



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, October 6, 2011

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 6, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Prayers

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ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*English*]

CHINESE CANADIAN HISTORY

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a brief chronology of 160 years of the Chinese Canadian history from segregation to integration.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMPROVING TRADE WITHIN CANADA ACT

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act and the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act.

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

* * *

[*English*]

INCO LIMITED ACQUISITION ACT

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-328, An Act respecting the acquisition of Inco Limited by CVRD Canada Inc.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a private member's bill entitled, "An Act respecting the acquisition of Inco Limited by CVRD Canada Inc.

Vale, formerly CVRD, acquired Canada-owned mining company Inco in October 2006. I have made requests of the Minister of Industry, Vale Inco, the House of Commons and through the Access to Information Act to have the details of the agreement made public and have been repeatedly denied.

I, therefore, present this legislation which would release the details of the Vale Inco agreement, along with any correspondence between the minister and the company and its enforcement.

FALCONBRIDGE LIMITED ACQUISITION ACT

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-329, An Act respecting the acquisition of Falconbridge Limited by Xstrata PLC.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce a private member's bill respecting the acquisition of Falconbridge Limited by Xstrata PLC.

Xstrata acquired Canadian mining company Falconbridge in July 2006. In the House of Commons, I asked the Minister of Industry to make the agreements in question public and I also asked the government under the Access to Information Act, but have, so far, received no response.

I am, therefore, introducing this bill which would require the Government of Canada to publish all written undertakings given in the right of Canada under the Investment Canada Act in respect to the acquisition of Falconbridge. The bill also would require the publication of all correspondence exchanged between the minister and the company about enforcement of this agreement.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf over 1,000 Nova Scotians who are concerned about the situation of Mr. Philip Halliday, a Canadian citizen who has been incarcerated in a Spanish prison since December 21, 2009, over 18 months, without a trial date set.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to defend the rights of Philip Mason Halliday and take action to intervene on his behalf with the Spanish authorities. They call upon the Government of Canada to use diplomatic channels to ensure Mr. Halliday receives a fair and speedy trial or immediate release based upon the length of his detention with no trial date and his continued deteriorating health issues.

Government Orders

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to stand today to present a petition signed by thousands of Canadians from all across the country who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known. They point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other occupational and industrial causes combined and yet Canada remains one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world, spending millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry and blocking international efforts to curb its use.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all of its forms and institute a just transition program for the asbestos workers and the communities in which they live, to end all government subsidies of asbestos both in Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

* * *

●(1010)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

BILL C-13—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

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

That, in relation to Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, not more than three further sitting days shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the bill; and

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

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1 there will now be a 30 minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to stand in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

Given the number of people interested, I would encourage members to limit their questions to perhaps about a minute or minute and a half and, as in previous incidents of this, the Chair will give priority to members of the opposition during the question and comment period.

I recognize the hon. member for Outremont.

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a French philosopher once said that while once is philosophy, twice is perversion. That is what we have here today with the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who is demonstrating the majority Conservative government's utter contempt for Parliament and our democratic institutions.

We know that 39% of the Canadians who voted in the last election chose the Conservatives. That was 39% of 60% of the eligible voters, because 40% of the voters stayed home. This means that they were elected by less than 25% of eligible Canadians. We have very clear rules, and that is one reason why, since its creation, Canada has always enjoyed peace, order and good government. We must all defend our democratic institutions.

But instead of defending our democratic institutions, the government is ignoring them and treating them with contempt. It is telling us that since we made the mistake of giving them a majority, it will now do whatever it wants, gagging us and bringing out the guillotine every time we start to debate a bill. According to the Conservatives, no one has the right to question their priorities or to ask any questions about their bills.

Madam Speaker, you are here to enforce the regulations that we have set for ourselves, and I urge you to take note of the Conservative government's latest affront to Canadian democracy and to defend the rights of parliamentarians to deliberately, carefully and meticulously debate bills. That is why we were elected. This shows contempt not only for Parliament, but also for the voters of the Canadian electorate.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, I do not think, in my lifetime, that there has been a budget that has received as much debate as this one. The budget was introduced in the previous Parliament and it was rejected by the opposition. We had an election and the main platform on which we ran was essentially the budget. After we won a majority government, confidence from Canadian voters, that budget was reintroduced in virtually the identical form and that budget was adopted by this House and is now being implemented through this budget implementation bill.

The amount of debate that has happened and the consultation with the public is unprecedented for this type of a bill. On top of that, we are proposing for this debate an entire four days of debate, which is more time than has typically happened, on average, for any budget implementation bill in the past 20 years. For all the budget implementation bills the average is certainly less than four days.

Therefore, we have ample opportunity to debate in this House following an unprecedented amount of public debate on this matter.

Government Orders

•(1015)

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that we are beginning to see a trend here with government bills with the new majority government. Unfortunately, it will stifle the proper debates that need to happen.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that one of the big shortcomings in this budget implementation plan, Bill C-13, is the fact that, once again, the government is discriminating against those who are poor, those who have less than the average Canadian. I will give an example. It has to do with the fact that some of the tax measures that the government talks about are non-refundable. This is something that perhaps escapes many Canadians but, unfortunately, it has a very real effect on those who are poor in this country.

I will talk about the example of the volunteer firemen who will have the opportunity to have a non-refundable tax credit. We, in the Liberal Party, gave a refundable tax credit. However, the reality is that if they are well off as volunteer firemen, they will be able to take full advantage of that tax credit against their imposable tax. If they are not, they will not have that opportunity to take advantage of it. That means again that it is the poor in this country who will be discriminated again, and we need to talk about that.

Hon. Peter Van Loan: Madam Speaker, this is an important bill to proceed with quickly because it has important measures that would address what I think, and certainly what this government thinks, is the biggest challenge, but apparently not the opposition, and that is jobs and economic growth. We have that in this bill with a proposal for a hiring tax credit for the creation of new jobs by small businesses in Canada. It is very important for job creation. We need that measure in place now.

The opposition members asked for a jobs plan and we have it for them. First, they voted against it the other night and now they want to delay and obstruct it further. That is why we want to move forward with it quickly.

We also want to move forward with additional measures, such as our accelerated capital cost allowance so that businesses can continue to invest and improve productivity to ensure that Canadians stay at the cutting edge of being able to produce and grow to innovate and so that businesses would have the capacity to hire and create jobs and compete successfully.

We are in a context of a global economic downturn and being able to compete successfully globally is critically important for creating jobs here in Canada. That is what a measure like that would do and that is why we want to see that measure put in place without delay.

We have had unprecedented debate, a general election on—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Questions and comments. The hon. member for Outremont.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: Madam Speaker, finally, some lucidity on the government side. We are in the middle of a world economic downturn. We are about to live the second Conservative recession since 2008. In three years, we will have lived through two consecutive Conservative recessions. Precisely because the world economic situation is degrading so rapidly, he does not realize the contradiction in his argument.

Last spring's budget no longer pertains in that context. We need vigorous, robust intervention to create jobs, to stimulate the economy and to hold on to what we have. Instead, we are being served these old bromides, doctrinaire Conservative approach. This is Herbert Hoover redux. This is the Conservative approach. That is not what Canada needs right now. We need stimulating expenditures on infrastructure. We need to keep the economy going. We need to create jobs. The situation has changed. That debate has to take place. The Conservatives are shutting down debate on the very subject that they do not want to hear about. It is the impending recession. It is what is over the horizon. They do not want Canadians to know that they are sitting on their hands like usual and they are using last year's remedies for this year's problems. We want to discuss that. Parliament exists to debate these issues. They are shutting down debate. That is what is going on here today.

•(1020)

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Madam Speaker, I am actually quite proud to stand and support this motion that has been put forward. I think we need to put this in perspective. We had a very thorough debate on this budget bill. It comes in two forms, as that hon. member and every member in this House should know. We would have moved this forward more quickly if we had not been forced into an election.

However, we had a debate, a debate that was very fulsome, probably the best debate that one could ever have, and that was with all Canadians for 37 days in the election campaign.

We tabled this budget on March 22. We had 37 days of fulsome debate. This is great debate in here, and there will be more debate on the economy as we move forward, but Canadians have spoken and they have spoken loudly by giving our government a strong and stable mandate and showing support for the budget that we tabled.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, this is completely mind-boggling to me. The government says that it had the economic action plan and that it went to the people with it, but things have changed. Even the Minister of Finance recognizes that things have changed because he was in the media as late as yesterday saying that the government needed to be flexible and pragmatic. If we want to be flexible and pragmatic in addressing the recent economic downturn, then we need to take another look at what the government proposed last spring when the economic situation was entirely different.

Government Orders

We need to take the Minister of Finance at his word. It is not just the New Democrats who are saying that the government's approach is flawed and that we need to revisit it. I will read a list of people. Sherry Cooper, the chief economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns; TD Economics; Scotiabank; the Conference Board of Canada; the International Monetary Fund; and the Bank of Canada. Even the Department of Finance itself recognizes that we need to do things differently. The Toronto Board of Trade also thinks we are now in a unique situation where we need to do things differently.

We started debate on this bill only yesterday and today the government is bringing a motion to shut down the debate. People in Canada need to be heard on this issue. It affects hard-working Canadians and seniors whose retirement savings are once again going up in smoke. The Minister of Finance agrees that we should be flexible and pragmatic, so let us bring the debate to the floor of the chamber. That is what Parliament is for and that is why we will be opposing this motion.

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, it is no surprise that the New Democrats will be opposing this motion to move forward with the continuation of Canada's economic action plan, a plan for jobs and growth, because they have voted against every other phase of it.

The New Democrats stand in the House now and say that we need to stimulate the economy. When we put forward a budget to stimulate the economy, they voted against it. They voted against every phase of both budget implementation acts 1 and 2 of the 2010 budget and, in fact, if I recall correctly, in 2009 as well when we put forward the first phase of our economic action plan that has worked. Why is it working? It is working because 600,000 Canadians are working. That is more jobs than we lost. We gained more output than we lost. They want to belabour this legislation that would actually provide more stimulus to the Canadian economy and more tax credits to families that need it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it most interesting that the government House leader introduces a motion in the House and then kind of turns his back to the whole debate on the issue and will not even stand up to answer specific questions.

It is very noteworthy that we recognize why it is we are here. We are here to hold government to account. We have had major bills introduced in the last few weeks. In this case, just yesterday the government introduced a bill and yesterday the minister said that he would be bringing in time allocation. Bill C-10, a crime bill, would do nothing in terms of preventing crimes from taking place and yet we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars. Bill C-4 would victimize refugees. The government put time allocation on these major bills.

Just so members across the way can say that they have actually seen the bill, this is the bill that we are supposed to be talking about. The government House leader and the Prime Minister see it fit to limit the debate on substantial pieces of legislation.

I would look to the government House leader to stand in his place and tell Canadians how he justifies bringing in this type of legislation and then saying, on the day it is introduced, that there will be only three days to debate it, not to mention the other bills that he

• (1025)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, no matter how loud the hon. member yells, it does not make any more sense. I could stand here for 10 minutes and recite all of the closure bills that the former Liberal government put forward in the House.

An hon. member: Anything I did you can do, too.

Hon. Ted Menzies: The argument just put forward by that hon. member is very hollow.

I would go back to what I referred to in my first comments—

Hon. John McKay: We did it. Therefore, you do it.

Hon. Ted Menzies:—if that hon. member would care to close his mouth long enough to listen. There is a reason that God gave us one mouth and two ears.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to continue while he is belabouring the points over there.

I want to emphasize the fact—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask for a little order in the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, *Beauchesne's* is clear when it states that all members are hon. members.

I am sitting in my chair trying to listen to the response that the minister is attempting to give in place of the government House leader when I posed the question to the government House leader. I was actually quiet. He is making an accusation that I should be quiet when I was quiet and was listening to the member.

If the member was actually paying attention in terms of who was listening and who was not, he should not have made those comments.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the hon. member to come to order. I believe there was considerable disorder in the House and I ask for respect from all members while one member is speaking. It is very difficult to hear answers and questions.

I would ask the hon. minister to conclude.

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, I beg your forgiveness. I was hearing voices from that side but I do pay attention to you, Madam Speaker.

We need to focus on what is important here, Canadians. Who did we talk to for 37 days during the election campaign? I spoke to thousands of my constituents, as did every member in this House. They actually understood what was in this bill. They supported what was in this bill and they gave us a majority mandate to move forward with this budget.

Government Orders

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find it ironic that the member across the way viewed the last election as the Conservative government's effort to listen to Canadians when they denied Canadians the ability to ask the leader of the Conservative Party any questions throughout the course of that entire election period. That constitutes listening on their behalf. That does not work for us in the New Democratic Party. We believe that when we say we are going to listen, we actually listen.

The concern with this is that the government is falling in love with the hammer of closure. There is no more draconian measure that a government can use. The way that the government justifies this is by saying that the Liberals used to do it when they were in government. It is as if the standard that the government is setting itself by is how the Liberals conducted themselves when they had majority governments.

This is dangerous for the government and it is certainly dangerous for this place and for our democracy. The Conservatives are taking a convenient but incorrect lesson from the last election. They are taking a lesson that this majority gave them the power to shut down debate and, more dangerously, not change their ideology or opinion or legislation when the circumstances have changed underneath them.

This is most dangerous for our economy and our country. I plead with the government that a day of debate over our economy is not enough. The Conservatives did not have it during the election, they did not allow Canadians in the door and now is the time. This is what this place is constructed for and what it is meant for.

We need to allow this place to do its work and allow the elected members of this place to our work. The debate should not be shut down. You need to get out of the ideological trap you have set for yourselves and get to work on putting people back to work.

• (1030)

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind all hon. members to direct their comments and questions to the Chair. The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's questions and comments about how important it is that we listen to Canadians. We did listen to Canadians. We listened to Canadians' reaction to what was in the budget that was first tabled on March 22, and then again in June, promoting job creation and economic growth through a temporary hiring credit for small business.

Resoundingly, across the country, businesses said that, yes, that would help them and that it would help them to stimulate jobs. That is what Canadians said to us and that is why we are moving forward with this budget implementation act, to ensure we can get this through so more jobs can be created.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the minister scolded us a few minutes ago for voting against infrastructure investments. But that should not surprise them. We know this government has a habit of bending the rules, diverting funds and using infrastructure programs to shower gifts upon their

friends, as the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka has done. It is quite disturbing.

Yesterday, the Auditor General said, yet again, that the rules had been broken. We need a responsible, accountable, transparent government. But that is not what we are getting with the Conservatives. The official opposition, the NDP, is asking for more time to study the budget implementation. This budget makes poor choices, is full of holes, has the wrong priorities and gives billions of dollars in tax cuts to banks and big oil, which have no need for them. This budget does not fulfill any of the real needs of the people. It ignores poverty and social housing. It makes no mention of the environment, research and development or the future. We need more time because we do not want to leave any stone unturned. We want to ask the government all the right questions.

[*English*]

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, what I think I heard in that rather rambling question was what we were doing to help Canadians.

I will talk about one of the other items in this legislation that should be accepted and supported by all members in the House, which is expanding tax support for clean energy generation. In fact, we are encouraging green investments. We hear all across this country, whether it is in Atlantic Canada, here in Ontario or in the west, industries asking for some support to green up their industries, to make their industries more environmentally friendly. I hear this from the coal-fired generation plants and from the oil sector in my neighbourhood.

We have put in the legislation a way for the tax system to encourage that. I would implore all hon. members to support these tax initiatives.

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would ask the minister to briefly comment on what the bill does for families. I have a family and I represent many families, as I am sure every member in the House does. Would he make some observations as to why the passage of this legislation in a timely manner is so important?

I also want to make an observation before he answers that I have been in the House for quite some time and I have never, ever seen such a stark contrast between the opposition and the government as I have now. The proposal for large, big spending programs; going further into debt, something the opposition should not be proud of; driving our deficits even higher and going further into debt—how does that affect families?

On this side, we like to keep government spending down. We want to ensure taxes remain low. How does that boost the economy? How does that help families? There are some key principles at stake and maybe the member could comment on these.

• (1035)

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Saskatchewan, who has been a very strong supporter of family values and helping families. That is why we continue on with some of the programs we started in budget 2010 and continued on into budget 2011.

