would have fixed election dates, which we supported. The New Democrats supported this initiative. As soon as the Prime Minister saw the ink drying on that law, he broke it.

It is not good enough to say we have this new bill and we will make appointments only after an election. The credibility of the Prime Minister, after having just broken the record by appointing 27 of his cronies and pals, does not carry water.

How has it benefited the Liberals to have this situation for so many decades? It has benefited them a lot and now it is benefiting the Conservatives. That is the problem. Crony after crony is sitting there. To whom are they loyal? Not to this place, not to this country, but to the party. That is what is wrong. That is why it needs to be abolished.

*Government Orders*

•(1640)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we in this party are at a point with the Senate that we cannot envision how we can continue with a body that can pull off an action like it did today

If the House accepts this action that occurred within the Senate, then we are accepting that the powers of duly elected members of Parliament are diminished enormously.

How can we move forward from this point? Is that not the reason why we must have an amendment to the bill at this time, to challenge the affront to our democracy that occurred last night?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the idea that an unelected place can simply undo what an elected body has chosen to do should be an offence to all of us. I remind my Conservative colleagues that, while they may think they have won on this issue and got a bill killed that they did not like, the other shoe drops in politics. What works for us on one day, if it is fundamentally flawed, may not work on another day. That should cause deep concern, because we are all diminished by this.

This is not simply about one bill or one party's ambitions or one idea. This is about the fundamental idea under which we operate. If there is anything we can agree on, it should be that. We come here with the powers we have, as legislators, because people voted for us. That is where we draw our power from, not from the party, not from the prime minister, not from the leaders of the parties, but from the people who sent us here. That is our authority to guide and craft laws, to spend taxpayer money.

That is not the case in the Senate. It is the opposite. Their loyalties, as was quoted, come directly from one source: the prime minister who appointed them. We are all diminished by this.

Today the Conservatives might celebrate because there is still no action on climate change. This is a shame in and of itself, but the other shoe drops. That is the nature and work of politics. We must all be concerned by this, and this House must respond.

The Conservatives initiated and orchestrated this. They more than tolerated it. They enabled it, and they must stop.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question was more to the Liberal member for Random—Burin—St. George's. During her presentation, she made some suggestions and allegations that the provinces had not yet been consulted in the process.

I wanted to remind her that the Manitoba government passed legislation on June 13, 2006, over four years ago. The legislation came about as the result of an all-party committee, which is a tradition in Manitoba, and there was Liberal representation on that committee. In fact, the Liberal member is their candidate in the Winnipeg North by-election.

I guess he is not informing his leader. When his leader has been out there for the last four visits, I guess he has not told him what has happened in Manitoba. This committee met and had a number of meetings. It had representation and 51 presentations. It had 32 written submissions, including one from Senator Terry Stratton himself. It even had a sitting senator give a written presentation.

What this committee did was come up with a number of recommendations.

By the way, on the term limits, it tended to agree with what the government wants to do. But in respect of its recommendations, supported by Liberal, Conservative, and NDP members, they decided that they would have first past the post elections, that they would have three seats in Winnipeg, two seats in southern Manitoba, and one in the north. That is how they proceeded with this all-party committee.

Where does the member get off saying that the provinces have not been consulted in the process? That is totally untrue.

•(1645)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals do not like to hear consultation that disagrees with what they want. The consultation that has come back, if we ask their constituents, is that an unelected, appointed Senate is a good thing and it serves democracy.

One of the Liberals making a speech earlier today said that the Senate enables and encourages democracy. I do not know how one could write those words down in a speech and then say them out loud and keep a straight face. It is offensive to suggest that a place filled with bagmen and cronies, as the current Prime Minister and others have said, enables and encourages the democratic spirit.

Try to imagine this taking place in Washington. Imagine a room in Washington filled with people who were appointed by the President and who could strike down legislation. Can we imagine the Americans, the Germans, or the French going for something like that? They have done away with these things. Modern democracies face this challenge, be they constitutional or otherwise, and they know when enough is enough.

This is from an old age. The Prime Minister was right when he said that this is a relic. It is a relic. It cannot be fixed this way. It must be done away with, and the reason members oppose this notion of abolishment is that they hope they might be next in line. That is why. Vested interests? Give me a break. Enough is enough. That is \$90 million down the toilet every year, funding a Senate that does nothing for accountability, transparency, or the benefit of this country.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** 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 Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, Copyright; the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle, Mont Tremblant International Airport.

At this point, we have passed the five-hour mark, which means speeches will now be 10 minutes instead of 20. Resuming debate, we have the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

**Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to debate this bill today, this bill that addresses a certain type of reform of the Senate, the second chamber of Parliament.

*Government Orders*

I have always thought that the Senate should be reformed. The Senate has served a useful purpose over time since Confederation. There are ways that it should be reformed, and I still believe that it needs to be reformed. But I do not think this bill would solve that or would affect it in a significant way. We need sensible reform of the Senate. I have always felt that way, and I continue to do so now.

As an elected member of Parliament, one thing that surprised me a little was just how important I found the work of the Senate to be. I do not have to go through chapter and verse on that. People in the chamber know the work that was done by Senator Mike Kirby on health, as well as his significant work on mental health in his report titled, "Out of the Shadows at Last", which led to the Mental Health Commission and his appointment there.

There has been some significant work done by senators individually and collectively. In some ways, the Senate has traditionally taken a bit of the bite out of the partisanship of the House of Commons. It has become more partisan in recent days and months, but that work was important. More recently, we have seen some fabulous work done by a Senate committee on poverty co-chaired by Liberal and Conservative senators, Senators Art Eggleton and Hugh Segal. It shows the kind of quality, bipartisan work that can exist in the Senate.

Today I am delighted that in the chamber the chair of the human resources standing committee tabled a report by the committee on poverty and developing an anti-poverty plan for Canada. Some of the recommendations will be similar to those in the Senate report, but some are not. Both studies are well worth looking at. Some significant work has been done in the Senate that I think has added to public discourse and led to better policy in this country, such as the work by Senator Segal, Senator Eggleton, and Senator Kirby.

I come from a province that has a rich tradition of senators providing valuable input. A good friend of mine, Senator Cowan, is the leader of the opposition in the Senate. Senators Mercer and Moore do fabulous work on many issues, one of which is post-secondary education. My co-parliamentarian from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Senator Jane Cordy, and one of my all-time favourites, Senator Al Graham, who retired some six years ago, have done a tremendous amount of work on behalf of Canadians as well as all citizens of the world. It shows that significant work is done in the Senate, and Canadians can be proud of that.

I think we need to take a serious look at Senate reform. Clearly, when the Senate was devised, it was in large part meant to balance regional input in Canada. In 1867, we had the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. There were 24 senators from Quebec, 24 from Ontario, and 24 divided equally between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As other provinces came into Confederation, senators were added. The most recent was the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which entered in 1949 with six senators. The tradition of the Senate there has been very strong as well.

It is not just Liberal senators. We have Senators Oliver and Comeau from Nova Scotia, and this strong tradition has existed across Canada. We have had some good senators and some bad ones. We have had some good members of Parliament in the House of Commons, and we have had some bad ones as well.

When we look at Senate reform, we need to look at it sensibly. The government of the day has turned the Senate into a bad guy on everything, and it has done this in a way that is very disingenuous.

I want to quote the leader of the opposition in the Senate, Senator Cowan, when he spoke about the idea of Senate reform being introduced by the Conservative government. I am going to quote directly from his speech in the Senate. He stated, "I begin by stating the obvious—that real democratic reform cannot be imposed, not even by a prime minister. The result of a unilateral action can never be enhanced democracy. A healthy democracy requires a leader to listen to the views of others and, in some circumstances, to accept those views even if the leader disagrees with them".

● (1650)

He goes on to state:

A constitution, by its nature, is the antithesis of unilateral action. Constitutions are the product of discussion and compromise. The Canadian Constitution contains a detailed amending formula meticulously negotiated over many years. [...] The government refuses to discuss the proposals with the provinces. It insists, notwithstanding the views of numerous experts, that the Parliament of Canada possesses the authority to pass the proposed constitutional amendments on its own.

People come here with their own points of view. We have heard some very strong positions from members of the New Democratic Party who believe that there is no place at all for the Senate. I do not believe that. We have heard from others who believe that perhaps there should not be any change at all to the formulation of the Senate. I do not believe that either. I think we need to look at this sensibly and reasonably.

A colleague from Manitoba speaks about some discussions that happened in Manitoba, but other provinces have very clearly stated that they do not intend to just go along willy-nilly with a change in the Constitution. That is a very important thing that affects their interests and their region and they do not want to see it imposed upon them by the Prime Minister.

What we have often heard from the Prime Minister and the government was that the Senate was holding things up. In fact, while the House was prorogued earlier this year, the Minister of Justice suggested that the Senate was holding up the crime bills.

There is a very good letter, which I commend to everybody's attention, from Senator Cowan to the Minister of Justice dated February 4. The letter reads:

Your Government introduced 19 justice-related bills in the House of Commons. Of these, 14 were still in the House of Commons at prorogation. Of the five justice bills that passed the House of Commons and came to the Senate:

two passed the Senate without amendment;

one (the so-called Serious Time for the Most Serious Crime bill) was tabled by your Government in November in the Senate but not brought forward for further action after that;

one was passed with four amendments and returned to the House of Commons which did not deal with it before Parliament was prorogued; and

one was being studied in committee when Parliament was prorogued and all committee work shut down.

There were a further two justice bills that your Government chose to initiate in the Senate. One was passed by the Senate after 14 days, sent to the House of Commons, passed and given Royal Assent. The other was tabled in the Senate on April 1, but has not been brought forward by your Government for any further action since then.

*Government Orders*

Very clearly, the Senate has been set up incorrectly as the entity that has been slowing down the government agenda. We all know that what slowed down the government agenda was its proclivity to prorogue Parliament, not just twice in the last couple of years but in fact three times if we go back to 2007. Therefore, it is not fair to say that the Senate has held up the agenda of the government.

What we saw last night was a bill that had been passed by the House of Commons in Parliament and sent to the Senate. For the first time in the history of our country, the first time since Confederation, a bill that was passed by the House of Commons was killed by the Senate without even going to committee.