Government Orders

The family caregiver tax credit would assist caregivers of all types of infirm dependent family members. This is a serious issue with many families who are caring for infirm family members. We all know that infirm family members certainly get the most love and attention at home, but the cost may be prohibitive. Therefore, we put in a tax credit for those people who wish to keep their infirm relatives at home. That is important for families.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I note that the government tabled the notice of time allocation motion on the same day that it tabled the bill. In other words, it tabled the bill, which is an inch or so thick and a very complicated document, for us to consider in the House of Commons, and decided at the same time that there had been enough debate. It tabled this notice of motion on the same day to cut off debate.

Government members talk about the fact that they won the election and received a majority government with a little under 40% of the vote, so they now have four years to govern. What is not clear to me is why they are not open to having a few days or even a few weeks of debate on the hundreds of pages in the bill before it inevitably will pass.

Why is the government so opposed to having a democratic process in the House?

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, I am not going to dwell on this. The important thing is that we have had a debate and a discussion with Canadians.

We had a debate when the budget was tabled on June 6 and finally passed on June 16. There was debate during the parliamentary committee process when witnesses were brought to committee to talk about some of the things that are important to their industries and their sectors. The not-for-profit industry supports many of the pieces in the legislation and spoke at committee about what was positive. They spoke about the fact that we need to get this bill passed.

We have debated this. It has been debated on the floor before. It is not as if the budget was just tabled. This is the budget implementation act, part two.

We have had the debate. Everyone has read the bill. It is time that we passed it and moved on to provide this good news to Canadians.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' approach here is that there have not been any changes to the budget and that we really have debated it fully, so there is no requirement to spend time on it. That approach flies in the face of what is happening with the economy.

I will refer to chapter 5 of the low-tax plan for jobs and growth. When we look at the plan for a balanced budget, we see that the government has charts that show what happens when we have a 1% decline in our GDP. They show a \$3 billion to \$4 billion increase in our deficit, and that is exactly what has happened. Many factors have changed in the economy. Those changes must change the government's plans, because it is falling behind on its plans.

We need to talk about this. We need to understand where our economy is going in relation to the budget that came out last March.

● (1040)

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, the matter before us today is simply about moving forward with a plan that has been accepted. It was accepted by Canadians. It was actually accepted by the House of Commons on June 16 to move forward. We are now implementing the measures that were approved through the House.

This is second reading. Everyone here is well aware of that. When the bill passes through the House, it will go to committee stage for a full debate there. The other processes will follow that. There will be ample debate after the four days that we have put forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Madam Speaker, democracy is being denied as a direct result of this gag order.

This should not come as a surprise to anyone here. When the Conservatives had a minority, beginning in 2006, a former adviser to the Prime Minister, Tom Flanagan, told the Conservatives to be patient, because once they had a majority, they could bulldoze over everything and do whatever they like. And that is exactly what they are doing.

With this bill, Quebeckers would have liked to talk about a Canada-wide securities commission. They would have liked to talk about a government that is once again pillaging the employment insurance fund without offering anything for unemployed workers. They would have also liked to talk about the government's decision to cut public funding of political parties.

So I would like to ask the government what it is so afraid of that would make it abuse democracy in this manner and prevent parliamentarians from doing their jobs and asking questions on behalf of Quebeckers.

[*English*]

Hon. Ted Menzies: Madam Speaker, I have heard my hon. colleague stand in the House and ask questions specifically about the Quebec wage earners who have been caught in one of the most unfortunate situations that any employee can be caught in, which is when their employer goes into receivership.

I am sure he has read the portion of the budget in which we propose to implement a measure called the wage earner protection program. It will help protect those individuals. Going forward, it will help protect employees who work for companies like those in his riding. They will be protected during unfortunate incidents of employers going into bankruptcy or receivership.

We think it is very important for those employees to have this protection and to have it as soon as we can get it through the House.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1125)

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

(Division No. 38)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoepfner	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Leef	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Opitz
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poilievre

Preston	Raitt
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 150

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Andrews	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brousseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Davies	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Goodale	Grogouh
Hassania	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Énard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Martin
Mathysen	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Patry	Pélet
Perreault	Pilon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Saganash
Sandhu	Savoie
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote — 107	

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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the debate on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

* * *

KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord has three minutes left for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, did the member, when elected to the House of Commons, contemplate that there would be an excessive and almost compulsive use of closure to shut down debate on virtually every issue brought forward in the House? The general public expects that all legislation put before the House will be given the due diligence of vigorous debate to test its merits before it is rammed down the throats of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP): Madam Speaker, to answer my colleague's question truthfully, I would say that I did expect that a bit. I know the mentality of the people across the way and their desire to quickly pass a pile of legislation that pushes Canada further and further to the right, toward selfishness and the absence of real social protections. I did indeed expect shortened debates and closure motions and so forth.

Before closing, I would like to point out that Moody's gave Canada a triple-A rating. I know that somewhere, the big bankers are drinking champagne. They are happy to come invest in Canada. I, myself, am giving Canada a triple-E rating when it comes to fighting poverty. Last year, the number of people who turn to food banks rose by 9%. I know that the ladies and gentlemen across the way are not very familiar with food banks. They are closer to the banks than to the people who are suffering.

This statistic tops the list of the greatest indicators of social solidarity. When we see an increase in the number of people using food banks in a country that brags that it is moving ahead, economically speaking, and has come out of the recession, I think there is a disconnect. We are being led by a government that has no concern for the realities of everyday people or for poverty in Canada, and that makes me very sad. In this 176-page budget, there is no measure to correct this situation, and that is shameful.

•(1130)

[*English*]

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to speak to Bill C-13 which the

Conservatives have dubbed the "Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act".

That would be an appropriate title if we had actually been experiencing growth in employment and the economy, but it is impossible to keep something that we never had in the first place. Let us look at the facts.

Canada has a weak job market. The current job market is still weaker than it was before the crisis in October 2008.

There is a continuing recession in the job market, with unemployment far above what it was before the last recession and job creation well below what is needed just to keep employment steady.

Economic growth is stagnant. Economists across the board have slashed their projections for Canada's economic growth. The Conservative budget is based on growth projections which no longer appear viable.

There is ongoing uncertainty regarding Canadians' retirement savings.

Household debt is skyrocketing. Canadian household debt levels have hit all time record levels of 150%.

There is the failure of our primary export markets. The International Monetary Fund projects that Canada's balance of payments deficit as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worst among advanced economies. It is worse than that of the United States and soon to be worse than that of Italy and Spain. The IMF predicts that our current account deficit will reach almost 4% of GDP by 2012.

As well, there is a lack of adequate private investment in Canada.

Urgent action is required on Canadians' top priorities, namely health care, jobs, pensions and helping seniors in need.

Earlier this week the Conservatives voted in favour of the NDP's economic action plan. It is time for them to live up to that commitment by doing more than talking the talk. They need to walk the talk. They need to follow through on their vote by coming forward with a plan for real and decisive action.

As I have been afforded only 10 minutes to participate in today's debate, I will only be able to highlight a few of the areas that are of critical concern to voters in my riding of Hamilton Mountain.

Members who listened to their constituents in last May's election and since cannot ignore the fact that health care continues to be a primary concern for Canadians. They are absolutely right to be concerned.

Five million Canadians do not have a regular family doctor. Of those Canadians who do not have a doctor, 73% are dependent on hospital emergency rooms or walk-in clinics for the front-line medical care their families rely on.

Canada ranks 26th of 30 industrial countries in terms of doctors per capita. In 2008, the Canadian Medical Association found that Canada would need an additional 26,000 doctors to meet the OECD average doctor-to-population ratio.

If no action is taken on training, there will also be a shortage of 60,000 registered nurses just 10 years down the road. In spite of this huge shortage of health professionals, the Conservatives do not plan to hire any new doctors or nurses. Rather, they will only move health professionals from urban to rural areas.

How does that help a city like Hamilton? We are experiencing a profound shortage of health care professionals. Instead of addressing that crisis, the Conservatives are adding insult to injury. They are luring doctors and nurses away from urban centres by offering loan forgiveness only to those who are willing to abandon cities and work in rural areas. That is robbing Peter to pay Paul. Canadians deserve better.

That is not a partisan observation; the Canadian Medical Association agrees. It warned:

If we do not act soon, an aging medical profession combined with an aging population will create a "perfect storm" with respect to our supply of physicians.

It is not only the health care system that is being put at risk by the Conservative government's inaction, Canada's economy is also being battered. The Conservatives simply shrug their shoulders and tell Canadians to take solace in the fact that we are better off than countries like Greece.

That is an insult. It is an insult to the hard-working Canadians who lost their jobs in the last recession through no fault of their own.

It is time to act decisively on job creation so that the middle-class citizens who built our country can finally get back on their feet.

Let me underscore the urgency for such action. The official unemployment figure is close to 1.4 million Canadians. If we include those who are discouraged or underemployed, that number would be closer to two million.

● (1135)

Unemployment is up to 7.3% and the proportion of part-time workers and involuntary part-time workers has risen rapidly. Full-time, permanent, family supporting jobs remain very difficult to find in many areas across the country. The real unemployment rate, counting labour force dropouts and involuntary part-time workers, was 11.1% in July, up from 9.4% in July 2008.

The government's claim to have created 600,000 net new jobs is also a sad distortion of the truth. We have seen the addition of barely 200,000 new jobs since the pre-recessionary employment high point in May 2008. However, the labour force has grown by 450,000 since then. So, those new jobs fall 250,000 short of the number needed just to hold employment steady.

Perhaps the most staggering figure of all is that today's lower employment rate represents lost wages alone of more than \$20 million, and that is to say nothing of the economic stimulus and tax revenues that go with them.

In light of these realities, the lack of action on job creation is not just disappointing, it is completely unacceptable.

The Conservatives often liken government to a business. However, there are few businesses that would overlook the opportunities facing the government: plenty of available skilled labour; a desperate need for infrastructure across the country;

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infrastructure that would pay handsome returns; and capital available at almost record low rates. A good businessperson, in such circumstances, would be investing like crazy. But not the government. It does not know a good deal when it sees one.

Despite Canada's shaky economic recovery, the Conservatives want to cut off all stimulus and cut tens of billions out of our economy. Radical spending cuts, even before the private sector is prepared to start investing again, hurt Canadian families and communities.

It is not just New Democrats who are pointing out the folly of this approach. The government's own finance department recognizes that infrastructure investment has more than five times the economic impact of corporate income tax cuts. It published this fact in the appendix of budget 2009.

The Toronto Board of Trade emphasized that a strong infrastructure foundation is a top priority in ensuring economic competitiveness now and into the future.

Glen Hodgson from the Conference Board of Canada also agrees. He told the finance committee this week that now is not the time for government spending cuts. Instead, he emphasized that the government must be willing to be flexible in its approach. He also emphasized, repeatedly, that tax expenditures, including the Prime Minister's ineffective and costly corporate tax cuts, ought to be included in any review of government spending.

Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada is on record saying that the government can help with strategic investments.

But perhaps Sherry Cooper, the Chief Economist of BMO Nesbitt Burns, said it best. She wrote on Monday:

The misplaced belief that the road to economic prosperity is paved by near-term fiscal tightening, as espoused by our own Prime Minister and British Prime Minister David Cameron last week, shows we have learned nothing from Herbert Hoover's response to the Great Depression.

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

I cannot sit idly by and let the government continue on with its do nothing approach while people in my community are suffering the consequences. I am proud to fight for the hard-working families and seniors in Hamilton Mountain, and I will not stop until that job is done.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was a very difficult speech to try to sit through because there were so many things that were actually wrong in that speech.

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This is a member of a party that talks about targeting tax cuts, but when we bring them in, its members actually vote against them. They talk about infrastructure, but when we brought infrastructure in, they did not actually like it, so they voted against it. Sometimes they are difficult. They do not want to see deficits, but they want us to spend more money. They are all over the place.

They have absolutely no plan, no understanding of how we can get Canadians back to work. They are upset with the fact that some 600,000 Canadians are working who were not working before. They are upset with the fact that this government has one of the best economic records in the entire world, but what they want to do is continue to talk down the successes of the Canadian economy, the successes of this government.

The reality is that what they are, in essence, is a bunch of ideological lightweights when it comes to the economy who have absolutely no plan, no understanding of what it is that puts Canadians back to work.

I wonder if the hon. member would just simply admit that they absolutely have no plan, no ideas, no understanding how the economy works, and just simply pass this budget because it is the right thing to do for Canadians. It is the right thing to do for the Canadian economy and we cannot delay it any longer.

● (1140)

Ms. Chris Charlton: Madam Speaker, it is highly ironic that the member would call us ideological when his party is the most ideological party we have seen in the House of Commons for decades.

I love the fact that he is espousing the lines that we have heard from the Conservatives since before the last election frankly, about what it takes to keep our economy on track. I wonder if he actually listened to his own Minister of Finance, who just yesterday said that in light of the current economic circumstances, we need to be pragmatic and we need to be flexible. Perhaps the Minister of Finance might want to talk to his colleague and explain to him that economic circumstances really have changed and we are on the cusp of another worldwide economic downturn.

The member went on to suggest that we voted against measures like infrastructure spending. Might I remind the member what happened to that infrastructure spending. Money that was supposed to be spent on border security to the tune of \$50 million did not end up anywhere near Canadian borders. It ended up being spent on gazebos and on ice rinks in the riding of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. The Auditor General has said there is absolutely no accounting for that money.

Yes, we vote against unaccountable, irresponsible infrastructure spending, but I will stand up for infrastructure spending that supports jobs in my community.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to issues that have come out of her constituency. I want to reflect on one of the issues that came out in my constituency and that is the plight of our seniors.

There are far too many seniors in Canada, specifically in my riding of Winnipeg North, who are having a difficult time making ends meet and it is because of the whole issue of pension

deficiencies and the need to increase pensions. I have been advocating for this since day one when I was first elected back in late November. I really feel that the budget has fallen short in terms of meeting the needs of our seniors.

I look to my colleague to provide comment as to how she believes the budget has fallen short on that particular issue.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Madam Speaker, I wonder whether the member for Winnipeg North would do me the honour of passing on my congratulations to the former member for Elmwood—Transcona for winning a provincial seat in his province.

With respect to seniors issues, the member has raised a really important point. Seniors' retirement savings have plummeted as a result of the decline in the markets. That is why New Democrats have consistently asked that we raise the GIS, so that every senior would be lifted out of poverty. That would cost \$2 billion, \$2 billion that the government had but squandered on continuing tax breaks to the oil and gas industry and on corporate tax cuts.

As well, we have consistently called for the doubling of the CPP because the member is quite right, employment pension plans are increasingly vulnerable and we are certainly seeing that in communities across the country.

I am really delighted that the Liberal Party now appears to be on board with the suggestions that we have made consistently for years now. I welcome his contribution to that debate when we bring these matters forth in the House of Commons.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to share my time with the member for Winnipeg South Centre and to talk about Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

For those who are new in the House, how this actually works is, every year we put a budget forward in the spring. There is a motion on the budget and it passes through the House as a budget in principle. For it to become law and be implemented, which is partly what we are debating today, there have to be implementation bills. That is what Bill C-13 is. However, the budget is so big that, since I have been here, for five years, it is split into two pieces. One we already passed in the spring. The first phase of the implementation bill has actually gone through the House. There is a ways and means motion that goes with that. For people who do not know what that is, it gives the authority to tax, or change the tax system, and that bill needs to happen.

There is a process. We are in the last part of the process that deals with the budget that we presented. It was turned down by both the NDP and the Liberal Party, as they were in the opposition benches before the election in May. We were progressing. We were doing things for Canadians. The opposition decided that it was time for an election. We had an election and the public, the voters of this country, decided it was time to get some things done. That is why we got elected as a majority government, so we could move our budget processes through, the things we are doing for Canadians and the things we are doing for communities. That is why we are here today talking about the second portion of that budget bill.

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The implementation bill is actually broken into five parts. There is a section to promote job creation and economic growth, support for communities, help for families, investment in education and training, and respect for taxpayers. I am going to highlight a few things in each piece that is in the bill.

It is a big bill, as my colleague from the Liberal side said because there are important issues that we are dealing with to make sure that we have the economic growth and the job growth, and stability that the country is asking for. That is what Canadians elected us to do, and we are implementing it as of today.

To give some examples of what is in the promote job creation and economic growth piece, we will hear quite a bit today and have heard over the past number of days about the hiring credit we are giving to small businesses, \$1,000 to encourage them to hire new employees. This will create jobs and ensure that we have economic growth in every community across the country.

We are doing other things. I know, as a member of the finance committee for the last five years, that the accelerated capital cost allowance was a big item for our manufacturers. They wanted to see that tool that they could use to invest in their companies and in machinery, so they can grow and supply new customers in order to have the economic growth. In this implementation bill, which we are discussing today, it has the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for manufacturer investment increased and added to.

There are a couple of things that I wanted to talk about under job creation and economic growth, but there is another area I want to talk about. As a member of city council for 13 years for the City of Burlington, in the region of Halton, rarely did we ever get any support, either from the province or the federal government. In the implementation bill we are making the \$2 billion gas tax fund a permanent fund for municipalities to rely on for their future infrastructure planning. When opposition members vote against that, they are voting against assistance to municipalities. That is what is actually happening.

We have the volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters. In Burlington we have a composite firefighting force, which means we have both professional, or permanent, firefighters and we have a volunteer base. We have a mix, so it is important for us. I heard from my fire chief. I went through an exercise with the firefighting team last Friday, actually. They put me through some training paces and we heard directly from the chief that they are having difficulty attracting and maintaining volunteers, because we all have busy lives. It is an important, key job, particularly in the rural area of Burlington. This tax credit will help them recruit and maintain volunteer firefighters. That is some of the support for our communities that is in the bill.

• (1145)

We are helping families in a number of ways. There is a new tax credit for family caregivers who give assistance at home to family members who are infirm.

There is one point I would like to make and it is very important to me. I used to be an employee of Easter Seals. My wife is an employee of Easter Seals. We help raise money and awareness for disabled kids across the province of Ontario.

Members may not know, but there was a limit of \$10,000 of eligible expenses that caregivers could claim through their medical expense tax credit. Through Bill C-13, which we support and which the voters sent us back here to complete, would remove that \$10,000 limit so families could use the tax credit for all the expenses they incurred for helping those who need that medical expense, whether a child, a mother, a father, a brother or whoever.

I want to remind members opposite that when they vote against the bill, they will vote against that change.

We are also adding a tax credit for children studying the arts. To be frank, my two daughters have been very active in sports, but not the arts. However, as a city councillor, and now as a member of Parliament, I am proud that we have just opened a new performing arts centre in the city of Burlington, which I have worked on since 1999.

I see the value in having children, families and grandparents involved in the arts. This children's tax credit would ensure there would be a level playing field for not only families with children who are active in athletics, but also in the arts. The arts are very important to us. That is why we encourage young people to be involved through this tax credit.

We are investing in education and training. We have a number of improvements to the financial assistance we are providing students. We are making it easier to allocate registered education savings plans to siblings without incurring any penalties. However, a key part to this, which does not affect my riding as much as others, is that we would forgive the loans for doctors and nurses who serve in rural and remote areas.

That is very important to me. I grew up in a little town called Port Elgin on Lake Huron, a rural of Ontario. It is a very lovely area, but it is very difficult to find a doctor. An individual would have to travel for hospital and medical services, as they would do in many parts of the country.

The forgiving of loans would assist communities to attract young medical professionals to their areas to provide the services to those individuals who need them.

In terms of the five items, the final thing I would like to speak to is the respect for taxpayer dollars. The key piece in this one is that we are ending the direct subsidy for political parties. Frankly, it affects the Conservative Party. The way it worked was the more votes we got, the more money we got from the taxpayer. It was a direct subsidy from the taxpayer, whether they voted for us or not.

We are removing that. It would be up to parties to talk to their supporters and get their direct support financially, instead of being like some parties in the House that almost exclusively rely on the taxpayer subsidy to fund their elections and their operations. We do not think that is fair and we do not think it is a good use of taxpayer money.

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Our government's top priority remains completing the economic recovery. Canadians gave the Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters, and that is creating jobs and economic growth. I will leave it at that, and I am happy to answer any questions anyone may have.

● (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Recently, the chairman of the Fed said that government budgets have to be managed prudently, in light of recent events on the economic stage.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of the current signals. What should be changed or adapted in the budget that was prepared in the spring to take into account today's economic signals?

● (1155)

[English]

Mr. Mike Wallace: Madam Speaker, we set out in a plan what we would do during Canada's economic situation. We have committed something to taxpayers and we will deliver. That is what the bill would do. It would put in place the last part of our economic action plan, which includes funding for job growth and infrastructure. All the pieces are in it. We are doing what we need to do.

That does not mean we spend wildly. The previous NDP speaker did not indicate how many billions of dollars New Democrats wanted to add to the debt or the deficit. They just wanted to add money. We had a plan that we set out in the spring, the opposition voted it down so we went to an election. We won the election and we will now implement that plan.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talks about the Conservatives voting for it and we all understand why you are voting for this bill. We also need to recognize that what you are voting for is not recognized—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would remind hon. members to direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what the member is also voting for is a tax credit that only applies to volunteer firefighters who have the income to take advantage of the tax credit. People need to have the necessary incomes to benefit from the tax credit. That is a bias against a lot of low-income volunteer firefighters. Would he not at least acknowledge that?

Mr. Mike Wallace: Madam Speaker, the member is new but he should look at all tax credits and how many are refundable and non-refundable. I know he understands the difference. He has suggested that if people pay no income tax, they should still get the money. The idea of tax credits are to be applied against taxes paid. That is the bottom line. If people do not pay taxes, they do not get the credit.

I have no problem standing in the House and defending the fact that if people pay taxes, the government will give them an opportunity to reduce their tax burden, but people should not just get a direct payment.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Burlington was my

predecessor as the chairman of the steel caucus. The area we come from has a lot of steel not only in manufacturing but processing as well. Could he share with the House just how important the initiatives are in this budget to ensure we continue to grow the steel industry, the cutting-edge steel, the new innovative steel that is produced in our area? How important is it in these initiatives to grow the jobs of research and development, as well as on the plant floor, in our community?

Mr. Mike Wallace: Madam Speaker, one key part of this budget implementation bill is the extension of the capital cost allowance. The president of the steel company in Hamilton has said that companies need it in order to continue to invest and grow and meet the demand. He has said that if they do not have that kind of financial support for their investments, it will make it difficult for them to make the investments and create jobs. In fact, one of the lowest unemployment rates in our country is in Hamilton because of the actions of this government.

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak on behalf of the hard-working families in Winnipeg South Centre. I am privileged to represent such a diverse, active and engaged community. Winnipeg South Centre elected a Conservative because the voters felt, as I did, that Canadians needed strong, stable leadership in a challenging economic climate. Voters in Winnipeg South Centre know that promises to raise taxes and increase spending will not create real sustainable jobs.

Many governments across the western world are struggling under mountainous debt. Meanwhile Canada is being recognized as a financial leader and a model for the world. That is why our plan, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, is focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

[Translation]

Our government's top priority is to complete the economic recovery. Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to continue to focus on what is important: job creation and economic growth.

● (1200)

Since July 2009, almost 600,000 net new jobs have been created in Canada. In addition, we are the only G7 nation to have more than recovered all of the production and jobs lost during the economic slowdown.

[English]

There are a number of key elements in our plan which I know will have a positive impact for Winnipeggers, Manitobans and all Canadians.

Government Orders

We recognize the vital role that small businesses play in the economy and job creation. That is why we are committed to helping them grow and succeed. The next phase of Canada's economic action plan includes a number of measures to further enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and create jobs.

One example is the hiring credit for small business. This new credit would help up to 525,000 employers defray the cost of additional hires. Winnipeg South Centre has hundreds of small businesses, some in people's homes, some of the best restaurants in Canada and all of them would benefit from this credit when they hire new employees.

A number of students whom our government helped with employment under the Canada summer jobs program gained vital experience and made a difference to their community at the same time. I know these young citizens will be encouraged to hear about our government's support for the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, providing over \$20 million for start-up financing and volunteer business mentors to enable young Canadians to launch more than 1,000 new businesses. With our help, young people are expected to generate more than 6,700 new Canadian jobs.

[Translation]

For that reason, the Prime Minister's government is staying the course with its plan to keep taxes low in order to create jobs and foster economic growth.

[English]

Helping to train the next generation of entrepreneurs is critical to our prosperity, but so is training the next generation of researchers, scientists and innovators. That is why our government is doubling the in-study income exemption for students, benefiting over 100,000 students.

[Translation]

According to the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, and I quote: "there is good news in the current federal budget for Canadian students...".

[English]

Making it easier for families to pay for their children's post-secondary education is just one of the many reasons my constituents are being well served with the budget. Every aspect of education matters to my constituents in Winnipeg South Centre. The government is helping families afford programs that will enrich their children's cultural and artistic education. Our new children's arts tax credit does just that. Modelled on our popular children's fitness tax credit, the children's arts tax credit supports eligible fees for children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

More and more families are feeling the double pressures of caring for growing children and aging parents at the same time. A key part of our plan is the new family caregiver tax credit. This measure supports caregivers who help infirm dependent relatives, including spouses, common-law partners and minor children. This all builds on top of the action our government has already taken to support families since 2006.

We have cut taxes over 120 times since forming government. We cut the lowest personal income tax rate. We cut the marriage penalty for one-income families. We have added the universal child care benefit. We have added the child tax credit. We added the landmark tax-free savings account and we added the registered disability savings plan to help children who live with disabilities.

In addition to this tax relief, families are benefiting from other new targeted measures like the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, the expanded home buyers' plan and the public transit tax credit. Families in Winnipeg South Centre are benefiting today from the strong actions our government is taking and has taken to provide tax relief and grow our economy.

Our community and country are benefiting from some broader measures as well. We provided \$20 million for youth crime prevention to promote programs that help youth resist and exit gangs. We are enhancing the guaranteed income supplement so that eligible low-income seniors will receive additional annual benefits. We have extended the eco-energy retrofit homes program to help families lower their heating bills and electricity bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Our low-tax plan for jobs and growth is working.

This week *Forbes*, the influential business magazine, has ranked Canada as the best country in the world to do business. The IMF is forecasting Canada will have the strongest overall economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. Canada has the lowest total government net debt to GDP ratio in the entire G7, by far.

• (1205)

[Translation]

The last thing the Canadian economy needs right now is the massive tax hike proposed by the NDP. A tax increase would result in job cuts, paralyze our recovery and shrink the purchasing power of Canadian families. The next phase of Canada's economic action plan will preserve Canada's advantage in the global economy.

[English]

Tremendous economic instability in Europe and slowing growth in the U.S. make a challenging economic environment.

[Translation]

We are not immune to the volatility of the global economy, which is caused primarily by a lack of confidence in governments' efforts to reduce their deficits.

This crisis is an important opportunity for Canada to show leadership and promote solid, sustainable and balanced medium-term growth, as well as improve market confidence and foster global economic recovery.

[English]

Canadians can be confident we will follow our prudent and pragmatic plan to lower their taxes and grow our economy together.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Together, we are stronger.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I remember a time when the Conservative Party of old, in previous incarnations such as the Canadian Alliance, perhaps, or the Reform Party before that, used to rail with indignation whenever the big bad Liberal government of the day would impose closure. I remember how they used to vilify Don Boudria, the House leader of the Liberal Party at the time. We had guys like Randy White doing a Mexican hat dance out in the lobby to demonstrate how furious they were. There was gnashing of teeth, rending of garments over the outrage and the affront to democracy in shutting down the debate and the scrutiny, oversight and testing of the merits of legislation that come from full debate.

My colleague is relatively new to the House and formerly associated with the Liberal Party that we all used to criticize for imposing closure some 88 times in one session of Parliament. We used to vilify the party that she used to be associated with. Now she is sitting with a party that has come to resemble that which it used to criticize the most vigorously, which is the denial of the most basic democracy through full debate in the House of Commons.

• (1210)

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Speaker, I need to clarify a few of the issues that the member has raised.

First of all, he made a comment about gnashing of teeth and rending of garments. When I was campaigning to be elected as a member of the House of Commons, no one was grinding their teeth. They were saying, “Let’s get the job done. Let’s work together. Let’s make sure our young people are not crippled with a mortgage for the rest of their lives, called a big bad deficit”. These were the comments that I heard when I was at the door. I heard people saying that we should get on with the business of Canada, be proud that we’re doing so well and work together to make things happen.

That is what I heard when I went to the doors of the good constituents of Winnipeg South Centre, and I am so sorry that the member opposite had a different experience.

His next point was about my past membership in the Liberal Party of Canada. I changed because of its reckless spending approach to Canada and Canadians, and I was joined by hundreds of thousands of Canadians who voted the same way, with their feet, including my colleague here.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had one question and now, in listening, I have been inspired to comment on something different.

Some of the biggest recognition around the world has been in regard to Canada’s banking industry, and there should be no surprise there. We know it was former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and former Minister of Finance Paul Martin who actually established and guaranteed the strong banking industry that we have today here in Canada.

On balance, in terms of expenditures and revenues, the former Liberal government outperforms the current government on virtually

every economic point. In fact, one could argue that the highest unemployment predictions were of Kim Campbell: I can remember the 1993 election, when she said we were going to be into double-digit unemployment, and the Liberals said no.

Would the member not recognize that the Liberals’ history in government is actually better than that of the government that we have seen in the last few years?

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who also comes from Winnipeg and serves Winnipeg North, for his comments.

I beg to differ with him. What was wrong with the approach to deficit reduction taken by past Liberal governments, whether of Mr. Chrétien or Mr. Martin, was that it reduced the deficit on the backs of education and health care. The former Liberal government reduced the deficit on the backs of transfer payments to our partner provinces.

This government, the Harper government—

Mr. Mike Wallace: You cannot call it the Harper government.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I am new here.

[*English*]

The government does not want to paralyze the importance of education. I served for ten and a half years as a school trustee in Winnipeg, so I can be trusted when I say it is an important investment. I am proud that the government will not be making any efforts to reduce those investments we make in provinces.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise you that I will be splitting my time today with my colleague from Winnipeg Centre as part of what seems to be the all-party Winnipeg caucus here in the House today.

On this side of the House, we often refer to the Conservative government as being out of touch. That language is often dismissed by the government as rhetorical flourish, but if there was ever evidence of this point it is this bill, Bill C-13, and more broadly the approach of the government to the economy of this country.

Since the Canadian economy came crashing down around us in 2008, very many Canadians have been affected profoundly and in material ways. While in technical terms a recovery of sorts followed, and for some it was in material terms, what never dissipated was a sense of economic insecurity and worry.

In my riding of Beaches—East York, from the neighbourhoods where poverty and unemployment are deep and persistent, through East York and down to the beach, people from all walks of life and living in all sorts of circumstances are worried.

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Those who have lived in the hope that they will someday enjoy some material comfort and security see those prospects becoming more remote. Those who have experienced material comfort and security wonder whether it will last. Those who have accumulated some savings wonder whether it will survive for its intended purpose, whether that be retirement or the kids' education.

The worry, of course, is not unfounded. In 2008 we were plunged into the worst recession in over 70 years. The recovery has been tentative and much slower than has historically been the case, with the persistent threat of a second significant economic contraction. Of course we are bombarded daily with news and images of economic catastrophes occurring or threatening to occur all around us, including with our biggest trading partners, the United States and Europe.

It was in this context of well-founded and widespread economic concern that I opened the paper the other day to read that our Minister of Finance had said he is prepared to let these circumstances persist until such time as the technocrats looking in the rear-view mirror tell him that we are, or more properly were, in economic trouble.

Now, what is it that we do not know here? We know that Canada is a small and very open economy, and therefore we are far from immune to global economic turmoil. We know that the largest economies in the world today, Europe and the United States, are in fact experiencing considerable turmoil.

We know also that they are our largest trading partners. With respect to the United States in particular, we know that there is a high correlation between its economic growth and our own. This is particularly the case in my own province of Ontario. For example, had the U.S. recovery from 2008 been a typical recovery, their GDP would be 2.5% higher, and Canadian exports would be 6.5% greater.

With European and U.S. economies struggling and our dollar remaining persistently high, it appears that we will be stuck with a massive current account deficit for some considerable time. Unemployment levels remain stubbornly high, particularly for youth, and are forecast to go higher.

We also know that things could get worse—much worse, in fact. In the quaint phraseology of the Governor of the Bank of Canada, “The risks...are skewed to the downside”.

According to a September 30 forecast from *TD Economics*:

In our view, there is a 40% recession risk in the United States over the next year.

This leads to the obvious conclusion that our own risk of a slip back into a recession remains heightened. Thankfully, not all economists are as technocratic and as out of touch as the government. In response to the minister's pledge to wait and see what happened, and note the past tense, BMO capital markets economist Douglas Porter said:

I think the risks of a downturn in North America are serious enough that the government should definitely have a Plan B.