I believe what we have is an abuse of the democratic process, consistent with a government that has chosen to prorogue Parliament, that has chosen to ignore the will of Parliament on a number of occasions and that is now using the Senate as the set-up bad guy when the government has to take responsibility for not being able to get its own agenda through.

That is just simply how it is. We do have a bicameral legislative body. We have had a system in Canada over many generations, going back to Confederation, that has two bodies. It has the House of Commons where members are elected. The Senate has members who are appointed. Should the senators be elected and how long should their terms be, are things that are open to debate.

What is not open to debate, though, is that the government has set up the Senate in an incorrect way, politicizing the Senate, beyond what it ever has been before, to suggest that the Senate is slowing down the will of Parliament. On top of all of that, last night we clearly had the Conservative-dominated Senate killing the will of Parliament on a piece of legislation for the first time in our history.

I say that we need to reform the Senate. We need to look at it seriously but we must not forget the good work that can be done by the Senate. We need to ensure that we enhance democracy as we go through this process and not further damage it.

•(1655)

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are positive things that the Senate has done over time but what we are talking about here is Senate term limits. In the past, the Liberal leader has said that Senate term limits were necessary. The previous critic also said that.

Would the member support this bill going to second reading to reflect on the benefit of term limits?

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, our position has been that we will send it to committee to have a look at it.

The government has framed this as simply a discussion on whether it should be an eight year term. What we are saying is that many other things are involved, both in terms of potential reforms to the Senate and the process as well. Yes, I would like to see it at committee where some of the provinces can come in and give their point of view and where some constitutional experts can come in and talk about some of the other options.

Because the government has determined that this bill specifically deals with the length of term, does not mean that is the only thing

people in Canada want to look at in terms of how we might consider the Senate and the work that it does within Parliament.

Yes, I want the committee to have a look at this and let us hear from people who have an interest and an expertise and we can go forward from there.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member's defence of the Senate, notwithstanding his exhaustive timeframe around possibly looking at some changes.

I am curious. In defence of the appointed, unelected, undemocratic Senate, the member mentioned that there are good MPs and bad MPs and that there are good senators and bad senators. When there are bad MPs, the Canadian people, as is the source of all power and democracy, have the right to turf them out of office and find themselves an MP who is one of the good ones.

I would like the member to tell me, in his defence of the unappointed Senate, how on earth Canadians get rid of the bad ones.

•(1700)

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, there are good MPs and bad MPs. I would remind my colleague that not all the bad ones have been defeated. Many of the bad ones do not get defeated.

Many of the senators are good but there may be some who are bad. We appoint a lot of people in the process. One thing that happens is that the Senate, run properly, does not have the kind of excessive and foolish partisanship that my colleague from Hamilton exhibits. He seems to believe that by elevating his voice, he elevates his argument. That clearly is not the case.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member stated that his party is willing to allow the bill to go through second reading to committee in order to allow an opportunity to reflect on the benefits, or not, of the bill, as per the democratic process.

Could the member doubly confirm that?

**Mr. Michael Savage:** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to keep track. This bill has come back more often than Mohammed Ali or Brett Favre. Every time we turn around the government is reintroducing this bill. However, our position as a party and my own personal inclination would be to send it to committee and see if we can fix it.

From my own point of view, doubly, triply or quadruply, I expect that will be the view I will have, subject to change, but that is where I sit now. Let us have a more serious look at it.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, once again, for the umpteenth time, the Conservative government is introducing Bill C-10 on Senate reform to limit senators' terms to eight years. This government bill is unacceptable because such a change represents a major modification to the Senate structure. That can only be achieved through a Constitutional amendment, which requires the approval of seven provinces representing 50% of the Canadian population.



The Conservative government's desire to unilaterally change one of the major elements of the Senate structure shows its complete lack of respect for provincial powers. This proves, once again, as though it needed to be proven, that this government—which was elected on the promise of governing in a less centralist fashion and showing greater respect for the provinces' jurisdictions and aspirations—feels utter disdain for the provinces and for Quebec in particular.

In fact, evidence to that effect continues to accumulate. The Conservative government always opposes any proposals that would give tangible expression to the recognition of the Quebec nation. It has never put words into action. On the contrary, it refuses to recognize that the Quebec nation has one language: French. Instead, it keeps trying to make Quebec even more bilingual by, among other things, making it impossible for companies under federal jurisdiction to be subject to the Charter of the French Language and Bill 101. It refuses to take into account the existence of our national culture, whether in the administration of our laws or the operation of the institutions that reflect our culture and identity. It refuses to recognize that our nation has needs and aspirations that differ from those of the rest of Canada. Instead, it continues to promote a form of multiculturalism that makes the French fact, the Quebec fact, a minority among other minorities and encourages immigrants to preserve their culture, all to the detriment of the continuity of our national culture, which is directly threatened as a result. This Conservative government refuses to even consider the possibility that Quebec should have its own radio-television and telecommunications commission to make regulations based on Quebec's unique interests and challenges.

Another aspect of this government's centralist policies is the fact that it wants to create a single securities regulator for all of Canada, even though the current system works perfectly well. We already know that it will refuse to limit federal spending power in the provinces.

And that, unfortunately, speaks to government's worthless commitment to give the provinces, their areas of jurisdiction and their aspirations more respect. Now this government is pushing its centralist interests even further, going over the heads of Quebec and the provinces in order to unilaterally impose changes to a major element of Canada's democratic system. And these changes, as we pointed out earlier, require amendments to the constitution and approval from the provinces.

The Canadian Constitution is a federal constitution. Everyone should know that, but apparently they do not. Quebec and the provinces must be consulted on all reforms that affect the powers of the Senate, the method of selecting senators, the number of senators to which a province is entitled and the residency requirement of senators. These types of changes affecting the essential characteristics of our federal democratic system cannot be made unilaterally by Parliament and must instead be agreed upon by the provinces. The government is clearly choosing to ignore this reality.

The Quebec government—led by a federalist party, I should add—clearly expressed a similar opinion. In November 2007, the intergovernmental affairs minister, Benoît Pelletier, reiterated Quebec's traditional position when he said:

The Government of Quebec does not believe that this falls exclusively under federal jurisdiction. Given that the Senate is a crucial part of the Canadian federal

### *Government Orders*

compromise, it is clear to us that under the Constitution Act, 1982, and the Regional Veto Act, the Senate can be neither reformed nor abolished without Quebec's consent.

The same day, the National Assembly unanimously adopted the following motion:

That the National Assembly of Québec reaffirm to the Federal Government and to the Parliament of Canada that no modification to the Canadian Senate may be carried out without the consent of the Government of Québec and the National Assembly.

• (1705)

The government was thus formally requesting the suspension of proceedings on Bill S-4, which became Bill C-10 on Senate term limits.

Naturally, the Conservative government may believe that it can point out that Quebec is zealously defending the principles of a Constitution that it refused to sign. Quebec's position on this matter is far from contradictory. In fact, it is and always has been very clear: there will be no Senate reform until the issue of Quebec's status is settled.

The Conservative government undoubtedly wants to avoid that problem. However, it cannot circumvent the will of Quebec and the provinces in an area by going it alone within their jurisdiction.

This very clearly shows that Bill C-10 proposed by the current federal government would directly thwart the aspirations of Quebec and the other provinces. We are also concerned that this would create a precedent, allowing the federal government to get its foot in the door.

This does not mean that the Bloc Québécois is opposed to making any change to the Senate. But it is clear that Senate reform is not at all in keeping with Quebecers' aspirations. They are rather indifferent about Senate reform.

According to a Léger Marketing poll conducted in March 2010, only 8% of Quebecers believe that the Senate plays an important role and that the current appointment system works well; 22% of Quebecers would like senators to be elected rather than appointed; and 43%, the largest group of respondents, would even be in favour of abolishing the Senate.

Clearly, in the current state of affairs, there is nothing about the Senate that can arouse the passion of citizens. Senators have an unfortunate reputation for high absenteeism and dereliction of duty. We should note that the Senate only sits 83 days per year.

However, the Senate also governs itself. It could make certain changes such as increasing the number of working days, reorganizing its committees to make them more effective, and adopting a more demanding schedule, along the lines of that of the House of Commons.

*Government Orders*

The government could also contribute to improving the institution's image by improving the quality of its appointments, by choosing more credible and more competent candidates rather than play the populist card and make purely opportunistic appointments. It should be noted that some senators are known for their absenteeism. Senator Jacques Demers, for example, was present for only 21 of the 83 short days that the Senate sits. That is less than one day in four on a schedule that is not very demanding.

And what can we say about Senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu who is a staunch defender of the families of victims of crime and kidnapping, but is in favour of getting rid of the firearms registry or, at least, removing hunting rifles from the registry? I gather that he never bothered to check what type of weapon Marc Lépine used in committing the massacre at École Polytechnique in 1989. What is more, in a logic that may raise some eyebrows, Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu blames the growing number of single mothers in Quebec society for the loss of hunting as an activity passed down from father to son. And again according to this senator, the decline in the popularity of hunting has a direct effect on the increase in highway accidents. It is unbelievable. This was published in Quebec newspapers.

This speaks volumes about some of the most prominent senators this Conservative government has managed to find. There is certainly nothing there to boost the Senate's image and nothing that is likely to get Quebecers interested in the fate of the Senate.

In any event, it is clear that Senate term limits do not top the list of Quebecers' priorities, to say the least. This government has enough to think about without having to get the public interested in an institution that many could see disappear without batting an eye.

Most importantly, it is totally unacceptable to allow the federal government to overstep its powers by circumventing the constitutional process, thereby trampling on the powers and aspirations of Quebec and the provinces and on its own commitments.

• (1710)

[English]

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Madam Speaker, my question is short and simple.

Seventy-one per cent of Quebecers support Senate term limits. If we take that, along with the Prime Minister's willingness to allow the people of a said province, including Quebec, to select who will represent them, through direct elections, why not support democracy, support the ability of the people of Quebec to directly select their senators and support this legislation with the understanding that this Prime Minister is the first prime minister in Canadian history to offer the people of Quebec the chance to select who they want to be in the Senate? It would empower Quebecers. Would the member support that?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:** Madam Speaker, I am astonished and flabbergasted—I know that is redundant—to hear the question from the hon. Minister of State for Democratic Reform. He is appealing to the notion of democracy. How can he want to do something as anti-democratic as making changes to the other house, in violation of the

current Constitution, which requires that Quebec and the provinces be formally consulted?