That plan B is, of course, what we on this side of the House have been arguing for: government investment in infrastructure.

●(1215)

Mr. Porter went on to say:

Infrastructure spending is one of the most effective short-term stimulus measures a government can use, but it takes time to get it going and that's why we should be studying a Plan B right now.

We know that economists can be just as adept at fighting among themselves as we are in this chamber but there does seem to be near unanimous agreement with the value of infrastructure spending in economic circumstances such as those that we are experiencing today.

As was pointed out at the time of the debate over the budget, even the annex to the government's document entitled, “Canada's Economic Action Plan Year 2: Built to keep our economy growing”, a seventh report to Canadians, confirms the potency of stimulus spending on infrastructure, particularly in comparison to other measures.

It is not as though we are lacking infrastructure in need of repair. Our cities are experiencing an infrastructure deficit in the order of \$123 billion. In addition, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has estimated new infrastructure requirements totalling \$115 billion.

While economists, very gently and generously, urge the development of a plan B, it seems fair and responsible for us to call out first for a plan A, because Bill C-13 does not add up to a plan. What Bill C-13 amounts to is paralysis, not planning. Were it the case that the government was frozen with a plan in place, that would be one thing, but what is frozen in place here is policy confusion.

The central policy piece of the government's response to our economic circumstances is the cut to corporate tax rates. As a stimulus measure, that is, as a measure that is responsive to the economic circumstances of Canadians, we know that this measure does not work.

First, it does not create jobs. A study of almost 200 large Canadian corporations that benefited from corporate tax cuts starting in 2000, showed that by 2009 profits had increased by 50%. Their corporate tax remittances had decreased by 20%, or \$12 billion a year, while creating jobs at a rate slower than the national average.

Second, corporate tax cuts do not stimulate investment. Capital spending in Canada has been declining as a share of GDP since the early 1980s despite corporate tax cuts that have reduced the combined federal-provincial tax rate from 50% to just less than 30% last year.

Third, the U.S. treasury loves our corporate tax rates. American corporations repatriating their profits to the United States are obligated to pay 35% corporate tax minus a credit for taxes already paid in Canada. The amount of tax revenue flowing to the U.S. treasury, which is the amount of tax revenue foregone by Canadian jurisdictions owing to our lower corporate tax rate, is estimated to be between \$4 billion and \$6 billion per year.

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Finally, as a policy prescription for our current circumstances, corporate tax cuts miss the mark by a wide margin. In spite of the economic misery and insecurity faced by so many Canadians, corporate profits have continued to increase year over year. Corporations are now sitting on half a trillion dollars of cash, the world is awash with goods, keeping inflation numbers in check, and it is in this context of over-supply that the government is prescribing, of all things, expanding supply. It makes no sense.

The prescription for what ails us is very different. We need to boost demand. While corporate profits increased by 15% in the second quarter of this year, the real disposable income of Canada was shrinking. Real wage growth fell year over year by 1.3% in July. That includes a 2.3% decline in Ontario. Meanwhile, households are finally strapped, carrying record loads of debt.

This is why, in part, our party champions creating jobs through government investment in infrastructure, more profitable pensions for seniors, increasing EI benefit eligibility and free collective bargaining, all measures that are responsive to the needs of the Canadian economy and economic growth.

• (1220)

When we cast our eyes forward, it is clear that this country not only faces some economic challenges, but also some incredible opportunities. Seizing those opportunities for the benefit of Canadians to ensure health and prosperity for Canadians is the responsibility of our government. On this account, the government, like its predecessor, has failed miserably. For years, it has insisted on locking Canada into disadvantageous and disproportionate trading relationships.

Finally, I want to pick up on the words of the Governor of the Bank of Canada. He stated:

...Canada is like a ship. We can be tossed by the waves or pulled by the current, but we are still able to chart our course in even the stormiest of seas.

I do not see a course set here by the government. To the contrary, the government has left Canadians bobbing in stormy economic seas.

• (1225)

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his discussion on Bill C-13, even though I completely disagree with his approach.

I want to ensure that the opposition members understand. If they look at the 2009-10 public accounts books, because we are a year behind in public accounts, corporate tax revenue for the Government of Canada is 13.9% and personal income tax is 47.6%.

The opposition members talk about an infrastructure program and so on. Have they set a number for how big a deficit they want this country to carry? How much more would they add to the debt? How much more money would they borrow to make that happen? Will they tell Canadians exactly how much they would increase personal incomes tax to pay for it or cut spending? How would they do it? There is only one way to get money and that is by either cutting spending or increasing revenues.

The opposition members are talking about a huge infrastructure program but they will not tell us what the numbers are. They would

need to raise taxes, and the vast majority of taxes in this country are collected from personal income tax.

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I heard my friends from across the aisle criticizing our party for a lack of sophistication on economic issues. However, what I think we just saw was an illustration of quite the opposite. Members on the other side of the House seem not only to not understand basic economics but they do not even seem to understand the budget documents that they are putting out.

In the report that I cited, the seventh report to Canadians on the economic action plan, the appendix, or the annex as they call it, for job creation spells out for us what the economic multipliers are of various forms of government investment. This is a way of governments investing in our economy to create jobs and, in doing so, create government revenues. This is basic math. It is basic economics. It is the economics of the Department of Finance. It is the economics of so many economists speaking for the big banks of Canada and for the Bank of Canada itself.

The party opposite should have a closer at economics and how to create jobs and increase economic growth in this country.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know my friend from the NDP, the member for Beaches—East York, is new to this place but I am sure he is very familiar with what took place a number of years ago with the fall economic update by the present government.

The government at that time did not recognize that there was an economic downturn in our midst. We were pretty much engulfed in an economic downturn globally but the Conservatives refused to come forward with any kind of incentive package, any kind of investment package, anything to try to stimulate the economy. At that time, and it was well documented, the opposition parties banded together and said that it was unacceptable and that it would hurt our country. That was prompted by a gross misunderstanding of what was going on in the world and in this country. The opposition parties told the government to get off its duff, put a package together and ensure we invest in Canada.

Now, the Conservatives have almost separated their shoulders by slapping themselves on the back taking credit for it.

Does my colleague see any reason to show confidence in the current government? Has it learned anything since that time?

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, it appears that the government has not learned anything from that time. When I came into this House, we had a regurgitated budget that I think over 60% of Canadians effectively rejected in the election. We now have a continuation of the same prescriptions for this economy.

The problem, of course, is that our economic circumstances have taken a significant downward turn, even since June when the budget was passed. What concerns me is that the government seems to have paid no heed to these circumstances.

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•(1230)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beaches—East York for not only sharing his time with me but for the thoughtful presentation he just gave on Bill C-13.

Some members of the House today are newly elected members and so I will begin by prefacing my remarks by saying that there is nothing normal about what they are seeing unfold today. I do not want them to think that the House of Commons debates have been, or should be, curtailed and shut down by use of time allocation motions and closure in the way they may have seen as newly elected members in this 41st Parliament. In fact, closure, in and of itself, is an affront to democracy.

We are seeing a worrisome motif that the government is using, misusing and abusing closure to a point where it is detrimental to the institution of Parliament itself and the fundamental, most basic tenets of democracy.

I am not overstating things when I say that democracy is undermined by the use of closure in such a cavalier manner. Time allocation has always been in the standing orders but it was meant to be used judiciously, only after a matter of debate had been dealt with in a fulsome way and when all members who wished to speak to a bill had the opportunity. When there is deliberate obstruction of parliamentary procedure, that is when a government of the day may contemplate the use of the closure.

However, what we have seen in the 41st Parliament are huge, complicated omnibus bills being given a day or two of consideration by this chamber and then, bam, the heavy hammer comes down and we have the iron fist of time allocation and closure. Nobody should ever accept this as the norm. I hope the Canadian people are taking note because it is worthy to note.

I have been elected six times to this chamber. I was an opposition member during the times when the Liberal government was in majority and we criticized it vigorously for what we thought was an overuse of time allocation and closure. Frankly, the Liberals were pikers at the game because at least when it was introduced by our colleagues, the Liberals, it was after days and days and weeks and weeks of debate on a certain bill. Yes, there were people who would have liked to have spoken again on a bill, but at least every member of the chamber had ample opportunity on behalf of their constituents to wade into a debate.

It is getting to be a matter of privilege, and I would like to see that researched. It gets to be a matter of parliamentary privilege when members are systematically denied the right to stand in this chamber and voice the concerns of the people who sent them here to represent them.

I am being allowed 10 minutes to debate a bill of this magnitude and substance. Frankly, Bill C-13 is perhaps the most important bill of Parliament in that it is the introduction of the manifestation of the whole financial cycle of estimates, to budgets to budget implementation, et cetera. No bill put forward by a government within the parliamentary cycle is more critical than the budget implementation act and we are being denied the right to give it a thorough vetting in the House.

Having said that, and with such limited time, I will limit my remarks to broad-brushed impressions of what the bill seeks to do.

I saw a bumper sticker when I was in Washington, D.C. last year that kind of says it all. It said, "At least the war on the middle class is going well". That sums up the attitude that we are seeing in the government's introduction of its budgetary process and the frustration that has manifested itself and is playing out on Wall Street as we speak.

•(1235)

The Americans were quicker to go into this blind faith that the corporate world had their best interests at heart. They were first to go into it, but they seem to be the first to come out of it as well. Americans are sick of rewarding the very architects of the economic malaise they find themselves in, whereas we are plowing ahead with that exact same mindset by rewarding corporate Canada, which has failed us with its wretched excess, greed and failure to provide the leadership in its own corporate sector. We are going to reward that sector. The biggest ticket item in this fiscal year's spending priority is in fact another \$6 billion tax cut for corporations.

I come from the province of Manitoba. The small business tax in Manitoba was 11% when the New Democrats took power in 1999. That small business tax has been systematically reduced to zero. The NDP has just been re-elected to its fourth majority government in that province partly because the targeted tax cuts which the NDP government put in place were in an area that would in fact generate jobs and stimulate the economy. That is giving a break to small entrepreneurs who will in fact reinvest in their businesses and create jobs. No such empirical evidence exists about the much larger tax giveaway that is contemplated by the government in this fiscal year of \$6 billion more in corporate tax cuts.

My colleague from Beaches—East York said that the Department of Finance itself recognizes that infrastructure investment has five times the economic impact of corporate income tax cuts. This fact is published in the appendix to budget 2009. We know full well where the bang for the buck is and yet the government seems to feel some obedient subservience to the very architects of the economic malaise we are experiencing. It rewards bad behaviour with even more handouts, the biggest corporate giveaway, by the way, since the review of the drug patent law in the mid-1990s when drug patents were extended from 17 years to 20 years. That was a corporate handout to Pfizer and others by the Liberal government of the day.

The Conservatives are plowing ahead by borrowing \$6 billion because they do not have it. We are in a deficit situation so they do not have the \$6 billion to give to corporate Canada, but they are going to give it anyway.

As my colleague from Beaches—East York pointed out, that profit is not even domestic. In fact, very often these corporations are actually foreign corporations. They take that money and expatriate it back to the United States where they came from and the United States taxes them at a reasonable rate of 35% on their foreign earnings abroad.

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The government of the day is not thinking of the big picture. We have a shrinking middle class. Wages are shrinking from year to year when adjusted for inflation. When I began my remarks I said that at least the war on the middle class is going well, but have the Conservatives thought through what it will do to the economy when they injure the consuming middle class, when they fail to promote and expand the consuming middle class? If it is a low wage, low cost economy they are striving for, let me remind them that we cannot shrink our way to prosperity. No country has ever shrunk its way to prosperity. Countries grow their way to prosperity. Even Henry Ford understood that workers with money in their pockets are going to buy one of the products they create. Somehow we seem to have lost that mindset.

The Conservatives' war on labour and the left is another example of what they intend to do. When Ronald Reagan was in power, he managed to reduce the unionized workforce in the United States from 33% to 12%. It is now at 5%. The war on labour and the left is just beginning with the Conservatives' majority government. This bill is the first indication of the type of financial planning they intend to do. It is deficient. It is faulty. It is old-school thinking. It is so last century that it does not serve the needs of the working people I represent.

• (1240)

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre and I was a little confused. I have heard him speak before and he sometimes is confusing. I would like him to clarify.

In one part of his speech he said he was opposed to business tax deductions that would help stimulate the economy and create jobs. Then he went on to talk about his home province, which happens to have an NDP government, and I congratulate the NDP on its re-election, and it has reduced its business taxes to zero on some levels. That has been great for Manitoba's economy and has created jobs for small business.

Is he for it or against it? Does he know? Does he understand that the vast majority of businesses in this country are incorporated and that they will all benefit from corporate tax deductions? If he could clarify, that would be great, but I am not sure he can.

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague would know, if he had been listening to the NDP for the last three, four or five years, that we have always said we would support the government in a small business tax cut, a reduction in small business taxes. What the government of the day has done year after year is it has given big corporate tax cuts. The beneficiaries of that are not the small entrepreneur and the small businessman who are struggling. Frankly, the companies that need the support and help are not earning and paying taxes on earnings anyway. It is the big profitable corporations that are getting it.

If the Conservatives want social benefit and social change from their spending and to put more money into circulation to stimulate the economy, the single most important thing they could do is to elevate all seniors out of poverty. For \$700 million, for less than one-tenth essentially of the corporate tax cut, all seniors could have been at least lifted to the poverty line. Seniors do not squirrel that money away in an offshore tax haven. They spend it in the local economy

and it gets re-spent four times before it finds its natural state of repose in some rich man's pocket.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier a Conservative member made reference to the fact that we have a choice between raising taxes or borrowing money. One of the things that is often overlooked is the issue of spending smarter. The Conservative budget is lacking in terms of how we could do a better job with the scarce resources that we have. I look for comment from the member because in many ways we represent neighbourhoods of a similar nature.

If the Government of Canada were to invest in housing stock through revitalization programs and provide the tax incentives to encourage urban revitalization of some of our older communities, we would be generating jobs and improving the housing conditions of our communities. Would the member agree that is a good way of spending smarter? It would cost taxpayers less money and would create more jobs. Would the member agree with that assessment?

Mr. Pat Martin: Mr. Speaker, sometimes I think the government of the day is channelling Brian Mulroney—give those members some Gucci shoes and the transformation will be complete—when it comes to gold-plated business cards or grandiose, overinflated, wild, irresponsible and reckless spending. Targeted, specific, useful spending on infrastructure or, as my colleague suggested, low-income housing stock is the kind of targeted spending that would stimulate the economy and put more people back to work. Perhaps it does not have the cachet of 65 new F-35 fighter jets or the wheelbarrows full of dough the Conservatives dutifully dump into Bay Street on a regular basis. Maybe it is the job of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance to deliver the booty to Bay Street on his way to work in the morning. Those of us on this side of the House know that we cannot afford that kind of dutiful obligation to the Conservatives' corporate masters.

• (1245)

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, It is a pleasure to speak to this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the exciting new member for Okanagan—Coquihalla. It is not that I could not speak for 20 minutes. In fact, as the previous speaker said, I could speak at length about all the wonderful measures contained in this document, but I want to share that opportunity with an exciting new member of Parliament.

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The previous speaker, a member of the NDP who is not short on colourful metaphors when describing things, indicated if we had just listened to the NDP the budget would look quite different. I would argue that I have been listening to the NDP. That is why I knew I had to win my election in Peterborough. Heaven forbid the New Democrats would ever have any say on the economics of this country, because where they would take it certainly would not be the leading position within the G7. It would not be a position which the IMF says is enviable. It would not be, as *Forbes* magazine declared just this week, the best place in the world to invest.

That is our Canada. That is the Canada our Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, with the support of this caucus, have worked hard to create. I would also note that the Minister of State for Finance has also played a very big role in that.

This bill is important. We heard the previous member talk a little about business. He talked about corporations. How he speaks about corporations in this country disturbs me. Corporations, investments, and obviously the jobs they create are critically important to communities. Those job creators are constantly being slammed and talked about as if they were entities that should be attacked by the state. That seems to be the NDP's mantra.

A few moments ago my colleague from Burlington indicated in his question that many corporations in Canada, some of them quite small, are benefiting from the tax measures we have put in place in our budgets. I would be remiss if I did not mention a specific example.

This budget extends the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturers. That allows manufacturers to upgrade their equipment sooner and to do it in a more economical fashion, but it is only a tax deferral. However, it makes the business case better for investing right here in Canada. On top of that, we have also reduced the overall corporate tax rates.