The current democratic process involves obtaining the support of 70% of the provinces or the equivalent of 50% of the population. That is the current democratic process. That is how democracy works. I do not understand how the minister can appeal to the notion of democracy and say he is proposing something more democratic, when his suggestion certainly does not respect the written democratic process.

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Madam Speaker, to my friend from the Bloc, in this House today we have listened to a number of Liberals talk about the good works of the Liberal senators who have been appointed by Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Martin over the years. They lament the fact that if the Senate were abolished we would lose that expertise.

I would suggest that we would not lose the expertise because the House of Commons could set up any special committee it wanted and draw on the expertise of Canadians and former senators.

However, my question for the member is simple. Does she not find it ironic that we are standing in this House debating a motion on the Senate when the unelected Senate yesterday killed the climate change accountability bill? Is it not ironic that body was able to do that without the hughes of uproars?

• (1715)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is here to defend the interests of Quebec and of Quebecers. And Quebecers have virtually no interest in the Senate or Senate reform.

First and foremost, Senators currently have the ability to change their work methods themselves. All the better if they are good and competent. Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu, Jacques Demers and all the others we never see, who are never there and have poor attendance records, can get together and decide to work, to be there when necessary, to get up early, to participate in committees and to undertake activities that are interesting, important and that matter in Canada's democratic process. If we saw these kinds of changes we would perhaps care a bit more about them and we could look at how constitutional amendments could change their method of operating.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. member for Chambly—Borduas for a very brief question. He has only one minute left.

**Mr. Yves Lessard (Chambly—Borduas, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would of course like to congratulate my hon. colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert on the relevance of her comments. She pointed out that only 8% of Quebecers believe that the Senate serves a useful purpose. It would seem that they are not terribly impressed by the value of the work done by senators.

The hon. member also pointed out that this bill interferes with the Canadian Constitution without the approval of Quebec and the provinces. I wonder if she could expand on this.

*Government Orders*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert has 25 seconds to respond.

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:** Madam Speaker, understandably, 25 seconds is not nearly long enough to explain why the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously refused to sign the Constitution in 1982. I hope to have the opportunity at a later date to explain this to the House. We have explained it many times, but clearly, no one understands.

[*English*]

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Madam Speaker, we are talking about the amendment brought forward by the NDP that will essentially lead to the status quo. On one hand, the NDP has espoused the need to reform or abolish the Senate, and by this motion that it has brought forward, it is preventing any kind of reform. It is disappointing.

I see that the NDP does not necessarily appreciate the complexity that is necessary to abolish the Senate. The government is proposing a step-by-step approach that falls within the Constitution, within the powers of this chamber, and that is to suggest term limits. Term limits are something the government has done before. In the sixties, the term of a senator used to be for life. Now it is until the age of 75, and that was done by this chamber.

What the NDP is suggesting in its motion is that the Senate should be completely abolished. Some people would agree with that sentiment, but in practical terms that is not an option. What is an option is Senate term limits. What is an option is having elections for senators. What is an option is what the Conservatives are suggesting.

The NDP unfortunately has proposed again, as it often does, unrealistic solutions. We have some challenges in the Senate, we all agree. What the Conservative Party is proposing are steps that we can take to enhance the Senate so it better reflects the values that we have as Canadians in the 21st century. A non-renewable term limit is one of those items. Having senators selected directly by the population of the province that they are to represent is another. These are steps that are within the Constitution and that we are pursuing.

In fact, I would like to make the point that our Prime Minister was the first prime minister in the history of Canada to say that he will select whomever the people of a province elect during a direct election process. That is a core Conservative value. That brings accountability.

The eight-year term limit, as proposed, would allow for a certain refreshment of the Senate over time. A lot of people feel that 45 years, which is now possible, is too long to serve in the Senate without any kind of accountability mechanism, so that is why we have selected a term limit. We have suggested eight years. Perhaps other parties have other suggestions. Let us have that discussion.

This is why I hope that other parties will allow this motion, as originally presented, to proceed and defeat the NDP amendment. The Liberal member from Nova Scotia, to his credit, just spoke a few minutes ago and said that he would stand up and defeat this NDP amendment and allow for Bill C-10 to proceed to second reading, to allow people to give their points of view on the legislation.

That is the correct thing to do. Allow the bill to go to second reading. Allow for feedback. That is why we have a democratic process, and for the NDP or other parties to just say, forget it, let us not try anything, let us just go for elimination, which actually really means, let us stick with the status quo, is not being intellectually honest.

• (1720)

I hope other parties, or individual members in the House, will see that by voting to allow Bill C-10 to go to second reading would allow for a clearer and more constructive debate about the length of time a senator should stay in the Senate. Bill C-10 would do that. It is within the power of Parliament and we should proceed with it.

Canadians appreciate that. Canadians overwhelmingly support Senate term limits. Canadians believe the Senate needs to be enhanced in order to be in line with 21st century principles. The bill would help to do that. Is it a complete fix? No. Is it a big step in the direction of improving the Senate? Yes. A step by step approach is what we need.

I call upon all members of the House to allow the bill to go to second reading to provide an opportunity to debate some of the provisions. Maybe there are different views on the length of the term or the nature of the term, but let us have that debate. By expanding it too much, will lead to nothing, no change. We know that. Everyone in the House knows that. If we want to improve the Senate, if we want to make it more in line with Canadian values, we should, together or individually, support the bill.

We live in the best country in the world and at the best time in human history. We have an opportunity to include more people in the democratic process by electing senators. We are allowing more people to become parliamentarians by limiting the term of senators.

Why can we not move together and have this debate? I appreciate the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for saying that he will stand and support the bill to go to second reading. I call on all members of the House to do the same.

Together we stand and we will make our country better through this great institution we call the Parliament of Canada.

• (1725)

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the minister and I can appreciate that this is perhaps not the best day for him. Prior to last night's Senate debacle, there were probably enough votes to have this carry cleanly so we could talk about it.

The fact is the bill would not have changed one bit the undemocratic dynamic of last evening, where the Senate, for the first time I believe in decades, stopped cold a bill that was initiated and passed by a majority vote by the elected House of Commons of Canada. How would that change if those senators—

**An hon. member:** I can't hear you.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Who is the member who cannot hear me? What is his riding? I will get him. Perhaps I could get the floor, Madam Speaker, and not be interrupted by those folks, or give me time to deal with them too.

My question for the minister is very simple. Why and how does the minister of the Crown think for one minute that he can do to that bill and to the majority rights of the House with impunity and not expect that there will be some kind of retaliation? This is his retaliation.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, I hope *Hansard* got the member's last word and that was "retaliation". Retaliation for what he did not say specifically, but retaliation none the less.

This is not what Canadians expect. Canadians expect that people will work together when possible to discuss these issues.

The member talked about the Senate blocking legislation. Actually the Senate has blocked legislation, our criminal justice legislation, in the past and that has been very frustrating.

What we are trying to do is improve the Senate, to make it consistent with 21st century values. The bill would do that. What the NDP has done out of spite, or anger, or viciousness or visceral cynicism is very disappointing and is not consistent with Canadian values.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** I regret to interrupt the hon. minister. He will have two minutes left when the debate resumes.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private member's business as listed on today's order paper.

---

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

### FREE PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR SENIORS ACT

**Mr. Marcel Proulx (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-449, An Act regarding free public transit for seniors, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I have the honour to open the debate today on an issue that is particularly important to a growing segment of our society: seniors. Although they are often silent, seniors have needs we must address with flexible, progressive measures.

Today, I present a solution to the problem of public transit, which is an important factor in promoting seniors' independence and overcoming the isolation our senior friends and relatives too often experience.

The bill I introduced would make public transit free for seniors, anywhere in Canada, during off-peak hours.

There are many reasons for this bill, which seeks to encourage seniors to lead active social lives, to make it easier for them to get around and to improve access to public transit.

I would like to start by describing some of the social characteristics of Canada's seniors.

Seniors are generally defined as people 65 and over. However, three different groups can be identified within this segment of the population: people 65 to 74, those 75 to 84 and those over 85. Each of these subsegments has different needs that call for specific, progressive solutions.

[*English*]

There are also many prejudices again about seniors, regardless of their age. The concept of an aging population has been the subject of a number of consultations and studies.

On the Hill, a special Senate committee on aging was formed. The committee tabled its report entitled, "Canada's Aging Population: Seizing the Opportunity", in April 2009.

[*Translation*]

Other governments have also looked at the aging population, and the Conseil des aînés du Québec released its own report in March 2010. Although the report has to do with ageism, I feel it is relevant to the issue of aging. In addition, although the report covers Quebec, the population and its characteristics are representative of Canada as a whole.

[*English*]

Returning to ageism, age is often the source of prejudice and beliefs that lead to discrimination. These perceptions affect seniors primarily, regardless of their exact age group. Ageism is also evident in various sectors such as employment, health and transportation. Seniors are seen as a social and financial burden.

[*Translation*]

I would like to help change our society's perception of seniors. But how can we change that perception when we are bombarded with images that equate happiness with youth and beauty?

I am one of those people who believes in accomplishing big things by taking small steps. Bill C-449 would give seniors greater mobility and perhaps change perceptions by showing that seniors are active and independent.

Let us look at the current situation of seniors, as described by Statistics Canada in its 2006 report entitled "A Portrait of Seniors in Canada". I would just like to mention the Conservative government's decision to abolish the long form census. The Liberal Party put forward a motion in the House that was adopted, and we will do everything we can to restore the census so that vital economic and demographic data continue to be available.

We can refer to statistics from the 2006 census that give an accurate, reliable portrait of Canadian society. The report says:

The aging of the population will accelerate over the next three decades, particularly as individuals from the Baby Boom years of 1946 to 1965 begin turning age 65. The number of seniors in Canada is projected to increase from 4.2 million to 9.8 million between 2005 and 2036....