When those two things are put together, it helps companies in my riding like McCloskey International, a very significant equipment manufacturer that is growing. I would invite any member to visit that plant to see the kind of growth it has experienced since 2006, to see the kind of growth that plant has experienced since we came forward with Advantage Canada, our blueprint economic plan for Canada. We brought that forward in 2007. We made it clear. We made a promise to Canada's employers and to Canadians as to how we would govern the finances of this country.

That company, McCloskey International in Peterborough, has grown by leaps and bounds. When I have talked to its owner, Paschal McCloskey, he has told me that in no small measure the amount of growth we have seen in Canada is due to the actions our government has taken to reduce his costs of manufacturing and doing business in Canada.

We have made investments in partnership with him through programs like the eastern Ontario development program and through the new Southern Ontario development agency, FedDev Ontario. We have made targeted investments in education. The Canadian universities association was very supportive of the budget. The colleges were very supportive of the budget. Students recognized that the budget made fundamental investments.

There are many items in the budget that are so important. This implementation bill is the actual meat of the budget being put into action.

● (1250)

When we follow through on these commitments, companies like McCloskey International can continue to grow. What it told me was that because of the measures we put in place, it could manufacture equipment cheaper and more efficiently on the east side of Peterborough than it could in Ireland, or at one of their other European facilities. That has allowed the company to expand its workforce dramatically. It has more than doubled in the last three years. A lot of middle-class families now have an income.

I would invite the hon. member from Winnipeg to come back and ask me a question about the middle-class families in my riding that have a job directly attributable to the government's economic leadership. It is fundamental and important.

We talk about promoting jobs and economic growth by providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring. The NDP has indicated that it would like to see this, but it will vote against it. It just does not make any sense. As a former owner and operator of a small business that had a couple of dozen employees, this is the type of incentive that encourages people to hire. It reduces the overall cost of employment. It is not just the wages paid, it is the employment taxes on top of that which also have to be taken into account. This kind of incentive is very important for small business.

I would also note that the member from Winnipeg also indicated that he would like to see lower taxes on businesses. I remember, and I am sure some of my colleagues who have been here since 2006 remember it well, that the member voted against small business tax reductions every time we introduced them. When we raised the cap for capital gains that small businesses could in fact be exempt from, the member voted against it. When we reduced the tax rate from 12% to 11%, the member voted against it. When we moved the limits from \$300,000 to \$400,000 when the tax rates would change over, which were big moves for small business, the NDP consistently voted against it.

The NDP also voted against all the infrastructure investments and the things on which small businesses thrive, such as good roads, good infrastructure for things like the Internet. I note the Speaker has been a strong advocate for eastern Ontario. The government has made a fundamental investment into broadband Internet in our region. This is an infrastructure investment that will help us encourage more investment, on top of the tax measures that we have put in place, even on top of things like the volunteer firefighters tax credit. This encourages the building of small communities.

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We are following a plan that encourages economic growth and job creation, and it is balanced. When we are reducing taxes, building infrastructure, helping people who live in the communities to undertake their volunteer positions, or just to live in those communities, we are coming forward with a balanced economic plan. That is why that balanced economic plan is leading the G7. That is why we are going to stay the course. Only by staying the course, continuing to keep taxes low, eliminating debt and making the investments for the future that need to be made, will Canada continue to lead all nations. That is our goal. We have said it many times.

I remember just a couple of weeks ago, the British prime minister spoke in the House and said that the 21st century may very well belong to Canada. It is because of the leadership of this government, of this caucus, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

I will close with just a couple of quotes, which I think are important. Here is what the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters had to say:

The extension of the two year write-off for investments in manufacturing and processing technologies announced in...[Budget 2011] is critical to sustaining Canada's economic recovery.

The member said that our party was attacking unions. This is what the Canadian Labour Congress had to say:

—the CLC has pushed hard for an increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement...paid to 1.6 million low income seniors. [The Finance] Minister has made a modest improvement to the GIS in this budget. This is a win for every senior living in poverty...

The NDP voted against it.

I also point out that the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, a huge organization that does so much promoting an outdoor lifestyle, and is based in Peterborough, said, among other things, that it applauded the inclusion of items in budget 2011 that would benefit the outdoor community across Canada. I cannot understand why the NDP would vote against that.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his speech and ask him a question about the budget.

The members talk a lot about investments and the economy but I find it very sad that they do not talk about the people in this country who are using food banks. Over 850,000 people used food banks last year, which is an increase of 70,000 people in one year.

What do the members opposite think they can do in the new budget to help these people who desperately need food and assistance?

[*English*]

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue on our focus toward promoting economic growth and job creation because that is the surest path to helping those less fortunate. In my community I participate in fundraisers for groups like Kawartha Food Share that help those less fortunate. We have worked to raise significant funding for them.

However, the ability for a government and a community to help those less fortunate is in building a stronger community and having a stronger government. We cannot give from a position of weakness. The positions put forward by the NDP to take on more debt, more spending and higher taxes would weaken Canada's economy and Canada's government and leave us unable to help those less fortunate in our communities.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for the hon. member.

He talked about the most vulnerable in society and I find that group somehow was overlooked. He talked about the CLC and that it was quoted as saying “a modest increase”. That is not the increase it was looking for. That is rather disingenuous. He should quote it in its entirety because we are looking at an increase that is well over that, in fact a little over two times that, in order to bring most of these seniors out of that vulnerable stage.

I will take one example, and I hope he talks to this specifically. The volunteer firefighter tax credit that the Conservatives brag about so much is a non-refundable tax credit. This basically means that the most vulnerable in society, those low-income people, will not benefit one dollar from this tax credit. A person would have to make above a certain level of income in order to get any benefit from this tax credit. Why is this tax credit not a refundable tax credit, much like the other tax credits budgeted, so the most vulnerable would share in that benefit?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro: Mr. Speaker, if the member speaks to the volunteer firefighters in his community, and I have spoken to mine, this is a very significant move. It is not a new program, but we have increased the program that previously existed. Firefighters in my community have come forward to let me know that they appreciate this and that they know their voices have been heard.

On the other point brought forward by the member regarding old age security and GIS, this is a significant increase in GIS and the Liberal Party voted against it. I wonder why the Liberals would do that. The bottom line is when people are in need, we do what we can to help them. The government made a very significant increase in GIS and all parties should have been able to rally around that and support it. It is unfortunate that they did not.

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

As this is my first time as a member of Parliament to have the opportunity to speak in support of a bill, I would like to say what an honour it is to be here on behalf of the citizens in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

While it is easy to cite statistics and quote numbers in support of the bill, Canada's economic performance and job creation record are without equal under the leadership of this government. However, it is more important to share with members of the House how the policies and direction contained in the bill would create jobs and support our Canadian economy.

Government Orders

Before I begin, I feel the need to share something that is important. Day in and day out in the House we consistently hear the opposition attack the very notion that any form of tax relief or tax incentive for a business is somehow a bad thing. Yet it is the same business community that provides the jobs that keep our citizens employed and our economy strong.

Perhaps I am too new, but I believe that members opposite care about jobs and keeping citizens employed in their ridings that they represent. However, it is not talk or increases in taxation that create jobs. It is economic policy and investment that will help create employment. That is why I will be supporting the bill.

I would like to speak to a very specific example of one of the many important job creation aspects contained in Bill C-13 and how that would create jobs in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

Bill C-13 proposes to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years.

The community of Okanagan Falls in my riding was particularly hard hit by the collapse of the U.S. lumber industry. The economic fall-out resulted in the community's largest employer Weyerhaeuser lumber mill to shut down. I am certain that other members in the House know first-hand what kind of economic devastation that can create in a small community such as a loss of jobs, the decrease to the total tax base and the increase of incidents of domestic violence. These are some of the unfortunate byproducts of unemployment.

To add insult to injury, the mountain beetle epidemic also threatened much of the local timber supply around Okanagan Falls and many forest-dependent communities in British Columbia.

This past June I was back in Okanagan Falls to attend the opening of Canada's, and in fact North America's, first large scale, state-of-the-art cross-laminated timber manufacturing production facility. This new plant created many vitally needed well-paying jobs in Okanagan Falls.

However, we have to recognize that this plant represents a multi-million dollar investment. The machinery and equipment alone are highly specialized and critical to the operation and success of this plant. The big master is the world's largest planer. It is one of the keys to the success of cross-laminated construction. Unfortunately, it is also incredibly expensive.

That is why it is critically important to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing machinery and equipment, exactly as Bill C-13 proposes. In fact, it is precisely these tax incentives and relief policies that ensure that big businesses invest in big equipment like the big master. The big master, that mammoth-sized planer, creates jobs. The opposition sees big business as nothing more than a source to increase taxes, but increasing taxes means more money flows to Ottawa instead of investing in jobs and equipment like the big master.

This is a really important success story and I hope all members, especially the opposition, will listen carefully as I continue.

The new jobs and machinery at this cross-laminated timber manufacturing plant will create highly specialized cross-lam panels that are used in commercial and industrial applications as a

replacement for concrete. Compared to concrete the cross-lam panels are six to seven times lighter and, as a result, are much more easier and economical to transport. They also require considerably less energy to produce and generate less waste, so it is also a more environmentally friendly product.

Here is what is really exciting. Cross-laminated timber can actually use surplus pine beetle killed timber as a fibre source. This is potentially the first commercially viable application for beetle wood in a structural application. What is more, cross-laminated construction can create in the very near future an entire wood sourced building that has vastly superior earthquake resistance than anything currently on the market. Think about the job potential of state-of-the-art, economically constructed earthquake resistant structures for a province like British Columbia that is strategically located to the Asia-Pacific gateway. The potential is huge.

• (1300)

All that stands in the way is another multi-million dollar investment in equipment and machinery from business. That is why the proposal in this bill to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery equipment is so critically important. It creates jobs and has the potential to create a whole new industry, an innovative value-added sector that could be a boon to many forest-dependent communities.

Bill C-13 also proposes to extend the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector.

Recently the premier of British Columbia announced that more provincial resources would be allocated to help the opening of eight new mines.

Let us also recognize that big business is the same big business that the opposition likes to try to tax out of existence. These are the very companies that are needed to invest literally hundreds of millions of dollars in machinery and equipment which in turn create not just jobs but high-paying jobs, even jobs for working people. We all know the term "working people" includes the exclusive worker who the opposition members consistently place ahead of all others.

Before we can have mines that lead to jobs we need mineral exploration. The mineral exploration tax credit helps create mines which help create these jobs.

In my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla is the Highland Valley copper mine. It provides hundreds of well-paying jobs.

Government Orders

Recently big business announced its intention to invest \$475 million to upgrade Highland Valley's mill to extend its output and its ore recovery. This announcement also allowed for a five year new tentative agreement between big business and the workers who are members of the United Steelworkers Union.

Instead of sending more money to Ottawa, as the opposition is calling for, big business is investing money directly into my riding where it continues to create more well-paying jobs. I raise this because it is important for the members of the opposition to realize that we cannot tax business out of existence. Business has to have the funds to reinvest and create jobs.

I have briefly touched on just two points in Bill C-13 to illustrate how this bill can and will help to create jobs in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla, as well as continue to help keep our economy strong.

There are over 20 other measures contained in Bill C-13 that will also create jobs and support the local economy in my region. The temporary hiring credit for small business, the permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund, the family caregiver tax, and the new children's arts tax credit are a few examples.

I also believe Bill C-13 will support jobs and the economy as well as provide a balance that will help families and seniors improve their quality of life. I thank the members opposite for listening to my comments and the reasons that I will be supporting Bill C-13, which will support the economy in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

●(1305)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the very passionate speech made by my colleague from British Columbia.

At the same time, I am rising today because I am hearing from the business community in Newton—North Delta, which is a very large section of that riding, that more breaks are needed for small- and medium-size businesses. We know that small- and medium-size businesses are the backbone of our economy. They create jobs that remain in our communities and that also add to the wealth and diversity of our nation.

I know there is a temporary tax credit for small- and medium-size businesses. However, what else is in this plan to help small- and medium-size businesses create jobs that will stay in Canada and help sustain our communities right across the nation?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, simply put, the government has taken more action to help small business and has been doing so since taking office in 2006. In this particular budget it is providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage that additional hiring.

All our members are thinking about the economy. We are focused on jobs and economic growth. We are listening to people, such as those from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who are solidly behind us because they know it is the right thing for our economy and for Canada.

I call upon my hon. colleague to support this measure and all of the measures in our budget.

●(1310)

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passionate speech as well as his hard work on behalf of his constituents.

There is also a very large manufacturing base in my riding where I am hearing a lot of positive feedback from businesses, especially with regard to the accelerated capital allowance.

For those businesses as well as the members in the House who may not be fully aware, I would appreciate if the member would elaborate on what it would do and how it would benefit small business.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of particulars in Bill C-13 that we can all support.

A temporary hiring credit for small business would encourage additional hiring. Right now businesses are in a state of uncertainty. They read things in the newspaper. We want to encourage them to hire new people by reducing those costs. By reducing those costs we give them more certainty which allows them to expand their business, which could be by getting more sales or providing better service.

Going back to the accelerated manufacturing credit, I would also mention that it is those kinds of business decisions that we want to encourage where they can buy that new equipment, such as a big master planer. We want to ensure that businesses feel encouraged that now is the time to be supporting economic growth and getting those jobs.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thanks to technology I was able to find on Google the company Structurlam, which the member mentioned. It looks like quite a company and is the type that will do well in the future.

He talked about the accelerated capital cost allowance and how it would allow companies like that to purchase larger machinery. However, does he not fear that the decreasing dollar value, now hovering closer to 90¢, would wipe out a lot of the credits and benefits that may ensue from the government's budget?

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, basically we have a business environment where on long-term expenditures, such as purchasing such big master planers or whatnot, it is important to send the right signal now. We are saying we support jobs and economic growth. We support and encourage those businesses to meet those challenges. There will always be challenges. However, this government stands behind big and small businesses no matter where they are in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, a lovely riding.

Government Orders

[English]

I will change course a bit. The last two members spoke at length about what this budget does for big business and corporations in Canada. Certainly we in the Liberal Party understand fully that one of the greatest things a Canadian can have is a job. It is important that our corporations are strong and our small business owners do well. Those initiatives are important but we cannot do that in isolation. We have seen what happens with trickle-down investments. Very rarely do those in need in this country reap any type of benefit.

In 2007, 9.2% of the population was living in poverty. Now almost 10% of the population is living close to the poverty line. Therefore, I will focus my comments today on those who do not have a voice, those I have not heard mentioned throughout this debate and those not mentioned in the chamber.

Before I begin my comments on poverty, I want to speak specifically about some of the closures of Service Canada and EI processing centres that are taking place across the country. There are 600 people processing EI applications now who will be sent home over the next number of months. Conservatives talk about investing in rural communities. This action by the government will take jobs out of rural Canada and consolidate them into fewer positions. However, those positions that will be maintained will be moved into centres that have very low unemployment rates.

I point specifically to three cases where the government centralized jobs. In Gander, Corner Brook and Happy Valley-Goose Bay where the unemployment rate is 17%, the jobs are being moved to St. John's where the unemployment rate is under 6%. In Edmundston, Campbellton and Bathurst where the unemployment rate fluctuates anywhere from 11% to 15%, the jobs are being moved to Moncton where the unemployment rate is under 7%. Finally, in Sydney where the unemployment rate is over 16%, a number of jobs are being moved to Halifax where the unemployment rate is under 6%. It makes no sense at all.

When questioned in the House on this, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development came back with the line that they were temporary jobs created with the economic action plan. That is absolute hogwash. That is misinformation provided on the part of the minister. There are 70 employees at the call centre in Glace Bay, which has been operating for well over 25 years, where 50 are permanent and 20 are term. Those term employees were all employed prior to the economic action plan.

The part that makes no sense at all is that the government is trimming these jobs when we know we are on the cusp of another economic downturn. We have seen the increase in the unemployment rates, which we know will continue to grow. What will then happen is as more people are unemployed, they will file for benefits. When they contact the employment insurance office there will be fewer bodies to handle the calls which will create more of a backlog. That is unacceptable.

In 2006, 80% of calls were handled within the three minute work standard for responding to telephone inquiries at EI call centres. As we speak, that percentage has gone from 80% to 32%. Calls are being dropped. People are phoning to ask where their EI cheques are

and wondering when the next bit of money will be coming in to buy groceries, diapers or whatever it might be to help keep that household running. They are having to call back 10, 15 or 20 times before they get an agent.