If this trend continues, here are Statistics Canada's projections:

...the number of 65 to 74 years olds is projected to increase to 4.8 million by 2031, accounting for 12.4% of the total population at that time.

...by 2021 the absolute number of 75 to 84 year olds is expected to reach 2 million.

Between 2005 and 2021, the absolute number of people aged 85 or older is projected to increase to 800,000, although their share of the total population will remain around 2%.

Most of Canada's population—approximately 62%—resides in Ontario and Quebec. About seven of every ten seniors in Canada lived in an urban centre with at least 50,000 residents. Seniors have long been less likely than people in younger age groups to change residences. Thus, we can conclude that most Canadian seniors are sedentary and live in urban areas of central Canada.

A task force that reports to the Quebec family minister described the home environment of seniors as follows:

Most seniors, i.e., nearly 88%, live in a natural environment and this is where they wish to remain as long as possible. They must therefore be able to find services such as places of worship, supermarkets, banks, health services, etc., near their home.

Women accounted for 52% of persons aged 65 to 69, a figure that jumps to 75% for persons aged 90 or older. I would like to focus for a moment on this segment of the population.

● (1735)

[English]

According to Statistics Canada, the guaranteed income supplement and the survivor allowance accounted for the bulk of senior women's income in 2003 at 31.7%. Although the number of low-income seniors has declined slightly, it is still high for senior women living alone, with the highest figures in British Columbia and Quebec.

[Translation]

In 2007, FADOQ, Mouvement des Aînés du Québec, submitted a brief to the Standing Committee on Status of Women regarding the economic security of senior women. The organization expressed great concern about the financial insecurity of women. Too often widows are heavily burdened financially, and the organization made a series of recommendations to rectify this situation.

It is true that women take care of elderly loved ones and are penalized for this choice, which benefits all of society.

FADOQ called on the government to recognize the role of natural caregivers, which the Liberal Party of Canada did.

[English]

The Liberal Party supports Canadian families. It will help natural caregivers cover the cost of caring for sick or elderly family members in their homes.

[Translation]

I will now address the issue of transportation for seniors. In about 15 years, one in five Canadians will be over the age of 65. What impact will the needs of this population have on transportation services in Canada? How can we provide transportation for our seniors when they are no longer able to drive safely? How can we provide affordable transportation for low-income seniors, and particularly senior women? How can we provide accessible transportation for seniors to essential services such as health care

### *Private Members' Business*

and social services? How can we provide transportation that will enable them to continue socializing, to maintain their independence and to avoid becoming isolated?

[English]

We have to ask those questions and find solutions for Canadians. It is a complex problem and will require more than one solution.

Today, I would like to present a solution that I hope the House will adopt.

[Translation]

Mobility is critical to seniors' independence, and for decades the automobile has been the preferred mode of transportation for most Canadians. However, when it comes time to take away a senior's driver's licence or to convince them to voluntarily stop driving their vehicles, they go through a period of mourning. Their independence has been taken away.

“Seniors’ access to transportation” is a Statistics Canada report. The data and analysis give an excellent overview of the issue. Here are some excerpts.

The great majority of adults and seniors have access to private or public transport

In 2005, 98% of men aged 65 to 74 and 95% of women the same age had access either to a vehicle owned by someone in their household or to public transit. These percentages declined among people in older age groups. Nevertheless, even among seniors aged 85 and over, 86% had access either to a household vehicle or to mass transit.

However, that percentage drops once seniors reach the age of 85; only 86% had access to a household vehicle or to mass transit. Only 80% of seniors had access to a household vehicle, compared with 91% of 55- to 74-year-olds.

More specifically, 71% of people aged 65 and over had access to a household vehicle and had a driver's licence. Of that percentage, 86% were men and only 58% were women. And that gap grew with age: among those 85 and older, 66% of men had that same access and only 33% of women did.

The author asked the following question:

Is better access to transport linked to a more active life?

He said:

...a senior who owns a car and a driver's licence, or who has the financial means to use a taxi to run his errands, can travel about much more easily than an older person who must rely on her son or daughter to take her shopping.

In this case, mobility refers to a person's ability to get up and go where they want when they want.

A statistical model showed that if a person has limited access to transportation, the probability that they would stay at home was 46%. The probability that those with a valid licence and a vehicle would stay home was 19%.

Women and people over the age of 85 living in rural areas are particularly likely to have limited outings. They are less mobile.

*Private Members' Business*

In the same study, the author reveals that people who live in rural areas and do not have access to a vehicle or to public transit leave their homes less frequently and do less volunteering. The study states:

According to some authors, this situation would suggest that older persons living in rural areas without a car are particularly at risk for social isolation, as well as difficulty in accessing community and medical services.

We therefore need to find a solution to the problem of transportation in rural areas and I would like to propose the beginnings of a solution. I read that in an area near the Outaouais region, in the Lièvre valley, seniors are mobilizing to organize their activities such as going to the doctor or simply getting groceries. However—and this is the recurring problem—they still need transportation. The lack of transportation represents a clear obstacle to seniors' activities, whether those activities are for survival, related to health, or simply social and recreational.

The task force established by the Quebec Minister of Families, which I previously mentioned, made this recommendation regarding transportation in the context of a policy on aging:

For those who live outside the areas well served by public transit systems, the possibility of travelling is essential to participate in the life of the community. The participants of several semi-urban regions mentioned difficulties with this. The transportation question must also be examined in the cities served by public transit to make sure that they meet all needs adequately.

• (1740)

[English]

With regard to transportation, seniors are a special case and should be treated as such. Such positive discrimination is not only justified, it is necessary.

[Translation]

I would add that we are already starting to see free services. Here in Ottawa, the nation's capital, public transit is free every Wednesday. What is more, seniors generally use public transit during off-peak hours and therefore this would not disrupt the existing service very much.

Public transit systems are already in place in most urban centres. Nevertheless, rural areas, as we have already seen, have fewer services or none at all. Special attention should be paid in order to provide free transit service adapted to rural needs. Seniors living in rural areas or outside major urban centres have the same needs as those living in urban areas that already have public transit.

In closing, allow me to emphasize two points. First, although transit comes under provincial jurisdiction, the need for resources should lead the various governments and territories to work together in order to meet the transit needs of Canadian seniors.

Second, the bill could be accompanied by a royal recommendation. In order to facilitate passage of Bill C-449, I will propose the following amendment at committee stage: to substitute, at lines 1 to 4 on page 2, the following:

The Minister of Finance shall study the ways in which a trust could be established to facilitate free local public transit for seniors, anywhere in Canada

In closing, I invite my colleagues to support Bill C-449 and refer it to committee. Ensuring free public transit for seniors anywhere in

Canada during off-peak hours, addresses the specific needs of seniors and gives them—

• (1745)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

[English]

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as senior member of the Liberal Party and the chief opposition whip, I wonder if the member could talk to his proposal and answer a few questions regarding costs.

I must say that I live in a rural community where there is no transportation. The people in my community would be paying for this and I think they would be very concerned.

How much would providing free public transit to seniors in both rural and urban Canada actually cost? Who has reviewed and validated the cost estimate? As this would be considerable new spending, has the Liberal Party identified the source of funds to pay for it? What taxes would it raise? What programs would it cut?

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Madam Speaker, I had addressed the situation that in rural areas it might be somewhat difficult, although we need to recognize that seniors are living not only in rural Canada but also in urban centres.

As far as the costs are concerned, this would be done on a voluntary and discretionary basis by the Minister of Finance to allow for a fund to be built from which municipalities, regional municipalities, cities or towns could seek money to help them finance this transportation.

As far as how much it would cost, is a good question. We are still looking at figures. We know that some transportation commissions have a certain clientele within seniors but most seniors are using these services at rush hour either to go to a part-time job or to visit relatives. In this case, we would be offering the transportation service to seniors in off-peak hours. Maybe these services could be offered from 10 o'clock in the morning until 2:30 in the afternoon. From what we have studied, there would be no additional cost to the transportation commissions, except maybe in rural areas where some additional transportation facilities would need to be implemented.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Madam Speaker, if this trust fund is to be on a voluntary basis, the way the bill is drafted is that the municipalities or the transit authorities would pay first and then apply for funding.

My understanding is that many transit authorities in different municipalities would have difficulty paying for it upfront. Why not define the trust fund to say that it could be accessed prior to offering the service? If not, then we are setting up the municipalities and the seniors who may want the service but the service may not be provided if the municipalities do not have the financial capacity to do so.

**Mr. Marcel Proulx:** Madam Speaker, I wish to thank my hon. colleague for making the suggestion.

As I said in the French part of my statement, because this bill will probably need a royal recommendation I will be presenting an amendment. Instead of saying that the minister will create a discretionary fund, it would say that the Minister of Finance shall study the ways in which a trust could be established for the purposes of facilitating the financing of these activities. Of course, it would be much easier if municipalities could seek this money prior to establishing the service and thus help our seniors.

I am sure that my colleague, who comes from a large city, will be very helpful in getting this bill passed through the House in order to help the seniors in her riding.

• (1750)

**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I must emphasize strongly, against this fiscally irresponsible Liberal proposal.

If Canadians want to know the difference between our Conservative government and the Liberal opposition when it comes to the economy and respecting taxpayers, this Liberal proposal sums it up. This pie in the sky Liberal proposal is to allegedly provide absolutely free—and free in this context would be taxpayer funded, so I cannot exactly say it is free—public government transportation to every senior throughout Canada. This is fiscally reckless and would cost untold billions of dollars to implement. I say untold billions because the Liberals did not even bother to cost it. In fact, we just heard moments ago when the mover of the bill was asked what the cost would be, he did not have a clue what the cost would be.

In fact, Conservative MPs had to ask the Parliamentary Budget Officer to cost it because the Liberals refused to ask the Parliamentary Budget Officer for a costing.

I am at a loss why a senior member of the Liberal Party, in fact the chief opposition whip, would introduce such a fiscally irresponsible proposal.

In his speech I heard him talk about discrimination. His concern about discrimination would be lost because every constituent in my riding would be discriminated against. They would have to contribute to public transit and would not have access to it. If that is not discrimination, someone please tell me what is.