• (1315)

These are the most vulnerable in our society. These are people who have the toughest time working from paycheque to paycheque and there is no mention of that in this budget. That is unacceptable.

The budget is 642 pages long and the word "poverty" comes up twice. The government sees poverty as a spending issue. Most Canadians see it as an investment issue. Certainly the people on this side of the House see it as an investment issue and the government has missed the target completely with the initiatives taken in this budget.

There are a couple of glossy things in the budget. Conservatives throw a couple of nuggets in it. It is like a bouquet of thorns with a couple of roses thrown in for good measure. Where I have concern is in the totality of the budget, that it does not do enough for Canadians who are up against it and will continue to be as we go forward.

I want to bring to the attention of every member in the House a study which has just been done on poverty. Senator Art Eggleton did an exceptional study entitled "In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness" on initiatives that could be pursued by the government in order to address poverty.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources and Skills Development embarked on a three-year study on poverty. Former NDPer Tony Martin did a lot of work on it. My great friend from Dartmouth Coal Harbour, Mike Savage, put a lot of time on it. It was an excellent report that went forward to the government which pretty much dismissed it. The government is motivated by dollars and cents.

That is why I want to bring to the attention of members, especially those on the other side of the chamber, to the National Council of Welfare report which is a branch of the government. The study it just completed is entitled "The Dollars and Sense of Solving Poverty". I am sure it will be distributed to all members, but I encourage them to take a look at it. It is a great study and talks about an investment model going forward to deal with some of the aspects of poverty.

Some of the anecdotal comments in the report highlight a couple of very obvious things. They make a great deal of sense. It talks about housing and investing in housing. If people do not have a place to live, or continue to find themselves in unacceptable housing conditions, if they are worried about whether they and their children are going to have a roof over their heads, that drifts into their physical health, their mental health and emotional well-being, but certainly their physical health as well. If people are sick and do not have a safe place to live, how are they able to focus on getting healthy again? Housing relates to costs on the health care system.

Government Orders

The study indicates that 20% of the cost of our health care system is attributed to socio-economic factors. If child care spaces are not available, how does a single mom take a job if she does not know what she is going to do with her children? If we have citizens who are engaged in the economy, if a single mother is able to go to school, or able to take a job, that is what we as legislators want to do. We want to ensure that those opportunities are there and the assets are in place so people can become contributing citizens within this great country.

The government has missed an opportunity in this budget. What scares me is that with the justice bills, things are going to get tougher on those who need help the most.

• (1320)

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my robust colleague across the way for his comments.

The member was talking about those who are being disadvantaged. In fact, we have done more for poverty-stricken and low income individuals in Canada.

Let us talk about the new veterans charter. When the Liberals were in government, they did none of these things to help our veterans who were sometimes up against the wall. There are now disability awards to recognize veterans' pain, suffering and injury of \$800 to \$285,000. As well, with the earnings lost benefit, income replacement while in rehabilitation, 75% have seen a minimum of \$40,000, and, in fact, the top part is non-taxable. Also, the amount for death benefits was not as high as it is now at \$285,000, which is non-taxable.

I list just a couple of things the government has done so far. I would not mind my colleague's response and hope that he would support it.

• (1325)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure, it does not matter whether a member supports it or not, we know that the government would ram it through anyway. We know we are going to be force-fed here for the next four years.

I hold a great deal of respect for the member, and I listened as he stated his case on some of the boutique tax reductions. The government sort of has a buffet table of tax reductions; however, one must drill down to get into the actual aspects of it.

The government did a pretty good thing with the tax credit for volunteer firefighters, but it is a non-refundable tax credit. Those who are under a certain annual income would not be able to receive it. Therefore, there are some guys on the fire department who receive it and some who do not. It is not fair. It is not bad for some, but not for all. We see that with the family caregiver tax credit as well. These boutique tax cuts have a varying impact in the community.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech, in which he spoke about the most vulnerable members of our society. I would like to ask him a question about the budget approach. He mentioned that it was the combination of all the small measures that created one

big document. How does he think we could remodel this budget in the current economic context?

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, there is some piecemeal effort here, but we have seen programs before. Some past governments have done good things. We know where the level of poverty for seniors was in the 1960s and that it is considerably less now. We have seen programs like CPP and the guaranteed income supplement and, just by chance, they were Liberal initiatives. However, I am sure the opposition of the day supported that.

Good things can be done, but we have certainly not seen an attempt or any effort through this budget to even address poverty. Like I said, within the 640-odd pages of the budget, poverty is mentioned twice. We recognize that it is not a priority with the current government. We recognize that the poor in this country and those who find themselves close to the poverty line are on their own for the next four years.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Cape Breton—Canso for generously sharing his time with me. I want to just add to his speech.

One element of his speech that I found should be brought up in the House once again is the measure by which jobs are to be put into efficiency mode. In other words, they are being shifted around and moved to places when in fact it is a cloak and dagger way to eliminate positions within the most vulnerable communities. In my riding in Newfoundland and Labrador, I have 195 communities and in one of those larger communities, Gander, it is losing 30 positions or more. They are moving to an area of lower unemployment and the excuses that come out boggle the mind.

The advent of technology has put us in a place where people can do their job in certain areas and they do not have to be centred around a particular building or group of people. It is a remote way of connecting. I heard one of the other members from the government talking about the wonderful broadband Internet strategy. As I mentioned, I have 195 communities in my riding and 65 of them do not have access to broadband Internet. It is like a community that has no access to even get in there. It is not good for business, it is not good for all these credits that the Conservatives are promising, as my colleague points out, these boutique tax credits. It means very little if they set up in a place that does not have access to broadband Internet and certainly some of the basic resources.

I want to move on to some of the measures that are contained within this budget and some of the stuff we find is a promising gesture. However, the promising gesture does not come to fruition. It does not come to its logical conclusion to allow those in poverty to be brought out of poverty and I can think of many examples such as the tax credits regarding the family, the volunteer firefighters and others. Because these tax credits are non-refundable, the lowest end of the poverty scale does not benefit from them. That is unfortunate because, in a big way, that is what these tax credits are for. That is probably the largest part of the population that would benefit the most from this. It is rather disingenuous when they play with these numbers and they do not explore the stories that exist behind them.

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When the Conservatives reduced the GST by two points several years ago, I remember how they bragged about saving money for so many impoverished people. However, the story we do not hear is that the real beneficiary of a two-point cut in the GST was a person buying a home valued over \$300,000 or buying a car that is valued over \$20,000 or \$25,000. The person who goes day to day scraping by, trying to get enough money to pay an electricity bill was not the biggest beneficiary of a 2% cut to the GST. Look what that did to the treasury itself.

So in the estimation of the government, it might be tax cutting that benefits the most vulnerable but it is not. If the government wants to brag about the tax cutting measures that it has for protecting elements of society like the upper class, the upper middle class or businesses, then it should say so.

My biggest problem with the particular government is not so much the thrust of its policy as it is the salesmanship behind it. In regard to something that was announced several months ago but now has been re-announced, but that is a whole other issue, the government will say that it will offer this brand new tax credit for small business that is taxed itself. The other issue is that, come January, there will be that increase or, so as not to offend the treasury, a modest increase in the EI premiums. It is a typical example of "I will give you this and while you aren't looking I'll take from here". It shows up in the copyright legislation that we are about to debate but I will leave that for another day.

It is unfortunate because we are now in the middle of time allotment because the Conservatives have cut down on the debate in this House.

• (1330)

Let us face it, we are paid fairly well to be in the House, yet we cannot have this conversation. We cannot have this discussion among ourselves from all different regions of this country to find out what these measures will mean.

The median income in my riding is among the lowest in the country. It is not the lowest, but it is pretty close. Therefore, the message from people in my particular area would be that they do not benefit from this particular tax credit. Would it not be advantageous to have a refundable tax credit, so that someone who is on a lower income would get the benefit by way of a refund?

It would not be income tested. It would not be based on an individual's particular income. This cuts across a wide array of these boutique tax credits, as my hon. colleague from Cape Breton points out, and quite rightly.

I do find that some of the matters that are not being discussed here are of great importance. Now that we have a majority government in place for the next four or five years, it is an opportunity for us to have a good, long discussion that is broad in scope on pension security.

Pension security will be one of those issues that will come back to haunt us several years down the road, and somebody will look back at us and say that at this particular moment, we did not really discuss what was most important. That is unfortunate.

I am not wholeheartedly against corporate tax cuts. I do believe, in many instances, that they do exactly what the government says. I do not think they are altruistic. I am not one of those people who blindly believes that any corporate tax credit will go directly toward creating new jobs. Corporations have shareholders; they want their returns, and they want a nice return. A lot of their shareholders include many of our seniors and the like, and there is nothing wrong with that. However, let us not expect a corporate tax credit to dig us out of levels of poverty at a time when we cannot really afford it.

I look at corporate tax credits and then I look at millions of dollars put into the F-35 jets. I am not one to turn down more resources for the Canadian military, but what about search and rescue? Where does that line up? It is a priority issue that we debate in the House, and unfortunately, every time we try to debate it, the debate gets shortened.

There are some good, concrete measures within the budget and within other pieces of legislation. There, I admit it.

Some are way too modest to make a difference. The CLC credited the government by saying it was a modest increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors. Of course it is a modest one. It could have been doubled. Numbers from many think tanks and many corners of this country say that if we had doubled that amount of money, from a \$300 million to a \$700 million investment, it could have brought many more people above that poverty line.

Let us bear in mind that a lot of people in my area depend on the government for their sole source of income: a combination of CPP, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. These are people who have larger homes, and that is the only income they have. Winter is coming, and, as we all know, oil is not particularly cheap these days, and has not been for the past five to 10 years.

I would look at this debate as a way of saying yes to this and more of that. Instead of a vote of no, it is a question of saying that the government can do a lot better. The people demand of not only the government but of us as individual MPs that we reflect the opinions of our ridings that it can be done better.

• (1335)

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Newfoundland talks about how the government gives us this and takes it away from us here.

It is quite true. I get a lot of inquiries from seniors. The government gives them an increase on their CPP in January, and then it claws it back on their GIS in July.

The Conservatives think they are doing great things for seniors, yet seniors are not getting the money they deserve. I wonder if the member would like to comment on that.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, one of the things the member talks about, and we get a lot of calls about this, is that when there is that modest increase in CPP, there is a decrease in the old age security. We have to look at this.

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Another example is that a lot of seniors out there will take money out of their RRSPs. When they do that, what ends up happening is a decrease in their old age security, their basic income from the government, which they have invested in for the past 40 years of their lives. Therefore, the RRSP is not the vehicle they wanted it to be. The investment that was there is no longer there, simply because of government regulation.

When it comes to pension security, my hon. colleague is right: it is a lot of giving and taking back. That can be fixed by having the discussion here and over the next three years.

• (1340)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to further elaborate on that exact point of the government giving with one hand and taking back with the other hand.

We are all aware that in January the government is going to increase payroll taxes by 5.6%. Any small business operator in this country fully understands that payroll taxes are job-killing taxes. The government is going to introduce that increase, but it is saying in the budget is that it is going to give it back with the other hand. It is going to have a hiring credit for small business to a maximum of \$1,000. That credit is going to be taxable. CRA has said it is going to tax it.

Up front there is going to be the additional payroll tax, and there is going to be this other tax credit, but it is going to be taken back. The government is sort of taking it back twice. It is unprecedented for the government to be taking the money back twice, but the government will stand up, take a bow and pat itself on the back for all the great things that it does.

Does my colleague see that it is imperative that we as an opposition stand up and make Canadians aware that there is a shell game going on over there that has never been seen before in this country? It is smoke and mirrors about the help that is on its way. The government is taking it back with the other hand.

Does my colleague see that we have to take this message to Canadians?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is a little frustrated, as we all are.

I would have to say that in this particular situation the member is right. In some cases the government will actually take it back twice, only to provide a benefit in the future, so it goes here, it goes there. It is here and there. It is like the Cirque du Soleil of fiscal policy. It goes up and it goes down, and it never stops.

Unfortunately, that is the problem of the salesmanship in all these boutique tax credits out there. The problem is that the most vulnerable are not going to be assisted by it, even though the government says that they will be.

It is a government numbers game, saying x numbers of people will actually benefit from this particular tax cut, but in fact they are not the most vulnerable, as the government claims, and unfortunately this little shell game, as my hon. colleague points out, will continue on other measures. It is like going to the store and seeing what we

want in the window, but by the time we get to the cash register, it is an entirely different piece of policy. That is unfortunate.

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my fine colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul.

I am pleased to rise on behalf of my constituents and to speak with my colleagues about the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. The legislation introduced by our Minister of Finance, Bill C-13 is a key element in the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

We made a promise to Canadians to focus on the economy and to continue to deliver new jobs and strong economic growth.

With the excellent leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister Flaherty, this Conservative government—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. I would like to remind this hon. member and all others that it is inappropriate to use the given names of other members of this House while in the chamber. He can refer to them by their ridings or by their titles, but not by their given names.

Mr. Rob Clarke: I do apologize, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and this Conservative government have cemented the strongest job growth in the G7. Since July 2009 we have created nearly 600,000 new net jobs. This is a result that our government can hang its hat on.

The International Monetary Fund projects that Canada will continue to be one of the strongest nations in the G7 over the next two years. While we appreciate that claim, it does not mean that Canada is protected from the global economic turbulence it is now facing. That is why our government is moving forward with, and implementing, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

One of my favourite features of Bill C-13, and one which would help my constituents tremendously, is the forgiving of loans for new doctors and nurses in rural and remote areas. This excellent program will help make access to quality health care in my riding and across Canada easier. It will create jobs in the riding and also support numerous communities in my riding.

Another example of our government helping communities and the excellent volunteers within them is the introduction of the volunteer firefighters tax credit. I know from my own experience serving in the RCMP what it was like to be in the line of duty and see volunteer firefighters at motor vehicle accidents. These are the individuals who put their lives on the line every day just for a simple thanks.

These individuals not only serve in the line of duty but do so as a volunteers. These volunteer firefighters are hard-working taxpaying Canadians. This tax credit would help ease the burden in these difficult economic times. Nearly 85,000 volunteer firefighters provide their services to protect the lives and property of Canadians living in communities across Canada. I greatly respect the work that they do.

As a result of our Conservative government, families are now able to enrol their children in artistic, cultural, recreational and sporting activities. This is great, and with a young family myself, I know the value and results that this brings. Youth stay active and their minds are challenged. It keeps them working hard for their future endeavours so they can contribute to the Canadian economy in years to come.

We are also investing in education by helping apprentices in the skilled trades or workers in regulated professions by making their occupational or professional examination fees eligible for the tuition tax credit.

These are excellent policies that will improve the lives and livelihoods of all Canadians.

Bill C-13 also has excellent measures for supporting Canada's forestry industry, something that is very important for my constituents.

By extending the powers of Export Development Canada to provide financing support to Canadian forestry companies, we have created new jobs and growth. In fact, a new mill is opening in Big River in northern Saskatchewan, and it will provide over 100 new jobs in the reforestation and transportation fields and also in the sawmill process. By extending the enhanced work sharing program to assist forestry employers, we have protected those forestry jobs that were at risk.

Another excellent initiative that helps my riding is the mineral exploration tax credit.

The Canadian mining industry is very important to my riding in northern Saskatchewan. There are numerous mines, and they employ thousands of people. In fact, 300,000 Canadians are employed in the mining industry today. This industry promotes economic stability and growth in the many rural towns and first nations and Métis communities in my riding.

I am very proud to be a part of the Conservative government. We are leading the way on the world stage on how to manage the economy effectively through this dangerous recession.

It is no wonder Canada is the envy of the world.

Our Conservative government set out on a mission to provide stability and growth in these troubled economic times while keeping taxes low, and we have accomplished that.

I would like to quote from Warren Jestin, the chief economist at Scotiabank, who pointed out in the *Daily Commercial News and Construction Record* on September 27 that "Canada is the best place to be and almost everything I look at screams that out to me."

● (1345)

We cut taxes over 120 times since 2006. This has resulted in the overall tax burden being at the lowest level in nearly 50 years. We reduced the GST, as it was pointed out, from 7% to 5%. We provided seniors with pension income splitting. We introduced a child fitness tax credit. We cut the personal tax rate to 15%, the lowest it has ever been, and we introduced a children's arts and tax credit. This has resulted in a total savings of over \$3,000 for the average Canadian

Government Orders

family. That is \$3,000 back in their pockets. These are results that all Canadians can be proud of.