With regard to costs, earlier this year the leader of the Liberal Party publicly proclaimed:

One of the issues we have to confront is, how do we pay for this? We can't be a credible party until we have an answer for that question.

We did not hear this either.

...We have to be courageous and we have to be clear on this subject. We will not identify any new spending unless we can clearly identify a source of funds...

Likewise, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has pleaded that politicians “who make announcements of future spending must tell Canadians how much those plans cost and where the money will come from”.

### *Private Members' Business*

However, the Liberals have no such answers for this proposal. They have identified absolutely no way to pay for it.

Accordingly, following the Liberal leader's own logic, and in his own words, the Liberal Party, with uncosted proposals like today's, has no credibility.

However, on matters of fiscal responsibility, the Liberal leader himself has questionable credibility, as he also earlier this year publicly proclaimed:

I am not going to allow the deficit discussion to shut down discussion in this country about social justice.

I ask, is absolutely free public transportation to every single senior social justice? If so, it is only one item on a laundry list of similar uncosted and unaffordable social justice commitments the Liberals have made over the past few years. The growing Liberal laundry list of unfunded spending commitments has included billions of dollars for everything including: a national government-run daycare scheme; a 45-day work year; a slew of new national strategies supported by permanent large bureaucracies; a supplementary Canada pension plan that in fact provincial governments disagree with, liberal provincial governments; subsidized overseas voyages for young Canadians; something called a secretariat of peace, order and good government; and the list goes on. They are all costly and reckless spending policies that carry hefty price tags that would send Canada into spiralling large and permanent deficits, erasing Canada's economic advantage.

What is more, the Liberals clearly have no way to pay for the vast majority of their growing laundry list of commitments, merely pointing to the same limited funding source repeatedly, that being hiking taxes on job creators. That does not cut it.

Even the *Globe and Mail* has caught on, remarking that the Liberals “cannot recycle their promise to cancel the tax cuts as a way to pay for other new social programs they may like to promise”.

• (1755)

Eventually someone is going to have to pay for those freewheeling Liberal spending plans. Make no mistake that someone is going to have to and that would be hard-working Canadian taxpayers.

Already the Liberals happily admit that Canadian job creators would have to foot the bill for the first wave of their endless laundry list. What will the Liberal attack on job creators mean for Canada's economy and the everyday Canadian? A weaker economy and hundreds of thousands of lost jobs.

According to the University of Calgary School of Public Policy, the Liberals would endanger \$49 billion in capital investment, equivalent to 233,000 Canadian jobs, with their irresponsible tax hike plan.

Already the Liberals' demonizing and targeting job creators with tax grabs is starting to harm Canada's fragile recovery. If the Liberals do not believe me, they should listen to the words of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters:

Canadian business investment needed to sustain an economic recovery is threatened by [the] Liberal Party Leader's pledge to scrap planned corporate tax cuts because companies may find it difficult to plan... Right now, frankly, I don't think we can afford the...uncertainty if you want companies to make big investments in Canada.

*Private Members' Business*

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce represents 192,000 companies that employ millions throughout the country. When speaking of the Liberal tax hike plan, it remarked, “Business is going to hold back making investments” and that it is “very damaging”.

What about the rest of the Liberal laundry list included in this proposal? Who will pay for the big tax-and-spend Liberal government? We all know the answer, and I repeat, hard-working everyday Canadian taxpayers. The Liberal leader would reach deeper and deeper into their pockets and wreck their family budgets to bankroll excessively costly proposals like this one. In the words of the Liberal leader himself, “federal taxes must go up” and “we will have to raise taxes”. What taxes in particular? To again quote the Liberal leader, “I’m not going to take a GST tax hike off the table”.

Earlier this year, an Infometrica study revealed that such a Liberal GST hike would cost Canada another 162,000 jobs.

The growing laundry list of Liberal proposals like the one here today is not grounded in fiscal reality and would saddle Canada with permanent deficit spending.

On the other hand, our Conservative government has taken affordable and sustainable action to actually benefit Canadians, especially our seniors. First and foremost, since 2006, the Conservative government has cut the tax bill for seniors and pensioners by nearly \$2 billion annually. For instance, we increased the age credit amount by \$2,000, doubled the pension income credit to \$2,000 and introduced landmark pension income splitting.

Second, our Conservative government has already made public transit more affordable for seniors, and all Canadians in fact, with the public transit tax credit. This important tax relief allows individuals to claim a non-refundable tax credit for the cost of monthly or ongoing weekly public transit passes. This has proved to be an exceedingly popular measure.

The Canadian Urban Transit Association said:

The government's tax credit for transit pass users is a strong signal that the government is committed to promoting transit use. It rewards transit customers for making smart travel choices.

Shockingly, the Liberal Party voted against the public transit tax credit and against helping seniors and other riders of public transit.

Finally, let me note that public transit is primarily a provincial and municipal jurisdictional responsibility. It is not one where federal spending power should unilaterally dictate their decisions.

Clearly, the Conservative government has brought forward fiscally responsible support for seniors and public transit users alike. Disappointingly, the Liberals want to force Canadian taxpayers and businesses to pick up the bill for their costly laundry list of proposals, like the one we are dealing with here today.

● (1800)

This is not a credible plan. Instead, it would damage family budgets and job creation across Canada. I strongly urge all members to vote against this flawed and costly proposal.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is opposed

to Bill C-449, An Act regarding free public transit for seniors. I would like the member for Hull—Aylmer to know that it is an excellent initiative and a recognition of the role of seniors. However, the Bloc Québécois believes that his bill meddles in a provincial jurisdiction. The member is a fellow Quebecker. Like the members of the Bloc Québécois, he appreciates that the federal government must respect provincial jurisdictions.

This bill would establish a trust that would make payments to municipalities or the provinces, in accordance with the terms established by the federal government. I began by complimenting my colleague for Hull—Aylmer, but now comes the criticism. This bill interferes in two areas that are exclusively Quebec's responsibility—public transit and social policy.

I am disappointed in the member for Hull—Aylmer. Had the bill been introduced by a member from Saskatchewan or British Columbia, we might have said that they were not as familiar with the exclusive jurisdictions of the provinces. Municipalities in other Canadian provinces, as we saw with the infrastructure program, speak freely and directly with the federal government. However, in Quebec, infrastructure money must pass through the Government of Quebec so that Quebec's municipal affairs department is responsible.

For these reasons the Bloc Québécois is not in favour of this bill. I am asking everyone in the House to not play politics with this. I am convinced that my Liberal colleague from Hull—Aylmer knows that the Conservatives generally play that card when we oppose the law and order bills they propose time and again without respecting certain individual rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I am sure that my colleague from Hull—Aylmer is able to recognize that the Conservatives are being blithely demagogic. And I am sure that when my colleague from Hull—Aylmer comments, he will say that although the Bloc Québécois agrees with the principle, it is against this double intrusion and cannot support the bill for that reason.

Municipalities and cities are under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. What is more, social policy, which covers services provided directly to seniors, is under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Under no circumstances does the federal government have the right to interfere in those areas of jurisdiction and impose conditions on fund allocation and the Government of Quebec's right to set its own priorities. We have always opposed that.

The Bloc Québécois agrees that the federal government should transfer funds, as long as they are provided to the Quebec government without any conditions because only the Government of Quebec knows and understands Quebeckers' priorities.



*Private Members' Business*

•(1805)

The federal government should not be barging in or imposing its Canada-wide or coast-to-coast-to-coast standards. That is something new; they added another “coast”. Here in Ottawa they realized that Nunavut—formerly known as the Northwest Territories—borders on the Arctic Ocean. That is why our anglophone colleagues so often use the phrase “coast to coast to coast”.

The Bloc Québécois does not think that the federal government should impose conditions because that money belongs to Quebecers. My colleagues surely know that Quebecers pay about \$57 billion in taxes to Ottawa every year. I hope that no one here in the House or watching at home thinks that the federal government is doing us a favour when it invests money in Quebec. It is not a favour since it is our money.

Until we hear otherwise, and until we are a sovereign people, Quebecers will continue to pay taxes to Ottawa. When the federal government invests money in Quebec, it is simply returning a portion of the taxes we have paid. That is why the Bloc Québécois thinks that the federal government cannot impose conditions. Imposing conditions means that the government will transfer the money on the condition that Quebec respect Canada-wide principles. That is why the Bloc Québécois cannot support the bill introduced by the member for Hull—Aylmer. Quebec is the only authority that can determine which priority projects would be most beneficial for Quebecers.

The Bloc Québécois continues to denounce the practice of imposing conditions on federal transfers to Quebec. That said, if the federal government truly wants to help our poorest seniors, the Bloc Québécois thinks that there are other possibilities within its own areas of jurisdiction.

People of my generation are doing as well as they are today because our seniors worked hard and suffered through poverty. They raised large families on modest incomes, and the men worked hard outside the home. That was the way of life in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s in Quebec. The men worked outside the home and the women worked inside the home. The couple worked together. Members may recall a monologue by Yvon Deschamps, in which he said that his mother did not have a job because she had too much work to do. We know that women worked very hard.

The Bloc Québécois suggested two measures. First of all, a tax credit for public transit users, which it had been calling for since 2001 and obtained in 2006. The government will go ahead with this measure. Also, if the federal government really wants to help seniors, especially those most vulnerable, those who receive the guaranteed income supplement, it must increase the GIS. The Bloc Québécois is calling for a monthly increase of \$110. It must increase GIS benefits. Seniors who receive the guaranteed income supplement are those most vulnerable, those who must ask themselves if they should buy their medication or bread and butter to feed themselves.

•(1810)

That is the kind of dilemma facing our seniors. Yes, some seniors are living very comfortably. Some seniors are getting along just fine.

However, by far, most seniors in Quebec are living below the poverty line.

In closing, I want to make sure that our position is clear: we are not against seniors. On the contrary, we fully support seniors.

[*English*]

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Madam Speaker, after working for more than 40 years, Canadians who are older require a break.

Some seniors, as they age, can no longer drive, so they are totally dependent upon public transit. But since the federal government has not substantially increased old age security or the guaranteed income supplement, tens of thousands of Canadian seniors are living in poverty. Some of them even have to rely on food banks. That means they have to make a decision every day. Can they actually go to the library or to the community centre or visit their grandchildren, or are they going to have trouble paying rent because they are taking steps to leave their homes and take public transit?

Isolation is a very difficult situation and seniors should not be subjected to having to make that kind of choice, to remain in isolation and stay home because they cannot afford public transit or to skip some meals or find some ways to turn down the heat because they cannot afford the heating bill. That is just not fair for the seniors who have served this country for such a long time and served us well.

That is why New Democrats would support Bill C-449, which would allow the minister to set up a trust fund for other levels of government so that seniors can take public transit free of charge during off-peak hours.

New Democrats believe that the federal government should fund the operation of public transit so that all Canadians will have access to better service at lower cost. Canada is the only G8 country that does not have the operating costs of public transit shared by the federal government. That is why we have negative consequences on the environment and on our pocketbooks. Canada needs a national transit strategy. We know that public transit is the backbone of our urban economies and the lack of proper funding for transit is costing our cities billions of dollars in lost productivity.

A recent OECD study found that traffic congestion costs the Toronto region \$3.3 billion per year in lost productivity. A recent issue paper by the Canadian Urban Transit Association on the economic benefits of public transit shows that the economic benefit of Canada's existing transit system is at least \$10 billion annually.

The transit industry directly employs 45,000 Canadians and indirectly creates 24,000 jobs. Transit reduces vehicle operating costs for Canadian households by \$5 billion a year. We know also that transit reduces the economic costs of traffic collisions by almost \$2.5 billion a year. Transit reduces annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2.4 million tonnes, valued at \$110 million. Transit also saves about \$115 million in annual health care costs related to respiratory illness.

*Private Members' Business*

Investing in public transit, whether it is to have lower-cost senior passes, which some municipalities already have, or to allow seniors or unemployed people to take public transit at a much lower cost during off-peak periods, is good for our pocketbooks, good for the environment, and good for the economy.

For the Conservatives to say that investing in public transit will somehow bankrupt Canada is absurd. It is totally absurd.

We know that public transit is not only good for our pocketbooks, but it also helps improve quality of life by contributing to giving travellers a choice, keeping downtowns healthy, containing urban sprawl, improving air quality and our health, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, bringing opportunity to disadvantaged persons and improving business access to the labour force.

● (1815)

In short, public transit is good for our economy, good for our environment, and good for our cities. That is why we need a national transit strategy. We need to make a serious investment in public transit across this country.

CUTA further said that \$53.5 billion is required over four years in order to keep our public transit system in good repair.

Canada also needs \$40.5 billion in public transit capital expansion so that seniors can actually get on public transit. Of that, \$17 billion needs to come from external funding. That is why the federal government needs to commit dedicated funding to our cities so they can operate and expand public transit, whether it is for seniors, low-income people, or ordinary Canadians.

We need to transfer an extra 1¢ of the existing gas tax to municipalities to fund public transit. This would generate half a billion dollars in new transit funding. Maybe a portion of that could help seniors to travel on public transit at a lower cost. A portion of the existing gas tax should be transferred to cities and municipalities, and this should be based on transit ridership, not per capita.

We also need to introduce a cap and trade plan that would limit greenhouse gas emissions and make polluters pay. After the polluters pay their share, a portion of this revenue could be used for public transit. Those funds would come directly from polluters and go toward public transit. That would result in much cleaner air in big urban centres and small municipalities. It would also allow smaller transit authorities to buy extra buses and offer their services at a lower cost during off-peak periods.

That is why we must have a national transit strategy with a strict made in Canada policy requiring trains and buses to be built in Canada. That would revitalize our manufacturing sector, create well-paying green jobs, and make Canada a world leader in the green energy economy. At the same time, since we would have more buses, street cars, and subways, seniors would be able to pay less for public transit during off-peak periods.

That would give seniors the mobility they desire. It would not force them to make the terrible choice between paying rent and paying for heat or food, or being locked up in their homes because they cannot afford public transit to take them to the local library, to visit their friends, to visit community centres, or to take part in physical exercise. This is important for our seniors.

The more seniors are able to connect with their communities, the healthier they are. Seniors have time to volunteer. They have a lot to contribute. Our communities will lose if a senior cannot afford to take a bus to volunteer at a local community centre, a local school, or a child care centre. Our young people will lose because they will not experience the joy that seniors bring when they are included in the life of a community. Thousands of volunteer hours would be lost, because seniors have a lot to contribute. Strong neighbourhoods cannot be built if seniors cannot afford to get to the places where they volunteer.

That is why New Democrats support Bill C-449, which would allow the minister to set up a trust fund so seniors can take public transit free of charge.

● (1820)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to lend my support to Bill C-449, An Act regarding free public transit for seniors.

The bill has been put on the table by my colleague, the member for Hull—Aylmer. I want to extend my congratulations to him. I know he cares very much about this issue. In particular, he is constantly raising issues involving seniors, and I appreciate his commitment to this.

As all members will know, any serious private member's bill demands a tremendous amount of time, research and energy on behalf of the sponsor as well as the staff and the House to prepare that bill.

Bill C-449 seeks to fill an important niche and is clearly no exception to this rule.

Before I continue, I should clarify why I believe seniors issues are, in general terms, so important to the future of the country and its long term prosperity.

Statistics Canada estimates that Canada's population over the age of 65 could reach an unprecedented 10.9 million by 2036. With this, as the Canadian population continues to age, new financial and logistical challenges will emerge for them as well as for our country. That is only 26 years away. If we fail to address these future realities today, we are only setting ourselves up for a crisis in the future, a crisis that is easily avoidable.

Bill C-449 is an out of the box way of starting to address these many factors one step at a time. Put another way, with this change, this proposal is what I would call enabling legislation. It could kick off the debate and give the Crown new and innovative options to really address issues such as transportation costs, isolation, public transportation and seniors quality of life.

The issues around quality of life for seniors is something about which all of us in the House care very much. We want people to look forward to retirement as a time of enjoyment for them. Things like free transit would offer opportunities for seniors to get out in those hours between, let us say, 11 o'clock and two o'clock, whatever the slowest period of time would be. Buses are going down those streets empty. Why not allow seniors to go on the bus at that time, or whatever mode of transit is in their communities? This would provide them the opportunity to be out mixing and socializing with other people.

Canadians are also known globally as a compassionate and caring people. Despite this, though, the reality is there still remains poverty in a country as rich as ours, particularly in the population over the age of 65.

We already know that poverty is a major problem for many seniors. We know that over 200,000 seniors still live well below any respectable poverty line, something that most Canadians find to be utterly unacceptable. I think all of us in the House continue to work toward reducing that so no senior lives below the poverty line. As a goal, I expect that many of us, certainly as Liberals, want to see that issue eliminated, so we could have a level of income that all people would receive.

By addressing transportation costs and public availability, we will have taken a small step down a very important road toward improving the lives and overall health of seniors. It seems so simple and, in many respects, it can be simple.

It is also worth mentioning that Statistics Canada data shows that seniors with access to regular and reliable transportation tend to get involved with charitable and community causes at a far greater rate than do their counterparts without that access. Again, we are talking about access to many avenues, access to wellness programs, access to community centres, where seniors can go and spend an afternoon with their friends playing cards, or bingo or whatever. It gets them out. It helps them to avoid depression. It improves their health immensely.

This means that in addition to fighting seniors isolation, increasing access to reliable transportation would have a very positive impact on a community. Service groups need volunteers and volunteers are the lifeblood of most of our communities. If we can do it, why would we not help seniors who help us?

●(1825)

In the same line of thinking, we also know that reduced mobility in seniors is generally linked to a lower household income. Again, I have great concerns with the notion that poverty continues to be a major factor in seniors' health.

My colleague who spoke earlier raised the issue of poverty among seniors and so on umpteen times in her comments. If I were to buy in to everything that my colleague said earlier, I would believe that we have an enormous amount of poverty in our country. We do not have an enormous amount of poverty but more than is acceptable. Those are the kinds of things that we need to be changing. Initiatives like this are the kinds of things that would help people who are living below an achievable amount.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

I am greatly concerned by the notion that poverty is a major factor, as I said earlier. We need to start looking at the issues holistically if we are ever going to resolve them. Bill C-449 may seem minor, but it is only the tip of the iceberg.

Also, given that the passage of Bill C-449 would prompt the minister to start addressing the serious problem of transportation deficiencies, we may also start making inroads on other related matters. For example, because of health or mobility limitations, many seniors are forced into a life of isolation. Studies show that loneliness, deterioration of mental and physical health, and the general worsening of one's quality of life, are all byproducts of isolation provoked by factors such as transportation deficiency for seniors.

As I have already said, Bill C-449 does not outright devise a solution, but clearly thrusts the issue onto the national table for debate. As my party's critic for seniors and pensions, I am certainly supportive of having this debate sooner rather than later.

I would also be remiss if I failed to address the financial consideration of the legislation. As I have already said, Bill C-449 would require an expenditure of public resources but it would only underscore a public policy shortcoming and encourage a resolution to the same.

I believe one of the strengths associated with Bill C-449 is the fact that it would permit the minister to establish a phased-in, multi-faceted approach to this very real problem. It would permit the need for a responsible fiscal framework to be a guiding factor in the government's response, but it would require a response.

For the past several years, the government has opted to ignore these problems, but that is unacceptable and must stop. Bill C-449 is key to this.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** 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.

●(1830)

[*Translation*]

COPYRIGHT

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, on June 10, I asked the Minister of Canadian Heritage a question about a press release from Mario Chenart, the head of the Société professionnelle des auteurs et compositeurs du Québec or SPACQ. In the newspapers that morning, Mr. Chenart wondered whether the heritage minister even cared. But rather than interpret his words, I will read his press release and we will see what he had to say. I would ask the parliamentary secretary, who is here, to give a detailed answer.

Mario Chenart wrote:

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Yesterday, the Conservative government introduced a bill in the House to amend the Copyright Act. The SPACQ was quick to read the bill in the hopes that it would reflect what creators had been calling for. But we were bitterly disappointed.

In fact, this new bill, which the government describes as “fair, balanced and full of common sense”, is so bad for authors, composers and performers that we have to wonder where is the wonderful balance between consumers' needs and creators' rights that the government boasts it is maintaining.