The number one issue for this government is getting people back to work, which will help the communities and the country grow.

Today's bill announces measures that would encourage hiring and provide additional financial support to Canadian workers and families during the recovery, including a temporary hiring credit for small businesses of up to \$1,000 against small employer increases in their 2011 EI premiums over those paid in 2010.

Today's bill also proposes \$4.5 million annually to expand the wage earners' protection program to cover employees who lose their jobs when their employer's attempt at restructuring takes longer than six months, is unsuccessful and ends in bankruptcy or receivership.

In conclusion, Canadians gave our Conservative government the mandate to continue to lead the way on the world stage. I am here to tell members that we will continue to lead the way and Bill C-13 is the way forward for this country.

● (1350)

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for this entire fishing season on the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, we have a shrimp plant that has not been working in quite some time. We are looking at a couple hundred people affected by this closure over this season and, for a lot of them, the benefits they received from employment insurance have now diminished.

I wonder if the hon. member would help me address how the economic action plan would help those people when I meet them soon.

Mr. Rob Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I, too, have, in northern Saskatchewan, freshwater fishing. What this government is doing is lowering taxes to help small businesses get back on their feet and to give them an opportunity to start hiring more people. That is why we have more people and why we are looking at further negotiations in the world free trade agreements. There are 50 new ones in negotiations right now. These will promote fishing—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You are drinking our own Kool-Aid.

Mr. Rob Clarke: Mr. Speaker, hopefully the member can go back and say to those people that this government is working hard to promote industry, all industries, from fishing, wild rice harvesting—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You have to be kidding.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That would be lying on your part.

Statements by Members

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, given that my colleague represents a constituency similar in many ways to the one I have the honour of representing, I would like to hear his thoughts on why, in the government's economic plan, we have not seen the priority put on first nations and the needs that first nations have in our regions in northern Canada, whether it is in terms of housing, funding for education or, quite frankly, a real commitment to economic development in some of the communities where the highest rates of poverty exist in our country.

Given that reality is so critical in our part of the country, I would very much like to hear his thoughts on why his government has been negligent on all of those priorities.

Mr. Rob Clarke: Mr. Speaker, as I earlier said, forestry and mining are very important in my riding. Those communities across northern Saskatchewan deal every day with those industries. Many first nations people are employed there. Many Métis are employed there. Many non-aboriginals are also employed there. We have people coming from Newfoundland and Labrador to Fort McMurray for employment. We have people coming from Ontario to northern Saskatchewan to work at the uranium mines. That is why we have invested over \$1 billion just in the forestry alone for the pulp and paper and green transformation program. That promotes economic stimulus for northern Saskatchewan, as well. We have provided millions of dollars to the mining industry in order to promote job growth.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to one of my colleagues on the Liberal side talk about a shell game. I was quite intrigued by that comment because it is my understanding that the biggest shell game that ever happened was the \$40 million that were distributed in brown envelopes. However, that is not my question.

I would ask the member to touch a bit on the capital cost allowance that our government is instituting in this bill.

• (1355)

Mr. Rob Clarke: Mr. Speaker, we have cut taxes by \$120 million since 2006. We have taken one million low-income families, individuals and seniors off the tax rolls altogether, which is very important. We have cut taxes in every way. We cut personal taxes, consumption taxes, business taxes, excise taxes and much more. This includes cutting the personal income tax to 15%.

Wherever we can, we are working to lower the tax burden on Canadian families, as well as on small business in order to promote more business in Canada.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today in support of the budget implementation bill, Bill C-13. The bill has been debated for a very long time. It was initially tabled in the House on March 22, and today we are dealing with the implementation of the second phase of that bill.

What has happened since we started this discussion? Not only was it debated in the House, not only did it go to committee for a thorough examination and not only did it come back to the House, but we had an election. During that election, I think every member went door to door and talked about the budget. What happened in the end? The Conservatives have a majority government. Why? It is

because Canadians said that this government would take care of the economy in this country.

Why were Canadians worried about that? They were worried because there was a disaster in Haiti, a disaster in Japan and a disaster in Iceland where two volcanoes erupted and caused a lot of problems with air quality and things like that. During those disasters, Canada generously participated to help communities and it kept a close eye on what was happening on our economic home front.

The Prime Minister has taken an amazing leadership role. Canada is known as the country with the most economic stability in the world at this point in time. It is not just this side of the House saying that. Many well-known companies, organizations and third parties have said that. Canada has the strongest job growth record in the G7.

What has happened because of this good planning? Six hundred thousand new jobs have been created and Canada's people are working. That is incredible.

The International Monetary Fund is forecasting that Canada will have the strongest overall economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. That is why we need to pass the second phase of this budget implementation bill and allow the economy to grow. Many wonderful things are happening and Canada is in a stable situation. Why? It is because our Prime Minister and the caucus have put together an economic plan that is good for Canada, Canadians, families and seniors.

Canada has the lowest total government net debt to GDP ratio in the G7, which is something to be proud of. We will get the deficit under control. There is a plan to do that.

The World Economic Forum ranks Canada's financial system as the soundest in the world for the fourth consecutive year. That is amazing in this global downturn. Moody's is renewing Canada's triple A credit rating due to our economic resilience. There is very high government financial strength. The world is saying that it is looking to Canada as a leader. As the prime minister of England said, "this is Canada's year". This is Canada's year because of the leadership.

• (1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul at this point to move on to statements by members. When the House returns to this matter she will have six minutes remaining in her speech.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

LOUISEVILLE BUCKWHEAT PANCAKE FESTIVAL

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to an important event in my riding.

Statements by Members

The Louiseville Buckwheat Pancake Festival began on September 30 and will run until October 9. This festival has become a community fixture over its 33-year history, and I would like to highlight the work of its numerous volunteers. Louiseville has been officially recognized as buckwheat country, which goes to show how important this festival is. The people of Berthier—Maskinongé are proud of their history and traditions. The area knows how to showcase its culture and local products.

Along with the festival's organizers and the people of Berthier—Maskinongé, I would like to invite the public to come celebrate with us and take part in the cultural, social and gastronomic activities that are taking place in Louiseville.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents know that, while restorative justice approaches complement other criminal justice system responses to criminal behaviour, they are not intended to replace them.

That is why we are strengthening our laws, investing in crime prevention and increasing police presence on our streets. At the same time, we are respecting the rights of the accused, but we recognize that the rights of the criminals should not take precedence over victims and community safety.

This is one of the reasons that our legislation to crack down on child sex offenders and those who would deal drugs to youth has such widespread support among victims and our communities.

We have doubled the budget of the National Crime Prevention Centre and emphasized programming to help youth at risk. We created the youth gang prevention fund and increased its funding.

Canadians can count on us to keep their communities and streets safe and to stand up for victims.

It is about time the opposition supported victims and stopped obstructing our legislation.

* * *

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago, in one of the worst and horrific atrocities of the Holocaust, 33,731 Jews were murdered in just two days at Babi Yar, an unspeakable horror too terrible to be believed, but not too terrible to have happened.

For 50 years, the fact that the murdered men, women and children were Jews was not even acknowledged, their identities simply erased, effectively killing the victims yet again.

It is with and because of the remnant of survivors in my constituency, as in the Ukraine and elsewhere, that we remember that each murdered person had an identity, that each was a universe and that we promise that never again will we be indifferent to racism and hate. Never again will we be silent in the face of evil. Never again will we be indulgent to anti-Semitism and mass atrocity anywhere.

May Babi Yar not be just an act of remembrance, which it is, but let it be a remembrance to act, which it must be.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's oil sands and energy sector drive the Canadian economy. The benefits for Canadian families and workers are simply overwhelming.

The Keystone pipeline and northern gateway project will help power our economy and deliver jobs for Canadian working families.

Employment resulting from these projects is expected to reach 1.6 million jobs by 2035. In the next 25 years, the effect on Canada's GDP will be over \$2 trillion, according to the Canadian Energy Research Institute.

By 2035, the investments and revenues from the oil sands will be close to \$5 trillion. Canada's working men and women will receive \$1.5 trillion in wages as a result of oil sands investment during this time.

The economy and jobs are our government's top priority, and Canada has some of the strongest environmental standards in the world.

Therefore, why is the NDP working with environmental extremists who want to destroy the livelihoods of thousands of Canadians who work in the oil sands and live from coast to coast to coast?

* * *

● (1405)

DARTMOUTH—COLE HARBOUR

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a buzz in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour right now. There is hope and optimism about our future. Companies are moving from Toronto to Dartmouth excited by the great potential they see. There are amazing new developments happening on the waterfront, bringing people and vitality to our beautiful harbour.

Excitement is building about a successful contract bid from our shipyards. In fact, Nova Scotia Community College just expanded its world-class metal fabrication program. People are talking, taking action and working hard to make life in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour better for themselves and others.

That is not to say that we do not have challenges in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. We do. There is clearly much work to be done and there is much that the government could do to help if it were able to listen and not be so out of touch.

Despite these issues, despite the challenges and despite the lack of progressive vision and compassionate leadership from the government, Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is growing stronger. We are making a name for ourselves and it is the people of my constituency who should be applauded for that. This—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

*Statements by Members***GUINNESS WORLD RECORD**

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to pay tribute to Arvid Loewen, a constituent from my riding of Kildonan—St. Paul, who has spent much of his life contributing to young people and families in our community. In 2006 Arvid resigned from his job to become a full time volunteer ambassador for the Mully Children's Family, a non-profit organization in Kenya that rescues and cares for vulnerable, at risk children. To date, Mully Children's Family has helped over 7,000 children.

This past summer, Arvid, a 54-year-old grandfather of three, decided to cycle across Canada to raise awareness and funds for the children in Kenya and challenge the standing Guinness world record. Arvid began his grueling journey in Vancouver on July 1, 2011, cycling 22 hours a day and sleeping only 2 hours a night. Thirteen days, 16 hours and 13 minutes later, Arvid arrived in Halifax, setting a new Guinness world record.

* * *

FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LETHBRIDGE

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow southern Albertans and many members and former members of the House will come to my riding in Lethbridge to celebrate the selfless career of over 30 years of public service of my predecessor and mentor, the Hon. Rick Casson. He came to Parliament in 1997 and worked tirelessly to provide a strong conservative voice for southern Alberta for 14 years. I am honoured that they have put their trust in me to do the same.

As chair of the defence committee, Mr. Casson was a genuine champion for the men and women in uniform and military veterans, particularly for those who served and sacrificed in Afghanistan.

Finally, it would be appropriate to acknowledge the 12 members of the House who have served in the military, including the member for Pickering—Scarborough East who sits two seats to my right, who served a tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2007.

I would like to thank these colleagues for a lifetime of service to our great country.

* * *

[Translation]

ORGANIZATION FOR SINGLE PARENTS

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the 25th anniversary celebrations of Sources Vives, an organization serving Beauport, Côte-de-Beaupré, Île d'Orléans and Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval. The organization was founded by single parents, both men and women, in order to bring people together and provide support for anyone in that situation or going through a separation.

The many services offered by this organization help to put an end to isolation, enhance families and cultivate positive attitudes. Thus, it has a special place in the community.

In closing, I wish to commend all the administrators and volunteers for their initiative and the success of the organization, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

[English]

VETERANS

Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the new veterans charter was introduced, our Conservative government promised Canada's veterans that it would be a living document, and we kept our promise. This week, the enhancements to the new veterans charter came into force. Through these enhancements, we are providing improved care and financial assistance, an enhanced earnings loss benefit and options for disability award payments.

Canada's veterans requested changes to the new veterans charter and we responded.

Enhancements to the new veterans charter are just one way in which the Conservative government is working to provide our veterans and their families the support they need. We must never forget the wonderful contribution these great Canadians have made to our country.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

AFFORDABLE SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the state of affordable social housing in this country is pitiful. The various affordable social housing programs administered by the federal government provide residents with inadequate basic living conditions and ignore those who need specialized services or who have physical limitations.

This government should do more to support affordable social housing.

[English]

In this time of austerity we must never forget that social housing is not wasted money. It is a sound economic investment. The more we do to help those who are most in need, the faster they will be able to find their own footing and participate in and contribute to Canada's economy. By helping people with basics, such as a base from which they can begin to build, we can help them turn their lives around.

Everyone has trouble making ends meet at some point. I encourage the government, on behalf of my constituency, to make a true investment in Canada. I challenge the government to see that economic prosperity is not only banks and multinationals, but about the people of Canada and especially those that need our help from time to time.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority remains on completing the economic recovery. Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters: creating jobs and economic growth.

Statements by Members

Canada has now created nearly 600,000 net new jobs since January 2009. We are the only G7 country that has regained more than all of the output and the jobs lost during the downturn.

We are not immune to the volatile global economic environment, largely due to problems of confidence in the efforts of governments to reduce their deficits. This is why our government is staying the course with our low tax plan to create jobs and growth. The last thing the Canadian economy needs is a massive NDP tax hike that would kill jobs, stall our recovery and set Canadian families back.

The next phase of the Canadian economic action plan will preserve our country's advantage in the global economy.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 8, 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced multiculturalism. Canadian multiculturalism represents the belief that no matter where one comes from or how long one has been in Canada, once the oath of citizenship is taken, one is a Canadian.

For too long political parties have relied on ethnic or cultural groups to vote for them. It is time that we integrate multicultural communities as full partners in the decision-making process of Canada. We need to ensure that all Canadians are fully engaged in the great experiment we call Canada. Multiculturalism is alive and well in Canada and it has a rightful place in our country.

We need to respect our fellow Canadians as equals. We need to accept them as full participants in all aspects of Canadian life. We need to celebrate their full participation in our communities. We need to embrace where it will take us. We need to come together as Canadians and show the world that in Canada we are all equal parts of the human race.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the hon. Minister of Health announced a new approach for energy drinks, which will include maximum limits for caffeine content. The proposed maximum caffeine levels for energy drinks is part of a new way to manage these popular beverages. Parents need to have access to as much information as possible so they are able to make good decisions when it comes to what their family eats and drinks.

The popularity of energy drinks has resulted in higher levels of caffeine consumption among young people than in the past. This has caused concern among some parents, health care providers and public health officials about potential health risks to teens and children. These new measures will not only allow Canadians to make informed decisions, they will also reduce the chances of over consumption of caffeine and other ingredients, such as vitamins.

Today's proposed changes will be especially helpful to parents of teenagers who regularly consume energy drinks.

I applaud the Minister of Health for taking this initiative. This is yet another example of how our government is committed to taking action to support Canadian families.

● (1415)

AVIATION SAFETY

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, northerners were devastated by the fourth airplane crash in only weeks.

On Tuesday, an Air Tindi Cessna 208 crashed on a scheduled flight from Yellowknife to Lutsel'e, killing the pilot and one passenger. This crash comes only days after the funerals for two pilots killed when an Arctic Sunwest Twin Otter crashed in Yellowknife's Old Town, injuring seven others. The day after that crash, a single-engine Cessna crashed near Fort Simpson. Luckily the pilot walked away.

On August 12, a First Air 737 crashed near Resolute Bay killing 12 of the 15 on board. The crew of that aircraft was based in Yellowknife.

I am sure all members of the House will stand with me to extend their condolences to the families and friends of the victims of these crashes.

For northerners, flying is something they do all the time due to the isolation of our communities. They have no other choice. Understandably, they are concerned about the safety of northern aviation.

Last year, government officials promised to beef-up transport Canada's aviation safety inspection arm. My constituents want to know if the government has kept its promises.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government received a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe. That is why we are committed to a zero tolerance policy for drugs in prison.

Our government has been consistent: we must develop a correctional system that actually corrects criminal behaviour.

We reject categorically suggestions from the NDP and their soft on crime friends like the Elizabeth Fry Society that suggest: providing prisoners with needles and drugs in order to engage in harm reduction; taking drugs away from prisoners violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; drug interdiction methods are unfair to inmates by violating their privacy and drug sniffing dogs can scare away visitors; and, most shockingly of all, strip searches of inmates suspected of smuggling drugs or weapons is tantamount to "lawful sexual assault by the state".

Oral Questions

Yesterday the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore demanded that I apologize for allegedly wronging this criminal group. I suggest it is the NDP that should apologize to Canadians for its complicity in the soft on crime coalition and for refusing to stand up for victims. I call—

The Speaker: Order. Oral questions. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

G8 SUMMIT

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board was a no-show at a conference about freedom of information, which is not a surprise considering his track record.