First, the government is again refusing to extend the private copying levy to digital platforms. By limiting it to cassettes and CDs, the Conservative government is depriving authors and composers of this major source of revenue. When was the last time you copied music onto a cassette? To ask the question is to answer it. In the age of the iPod, most music is copied onto these sorts of platforms, which remain excluded from the system. For years, artists' groups have consistently called for a revamping of the private copying levy, but the current government's so-called balanced approach ignores this.

Second, likely in response to American demands, the government is making piracy illegal. This is something the SPACQ can only agree with. The problem is that the tools the legislation gives to copyright owners are insufficient and obsolete. The bill in no way addresses the monetization problems caused by the fact that consumers download 95% of content illegally from the web. Legislators continue to place the burden of taking legal action on copyright owners. As for service providers, their responsibility is limited to providing the copyright owner with the information needed to identify the offender.

Meanwhile, Internet service providers continue to profit from the use of their bandwidth with this loss leader. Knowing that the vast majority of the flow of funds generated by music downloads on the Internet benefits service providers, we have every right to question their technological and financial responsibility towards copyright holders. The Conservative government prefers to ignore these considerations, absolve them of their responsibility and take them out of the equation altogether.

So the question is this: what balance are they talking about? Do we have a heritage minister prepared to act as a counterbalance to the interests of industry and watch over our so-called heritage?

While the government can claim that its bill is the fruit of extensive, Canada-wide consultation...it is somehow difficult to have faith in any process to review the Copyright Act that does not invite artists to the table—neither the SPACQ nor the UDA [the Union des artistes du Québec] was invited to the discussion table. There is no question that Bill C-32 is an exact replica of its predecessor, Bill C-61, which died on the order paper right before the election. And this has all been spearheaded by a heritage minister working in tandem with an industry minister who will not guarantee that all of the music on his portable MP3 player was obtained in compliance with all copyright laws. But thanks anyway for the consultation.

The stakes remain high and, over the next few months, the SPACQ will continue to make representations to remind our elected officials of their responsibilities regarding the heritage of Canadian artists.

That was from an SPACQ press release.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will do my best to provide an answer for that statement as factually as I can.

To begin with, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages is not in the House. That is the first answer I would provide, but the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages is most certainly on board with updating the Copyright Act.

Bill C-32 is an outstanding bill. While it may need some technical amendments, upon which we have consulted with some groups, let us face it. We have the basic tenets of the bill right.

What is so important to the constituent who has just been cited by the hon. member is that we will actually put a system in place again whereby a creator who creates a piece of music, video or intellectual

property can sell it, rather than have it stolen or compromised over the Internet.

It was mentioned to me the other day that Canada is the number one location in the world for Bit Torrent sites. Why is this happening? It is happening because we need to update the Copyright Act. Unless members like this get on board, frankly, we will have a difficult time doing that. The hon. member would prefer to favour a system whereby we would put a tax on devices, an iPod tax, a digital tax or something like that, rather than actually tackle the problem. The problem is that the Copyright Act is out of date.

Furthermore, in the statement it was indicated that Bill C-32 is just Bill C-61. Actually, I worked on Bill C-32 and there are a lot of differences between Bill C-32 and Bill C-61. I thought Bill C-61 was a good bill, but Bill C-32 is a much better bill and corrects some of the shortfalls in Bill C-61.

I can also say to the hon. member that we have been told by groups from across the country that this bill does strike the appropriate balance. In fact, I would argue that she should actually speak to her constituents and indicate to them what she is lobbying for, and in fact she has asked the same question many times. What they are actually looking for she refers to as a levy, but my constituents will not see it as a levy. It will be as much as \$28 per device, which is what ACTRA has indicated to me when they met with me the other day. It would be added on to digital devices. That is what they would request at the copyright collective. On top of that \$28, which would be arbitrarily added to the price of every single digital device, we would then also pay sales taxes in the various jurisdictions, so it becomes even more.

People at home are asking why we are taxing technology. Why would we want to put a tax on technology? They want us to just make the system work. If people want music, they will buy it.

What we want to do is shut down the sites that are allowing people to obtain these works illegally, music, movies or whatever. We want to shut down illegal file-sharing.

At the same time, we will allow for format-shifting, so if people buy CDs and want to format-shift them on to their digital device, their BlackBerry, their iPod, their laptop, their home computer or whatever the case may be, we will allow that. Bill C-32 is entirely technologically neutral. It allows for a review every five years, and it is in the interest of all Canadians. An iPod tax is not in the interest of all Canadians.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée:** Madam Speaker, the problem with Bill C-32 is that it takes away a great deal of revenue that artists were already receiving, from private copying for example, without replacing that revenue with something else, quite the contrary.

Again, the parliamentary secretary keeps saying that it was a tax on iPods. It is not a tax; it is a royalty. A tax goes into the pockets of the government, while a royalty goes to an artists' collective that distributes the money according to a complex but fair formula.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

To answer the assertion that consumers are not interested in this, I would like to remind the parliamentary secretary that a Conservative Party pollster, Dimitri Pantazopoulos, conducted a survey in January 2010. He found that 71% of Canadians think that the current royalty of 29¢ on blank CDs is fair to consumers. These same Canadians are also prepared to pay royalties that could run between \$20 and \$30 on MP3 players and iPods, the type of devices that could hold 7,500 songs or 500 CDs. And 58% would pay up to \$20, 59% would pay \$25, and 56% would pay \$30. Consumers—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Madam Speaker, our party has been very clear. We are not going to support an iPod tax.

In fact, the member well knows that when the Canadian Recording Industry Association came before committee, it indicated to her, “You want to give us scraps. What we want is a market”.

That is what Bill C-32 would provide. It would provide the opportunity to re-establish a marketplace where people buy music, and it would absolutely shut down illegal file sharing in this country. That is what we need to do. We need that member on board.

\* \* \*

● (1840)

[*Translation*]

#### **MONT TREMBLANT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on September 23, I asked the Minister of Public Safety to respect the unanimous will of the House of Commons and act on a motion moved by the Bloc Québécois in June 2008, recognizing the Mont Tremblant International Airport of La Macaza as an airport of entry into the country without customs charges, as is the case with the airports in Montreal and Quebec City. This recognition is vital to the expansion of the airport and the region.

The government continues to insist on maintaining the customs charges on flights outside the winter season.

I would like to remind the Minister of Public Safety that following the unanimous adoption of this motion, his colleague, the Minister of State for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, went to this airport in July 2009, or a year after the motion was adopted, to announce a subsidy of \$2.7 million from the Economic Development Agency of Canada for airport infrastructure improvements.

During that announcement, the minister said, “The Mont-Tremblant airport is an important gateway to the Hautes-Laurentides and its infrastructure is in need of improvement in order to further the region's tourism development and economic diversification”.

Since that time, a number of improvements have been made and others are under way to increase the airport's capacity to 5,000 flights per year and the number of potential passengers to nearly 25,000. This would foster year-round destination tourism.

If the government wishes to be consistent, it cannot give with one hand and take away with the other. The Minister of Public Safety

must eliminate the customs charges at this airport during the other nine months of the year. Does the minister realize that by maintaining the customs charges for the rest of the year he is putting a damper on potential agreements with international carriers for peak tourism periods during the summer and fall seasons?

This airport is entitled to get what it needs to be more competitive all year round. The tourism industry operates year-round in the Laurentians, not just in the winter.

In closing, following the unanimous adoption of the motion by the House in June 2008, the Conservative government recognized that the Mont Tremblant International Airport of La Macaza is an international airport.

In a press release issued by his department in June 2008, which stated that his government had signed an agreement with this airport concerning the provision of border clearance services, the minister said, “Providing border clearance services to the Rivière Rouge/Mont Tremblant International airport will allow the airport to be more competitive by attracting more international flights.” He added, “Publicly funding border services to this airport recognizes the value of the tourism industry in this region.” That is the Haute-Laurentides or Upper Laurentians region.

In view of the minister's statements, I would like to know why the Minister of Public Safety is not providing border clearance services on a year-round basis at this airport that operates 365 days a year?

Does he realize that he is hurting the region's tourism industry and its economic prosperity by failing to do so?

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the question put to the House by the hon. member regarding the Mont Tremblant International Airport.

Canadians expect their government to provide exemplary border services in a manner that protects security and facilitates trade while respecting the sound management of their tax dollars.

Among the CBSA challenges is how it can fairly and transparently respond to requests for revised levels of border clearance services while at the same time balancing the requirements to protect national security and facilitate the free flow of legitimate travellers and trade. The CBSA is providing such services at ports of entry across Canada, including the Mont Tremblant International Airport.

In June 2008, the Government of Canada entered into an agreement with the Rivière-Rouge/Mont-Tremblant International Airport. The agreement included core service for passengers during the airport's peak period of December to March. For the balance of the year, due to low volumes, the agency included in the agreement a service delivery provision under cost recovery.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

With the aim to address service delivery challenges, the CBSA embarked on a core services review of its passenger clearance services. The result of which was the implementation of the air services policy framework on April 1, 2009, which fulfilled the agency's commitment to provide fair, transparent and flexible service delivery for air travel.

The framework sets the four tiers of categories of airports based on international passenger volume, flight frequency of regularly scheduled flights and the distance from the airport to the nearest CBSA location. All criteria must be met before an airport authority or municipality is eligible for new or expanded CBSA services.

The Canada Border Services Agency then reviews the requests for new or increased core services and seeks funding mechanisms in order to move forward.

Implementing core services are always dependent on whether or not the CBSA has sufficient funding.

It should be noted that under this framework, the Mont-Tremblant International Airport would not qualify for any core services given its current volumes.

However, the agreement with the Mont-Tremblant International Airport is an example of the agency working with local authorities to develop a responsible and cost-effective solution to border clearances at one of Canada's smaller airports. It is an agreement that recognizes the value of the airport to the local economy while respecting the realities of the fiscal environment.

Responsible spending and sound management of tax dollars are important at all times. During difficult economic times, Canadians expect the government to be even more vigilant to ensure every dollar is producing results.

Each day, the Canada Border Services Agency responds to the demand for border services for a rigorous travel industry in a tightening economy.

In this respect, the CBSA will continue to work closely with stakeholders to find collaborative, fair and transparent and realistic solutions regarding border services. This is simply good management to ensure value for money for Canadians.

This is how the Government of Canada is doing business: providing vital services while respecting the taxpayer.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Madam Speaker, I would like to clarify what my colleague said about sound management of tax dollars.

I would like to remind him that his government gave \$2.7 million in subsidies to help develop this airport. It must be consistent, given that the airlines that bring foreign tourists in the winter are also interested in having the same service in tourist season, in the summer and fall. There is currently a hold on new contracts with these airlines. The fact that customs charges are collected in the summer and fall means that the airport is not competitive in terms of the services it could offer to airlines.

The government has invested \$2.7 million to improve infrastructure. If it is a good manager, it will ensure that the airport has every advantage.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:** Madam Speaker, the Canada Border Services Agency provides service at approximately 1,200 locations across Canada. It engages stakeholders on an ongoing basis to ensure it is best positioned to support national security priorities and facilitate the free flow of people and goods.

Amidst a challenging border risk environment and an economic recovery that depends on timely cross-border commerce, the CBSA's success depends on the excellence with which it delivers border services and achieves priority results within resource allocations.

The CBSA is committed to excellence in the delivery of border services, as well as to provide services in a way that respect the taxpayer.

The CBSA recognizes the importance of its services to the promotion of trade, tourism and regional economic development and has created a level playing field with industry by implementing the air services policy framework on April 1, 2009, which fulfilled the agency's commitment to determine eligibility for core services in a fair and transparent manner for air travel.

The agreement with the Mont-Tremblant International Airport delivers on this commitment by ensuring effective and fair service delivery that responds to local needs while protecting security and facilitating trade.

• (1850)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie):** A motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:49 p.m.)







# CONTENTS

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS</b>			
		Mr. Toews .....	6059
<b>Direct Selling Industry</b>		<b>Afghanistan</b>	
Mr. Preston .....	6055	Mr. Duceppe .....	6059
<b>Youth Homelessness</b>		Mr. Harper .....	6059
Ms. Bennett .....	6055	Mr. Duceppe .....	6059
<b>Order of Saint-Eustache</b>		Mr. Harper .....	6059
Mr. Desnoyers .....	6055	Ms. Deschamps .....	6060
<b>Infrastructure Funding</b>		Ms. Oda .....	6060
Mr. Bevington .....	6055	Ms. Deschamps .....	6060
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>		Ms. Oda .....	6060
Mr. Obhrai .....	6056	Mr. Layton .....	6060
<b>Holy Angels High School</b>		Mr. Harper .....	6060
Mr. Eyking .....	6056	<b>The Environment</b>	
<b>International Trade</b>		Mr. Layton .....	6060
Mrs. Grewal .....	6056	Mr. Harper .....	6060
<b>Yves Lamontagne</b>		<b>Government Spending</b>	
Mr. Malo .....	6056	Mrs. Mendes .....	6061
<b>National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims</b>		Mr. Lebel .....	6061
Mr. Jean .....	6057	Mrs. Mendes .....	6061
<b>Eid al-Adha</b>		Mr. Day .....	6061
Ms. Ratansi .....	6057	Ms. Coady .....	6061
<b>Effects of Drug Use</b>		Mr. Day .....	6061
Mr. Keddy .....	6057	Ms. Coady .....	6061
<b>Shannen's Dream</b>		Mr. Day .....	6061
Ms. Ashton .....	6057	<b>The Environment</b>	
<b>Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada</b>		Mr. Bigras .....	6061
Mr. Bezan .....	6057	Mr. Warawa .....	6062
<b>Government Decisions</b>		Mr. Bigras .....	6062
Mrs. Beaudin .....	6058	Mr. Warawa .....	6062
<b>Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada</b>		<b>Securities Industry</b>	
Ms. Neville .....	6058	Mr. Paillé (Hochelaga) .....	6062
<b>Bill C-343</b>		Mr. Flaherty .....	6062
Mr. Vellacott .....	6058	Mr. Paillé (Hochelaga) .....	6062
		Mr. Flaherty .....	6062
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b>		<b>The Environment</b>	
<b>National Defence</b>		Mr. Kennedy .....	6062
Mr. Ignatieff .....	6058	Mr. Warawa .....	6062
Mr. Harper .....	6058	Mr. Kennedy .....	6062
Mr. Ignatieff .....	6058	Mr. Warawa .....	6062
Mr. Harper .....	6059	Mr. Scarpaleggia .....	6063
Mr. Ignatieff .....	6059	Mr. Warawa .....	6063
Mr. Harper .....	6059	Mr. Scarpaleggia .....	6063
<b>G8 and G20 Summits</b>		Mr. Warawa .....	6063
Mr. Regan .....	6059	<b>Member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin</b>	
Mr. McKay .....	6059	Mr. Blaney .....	6063
Mr. Regan .....	6059	<b>Afghanistan</b>	
		Mr. Harris (St. John's East) .....	6063
		Mr. MacKay .....	6063

Mr. Dewar .....	6063	<b>National Brain Health Education and Awareness Month Act</b>	
Ms. Oda .....	6064	Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North) .....	6067
<b>Families of Victims of Crime</b>		Bill C-595. Introduction and first reading .....	6067
Ms. Bonsant .....	6064	(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	6067
Ms. Finley .....	6064	<b>Petitions</b>	
Mrs. Mourani .....	6064	<b>Passport Fees</b>	
Mr. Nicholson .....	6064	Mr. Maloway .....	6067
<b>Infrastructure</b>		<b>Employment Insurance</b>	
Mr. McCallum .....	6064	Mr. Simms .....	6068
Mr. Strahl .....	6064	<b>Canada Post Corporation</b>	
Mr. McCallum .....	6064	Mr. Bernier .....	6068
Mr. Strahl .....	6064	<b>Use of Wood in Federal Buildings</b>	
<b>Mining Industry</b>		Mr. Asselin .....	6068
Ms. Ashton .....	6064	<b>Canada Pension Plan</b>	
Mr. Clement .....	6065	Ms. Charlton .....	6068
Ms. Ashton .....	6065	<b>Protection of Children</b>	
Mr. Clement .....	6065	Mr. Patry .....	6068
<b>Employment Insurance</b>		<b>Canada-U.S. Border Crossing</b>	
Ms. Cadman .....	6065	Mr. Komarnicki .....	6069
Ms. Finley .....	6065	<b>Housing</b>	
<b>Agriculture and Agri-Food</b>		Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) .....	6069
Mr. Easter .....	6065	<b>G20 Summit</b>	
Mr. Ritz .....	6065	Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) .....	6069
<b>Public Works and Government Services</b>		<b>Middle East</b>	
Ms. Faille .....	6065	Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) .....	6069
Ms. Ambrose .....	6066	<b>Public Transit Safety</b>	
<b>Expo 2017</b>		Mr. Kennedy .....	6069
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) .....	6066	<b>Food Security and Sovereignty</b>	
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) .....	6066	Mr. Kennedy .....	6069
<b>Democratic Reform</b>		<b>Canada Post</b>	
Mrs. Gallant .....	6066	Mr. Kennedy .....	6069
Mr. Fletcher .....	6066	<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
<b>Agriculture and Agri-Food</b>		Mr. Lukiwski .....	6069
Mr. Easter .....	6066	<b>Questions Passed as Orders for Returns</b>	
Mr. Ritz .....	6066	Mr. Lukiwski .....	6070
<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		<b>Motions for Papers</b>	
<b>Foreign Affairs</b>		Mr. Lukiwski .....	6071
Mr. Cannon .....	6066	<b>Request for Emergency Debate</b>	
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>		<b>Rejection of Bill C-311 by the Other Place</b>	
Mr. Lukiwski .....	6067	Mr. Hyer .....	6071
<b>Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act</b>		<b>Points of Order</b>	
Mr. Blackburn .....	6067	<b>Royal Recommendation—Bill C-449</b>	
Bill C-55. Introduction and first reading .....	6067	Mr. Lukiwski .....	6072
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	6067	<b>GOVERNMENT ORDERS</b>	
<b>Interparliamentary Delegations</b>		<b>Constitution Act, 2010 (Senate term limits)</b>	
Mr. Bélanger .....	6067	Bill C-10. Second reading .....	6072
Ms. Ratansi .....	6067	Mr. Cardin .....	6072
<b>Committees of the House</b>		Mr. Fletcher .....	6073
<b>Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities</b>		Mr. Cullen .....	6073
Ms. Hoepfner .....	6067	Mrs. Hughes .....	6074
		Ms. Foote .....	6074
		Mr. Fletcher .....	6077

Mr. Marston .....	6077
Mr. Savage .....	6077
Mr. Fletcher .....	6078
Mr. Cullen .....	6078
Amendment .....	6081
Mr. Fletcher .....	6081
Mr. Bevington .....	6082
Mr. Maloway .....	6082
Mr. Savage .....	6082
Mr. Fletcher .....	6084
Mr. Christopherson .....	6084
Mrs. Lavallée .....	6084
Mr. Fletcher .....	6086
Mr. Marston .....	6086
Mr. Lessard .....	6086
Mr. Fletcher .....	6087
Mr. Christopherson .....	6087

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Free Public Transit for Seniors Act**

Mr. Proulx .....	6088
Bill C-449. Second reading .....	6088
Mrs. McLeod .....	6090
Ms. Chow .....	6090
Mr. Menzies .....	6091
Mr. Guimond (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord) .....	6092
Ms. Chow .....	6093
Ms. Sgro .....	6094

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

**Copyright**

Mr. Lavallée .....	6095
Mr. Del Mastro .....	6096

**Mont Tremblant International Airport**

Ms. Deschamps .....	6097
Mr. MacKenzie .....	6097

**MAIL  POSTE**

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

**Lettermail**

**Poste-lettre**

**1782711  
Ottawa**

*If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:*  
Publishing and Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,  
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*  
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

### **SPEAKER'S PERMISSION**

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and  
Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5  
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943  
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757  
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca  
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the  
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

### **PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT**

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les  
Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5  
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943  
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757  
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca  
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à  
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>