He used his personal email to go undetected. He left no paper trail. His ally from Huntsville now says the paper trails and emails are a bad idea, that they should have spoken on the phone.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the minister has lost all credibility?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if this is a reference to the G8 funding, I think this has been looked at thoroughly by the Auditor General. The government has accepted those recommendations. There were 32 projects. They were all public. They all came in at or under budget, and they are all good projects for the area.

[Translation]

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General said that the government violated the rules by establishing the G8 legacy fund. He did not find any evidence or explanations justifying how or why this \$50 million was spent. The minutes from municipal meetings provide us with a hint: in them, the minister says that it is the Prime Minister's Office that decides.

Can the Prime Minister explain why his office was involved in the distribution of G8 funds?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has now been several months since the Auditor General examined this situation, and the facts have not changed. The Minister of Transport was the one who approved 32 public projects. All the money was spent fairly and all these projects were carried out under the appropriate budget. These are good projects for the riding.

• (1420)

Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General spoke to five departments to try to understand what happened and figure out who decided what. No one was able to provide an answer. The only answer we were able to find was in the minutes from municipal meetings, which quote the minister as saying that the budgets must first be approved by the Prime Minister's Office. That is what the minister said.

If he has nothing to hide, is the Prime Minister prepared to open his books to the Auditor General?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new here. The Auditor General reviewed these projects several months ago now and the government accepted her recommendations.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is something new. Yesterday, the Auditor General said that he tried to obtain additional information from the President of the Treasury Board. The Auditor General just wanted some documentation explaining the decision-making process, but he came up against a brick wall. We know why: the minister was managing this budget from his riding office.

If he has nothing to hide, why is he refusing to give the Auditor General all the documentation? What is the President of the Treasury Board trying to hide?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, prior to the Auditor General writing a report, I was pleased to sit down with her and answer every question that she and her office had with respect to these infrastructure projects.

I approved 32 infrastructure projects. Every one of those infrastructure projects is for public infrastructure, for an airport, for a provincial highway, for municipal infrastructure. All 32 projects came in on or under budget.

The Auditor General has made some useful observations on how we could be even more open and more transparent to Parliament, and we have completely accepted all of her recommendations.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. It is the Muskoka minister who misled the Auditor General. After 119 days, he should explain himself.

The Auditor General said, “We received a small amount of documentation which wasn't, frankly, relevant to the question”. The Auditor General also said that these were unique examples of bureaucrats being shut out.

If the minister will not stand up, will the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain why he approved these projects that broke all the rules?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more than 23,000 public infrastructure projects were approved from coast to coast to coast at the height of the economic downturn which Canada was not immune from.

All 32 of the projects in question had contribution agreements prepared by the public service. All 32 of the projects were for public infrastructure. All 32 of the projects came in on or under budget.

At the same time, the Auditor General has made some helpful observations and helpful recommendations on how we can improve the process going forward. The government has completely accepted all of those recommendations.

CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives were missing in action when the Americans reintroduced the buy America provisions. When it came time to protect Canadians from the long arm of the IRS, the Conservatives once again let Americans treat Canadians unfairly. Now, when they are proposing to sign a perimeter security deal with the United States, why should we believe they will not fold again like a cheap suit?

If the Prime Minister did not stand up for Canadian interests in the past, why should we believe it will be different now?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been working very hard with President Obama to try to make the border less thick which will help the manufacturing sector and so that individuals can pass freely across the border.

We were very pleased to see the Liberal Party begin to stand up and fight for free trade. It was only 23 short years ago that every Liberal member ran in the fight of their lives to stop free trade, to try to stop more jobs, more hope and more opportunity.

I am so excited to see my friend from Beauséjour standing up and being so passionate about free trade. I congratulate him and welcome him aboard.

* * *

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has announced it is closing search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's.

Staffing and infrastructure requirements are just some of the concerns raised by departmental officials in a recently obtained internal government document which shows that the Coast Guard would have to absorb the transitional costs without any new government funding.

We are dealing with an essential service and human lives. Will the government do the right thing and reverse this reckless decision?

• (1425)

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the consolidation represents a positive change by locating all maritime and air search and rescue coordinators in the same centre working side by side.

This change does not affect the availability of resources such as Coast Guard ships or Coast Guard auxiliary and Canadian Forces aircraft.

The consolidation of the sub-centres into existing joint rescue coordination centres will have no negative impact on the current levels of service provided by the Coast Guard.

[Translation]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue is that the minister is being contradicted by his own officials. In the document obtained, they warn about the lack of

Oral Questions

French outside Quebec City's rescue centre. I would like to read from the document in English:

[English]

“A number of senior team members have expressed doubt and concern about the success of closing MRSC Quebec et al”.

[Translation]

How would the minister feel if he were in danger and had to communicate in a language he did not understand? Will he listen to his own advisers and leave the rescue centres where they are so that they can save lives?

[English]

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many times I have indicated that bilingual capacity will be increased above the levels that are in place now both in Halifax and Trenton.

This is not an issue. There is no way we will jeopardize the safety of mariners. We will continue on course as we have been to save money and provide better efficiencies.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, taxpayers deserve better than an out of touch government that believes it does not have to follow the rules.

Since 2006, the Conservatives have spent more than \$10 million on press conferences, not to mention the travel expenses of ministers who jet across the country to eat lobster. There are two press rooms on Parliament Hill, and ministers can make announcements at any time in the House of Commons.

Why is this government wasting so much taxpayers' money on self-promotion?

[English]

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is actually quite proud to share with Canadians all of the suggestions we have put out, all of the ideas and all of the programs we have brought forward in a number of budgets.

It is our role to make sure that Canadians are aware. Along with our partners we made sure Canadians were aware of, for example, the home renovation tax credit. We had to make sure Canadians knew about that so they could apply for it. We need to make sure that Canadians are aware of the children's arts tax credit that is coming forward now.

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the Conservatives know their real role.

Oral Questions

The Minister of Justice can boast about having one of the most expensive websites in the world: \$73 million in just over 10 years. That is expensive, especially when compared to the Public Safety website, which has cost \$500,000 in seven years.

Clearly, the Conservatives like to blame the Liberals, who are also expert spendthrifts. But is the government's excuse for everything the fact that the Liberals did worse? When will this government understand that money does not grow on trees?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): First of all, Mr. Speaker, any blame that we put on the Liberals, the Liberal Party has good cause to accept, so I cannot accept any comparisons to that.

With respect to IT costs, it is a very sophisticated process that we have moved forward with at the Department of Justice over the last number of years. It is money well spent. We are informing Canadians of the important measures we are taking on their behalf.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives want us to believe that \$70 million for one website is a good use of taxpayers' money. They want us to believe that \$10 million for self-promoting photo ops is good value. They want us to believe that rewarding a failed Conservative candidate with a \$135,000 a year appointment is responsible. It is not.

When will the government stop using the public purse to reward its political friends?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the story to which the member refers is inaccurate. The Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority is independent from government and makes its own decisions. We understand there was, in fact, a competitive selection process in this case.

As for the others, we do not comment on the staffing of ministers' offices.

I would say to the member that perhaps she could speak to her colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster. I understand that he is currently employing a failed NDP candidate in his office.

• (1430)

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we sure did not hear Conservatives say that crown corporations were arm's length during the Canada Post lockout.

The government has done the impossible. It has done an even worse job on patronage than the Liberals did. Some defeated candidates were appointed to the Senate, others were rewarded with government jobs, and the failed Conservative candidate in Mount Royal was hired as a ministerial adviser. This is not just old-fashioned patronage. Conservatives are keeping former and future candidates on the payroll. Why do taxpayers have to pay for their failed candidates?

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the member in fact once ran as a candidate and was picked up as a staff member by the leader of the Liberal Party when he was the leader of the NDP. This is common. All political parties hire partisan staff to work on partisan measures.

I would suggest to my NDP colleague across the way that if she would like to hire some good Conservative staffers, I have a list she might want to consider. I have full faith in all of them.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned from the Office of the Comptroller General that the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency has violated almost every rule in only two years of existence: expenditure control, contract management, use of credit cards, travel and hospitality expenses for its guests and all the rest.

Instead of helping northerners, the government is breaking all the rules of financial management.

How can the Prime Minister, who was the one who announced the creation of the agency in 2009, justify such a fiasco?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a draft audit. We take all audits very seriously. I look forward to receiving the final audit. We will address all the issues raised in the audit.

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we cannot expect to get any detailed or reliable response today, but we will try again anyway.

Development of the major projects planned for the north will cost Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, but the government is not even capable of managing a budget of \$75 million for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

Has the government lost complete control of northern development management?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member to travel to Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Yukon to see what is really happening on the ground with regard to development.

Again I say that this is an internal audit. It is a draft audit. I look forward to receiving the final audit. Once we have received it, we will address the issues to make improvements.

Oral Questions

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since it was created two years ago, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency has broken almost every rule in the book: out of control costs, contract mismanagement, improper use of credit cards and travel expenses, and the list goes on and on. This appalling record should put the Conservatives to shame.

Since the Prime Minister refuses to take the advice of his minister and the department, especially on the location of the head office, will he now stand and take responsibility for the mismanagement of this agency?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, this is a draft audit. It is an internal audit. We take all audits very seriously. Once I receive the final audit, I will review it and put action plans together to address the issues.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago the U.S. government issued permits for Shell Oil to release 250 metric tonnes of pollution in the Beaufort Sea, along the disputed territorial waters between Canada and the U.S. The so-called environmental standards developed by the Americans were clearly intended to apply to these Canadian waters. If we do not act now, we will be shut out of our own waters.

Has the government been involved in setting these environmental standards, or has it given up our Arctic waters and our Arctic sovereignty to the United States?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have ongoing discussions with our neighbours to the south on this and other issues that are important to the Arctic.

Obviously, this government will always stand up for Canadian sovereignty and fight for what is right. We have an incredibly important responsibility to ensure that our environment is protected and nowhere is that responsibility more important than in the Arctic, which has a very fragile ecosystem.

* * *

● (1435)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador were surprised this morning to find out that they have something new in common with British Columbia. These provinces are now also being threatened by the Conservative government. If they do not accept the government's deal on the RCMP, the RCMP will be pulled off the streets.

When will the Conservatives get back to the negotiating table and stop ambushing provinces with take it or leave it offers?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of the provinces that have contract policing know that the date for renewing the contract is March 2012. Everyone knows that. That is when the 20-year agreement comes to an end.

On September 9 the B.C. government, which is leading all of the other provinces that have not signed, said it would send us its proposals to consider. I am waiting. I have not heard from that government.

* * *

[Translation]

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport's duty, his responsibility, is to ensure that the existing Champlain Bridge is safe. Experts have released damning and troubling reports. The government is hiding the truth about the real state of the Champlain Bridge.

What would the government prefer to do? Table all of the audit reports and the certificate of compliance to prove that the bridge is safe, or one day defend itself in court for criminal negligence? Even the engineers think that we should prepare for the worst.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Bourassa is not one to lecture us about safety. I would remind the House that we have invested \$359 million to make the Champlain Bridge safer, including \$159 million in budget 2011, which the member for Bourassa voted against. That is not an impressive safety record.

I would like to share what the president of la Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, Ms. Bertrand, had to say about our government. She said, "After announcing an agreement on the harmonization of the GST and the QST last week, now we have a commitment on the Champlain Bridge...This is excellent news for Quebec's economy and we are proud to see the demands of the business community being heard."

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the member's information, in 1999, 2000 and 2001, we worked on repairing the Champlain Bridge and also invested money in it. There is a bit too much asbestos in his riding and he is insulating himself. There will be a new Champlain Bridge, but there is a problem with the existing one. We want to know whether it is safe. We are not looking for quotes about how happy people are. We are happy about the new Champlain Bridge, but it will take 10 years to build. If the existing bridge collapses in the meantime, it will be a case of criminal negligence. It is a matter of safety.

We want to know why the government refuses to table the inspection reports.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is complete nonsense. They may very well have made investments, as they said, which were too little, but we have made massive investments—\$359 million, including \$159 million in the 2011 budget—and the member voted against them. Frankly, that says it all. If they care about safety, that makes no sense.

Oral Questions

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Majeed Uddin Ahmed, a Canadian citizen, together with his wife and their two Canadian children, ages five and one and a half, have been arrested and incarcerated in Saudi Arabia's notorious Dhaban prison for two weeks. One of the children is sick and requires medical care.

From the beginning, the minister was made aware of this situation. The family in Canada has been advised that it will have to wait until next week for news as officials have told them, "It is not in our route of travel".

When will the minister order her officials to change their travel plans and bring these kids home?

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in fact aware of reports of this family being detained in Saudi Arabia. Canadian officials have been working, and will continue to work, with local authorities to receive formal confirmation of the family's present situation.

In addition, consular officials are seeking, if there is confirmation of the family's detention, to have consular access with the family. We are in constant daily contact with the family here in Canada and we will continue to work for the well-being of this family.

* * *

[Translation]

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government is finally responding to NDP pressure to build a new Champlain Bridge. We barely had time to celebrate—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1440)

The Speaker: Order. Is there a problem with the translation?

The hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, we hope the bridge will not be built in Muskoka.

We barely had time to celebrate before we learned that families will be the ones footing the bill. Why is the government taking money from families instead of making their lives more affordable? Can the government tell us how much each family must pay to cross the bridge?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is an odd question.

I have an article here written by Louis-Gilles Francoeur on December 23, 2005. This article says that in a hotel in Montreal North in December 2005, the member for Outremont, then the environment and sustainable development minister, openly said he was in favour of extending Highway 25 and the bridge, a project that included tolls. Some people began to call it the Mulcair Bridge .

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport is saying that there will be a toll on the

Champlain Bridge but that the bridge will not cost taxpayers a penny. Let us be clear, it is families that will pay. The municipalities of Montreal's south shore are wondering why their residents will be the only ones footing the bill. Families are also wondering why they are being punished.

It is currently free to cross the bridge. Why should families have to pay?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, this is an odd question because the member for Brossard—La Prairie has also publicly stated that he is open to a toll system. I do not understand this double standard.

Everyone is happy about the bridge. They should be looking at this in a positive light and stop casting a shadow on this wonderful news. There will finally be a new Champlain Bridge that will be sustainable for future generations and affordable for Canadian taxpayers. That is what is important.

[English]

Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's vague announcement is going to hurt Montreal families right in their pocketbooks. First, it decided to ding commuters every time they go to work; then, it saddles taxpayers with a cost overrun we know will come from these risky private ventures.

Could the minister tell this House who will own the bridge? Does he even know how much these tolls will cost? Will the government have any say? Or will the new bridge become a cash cow for some private company?

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just stated what the member for Brossard—La Prairie said and I will quote him. He said, "In terms of tolls, it's still to be seen. Like we've always said, we're open. With regard to the Champlain Bridge's replacement, we're not dismissing the idea of tolls".

What is the problem today?

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will also try to build bridges.

The Champlain Bridge construction project contains no plans for public transit. The minister says that that is a provincial responsibility, but if this bridge is 100% federal, as he likes to remind everyone, why are there no plans for federal-provincial coordination of public transit? That is important. So, the federal government is going to spend \$5 billion on the bridge, while, at the same time, further down the same road, the provincial government is spending \$3 billion on the Turcot project.

Will the Conservatives work in partnership with Quebec for more public transit, or is \$8 billion going to be spent to wind up with the same congestion problems? Talk about short-sightedness.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: everyone seems to agree that a toll system is a viable solution for Canadian taxpayers. Finally, a new bridge will be built.

The Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities has been very clear. We have taken the first step. We know where we are headed. We know that this viable infrastructure will be there for future generations. Yes, consultations will be held with the mayors in question and with the province in order to maximize this investment. That is how we will move forward.

Let us be clear: this viable infrastructure will serve future generations and will be affordable for Canadian taxpayers.

* * *

• (1445)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while our Conservative government is focused on helping create jobs and growing the economy with lower taxes, the NDP is demanding higher taxes. The NDP has clearly stated in its platform it wants to slap a huge \$10 billion-a-year job killing tax hike on Canadian employers. Lower taxes, not higher taxes, create jobs. Even the NDP Manitoba government understands that.

Could the Minister of State for Finance inform the House why the government and the NDP are—

The Speaker: Order, please. I will have to stop the member there. He is out of time.

The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the federal NDP needs to listen to its Manitoba cousins who agree that lowering taxes for businesses and Canadians actually helps create jobs. The Manitoba NDP government actually cut business taxes seven times in the last seven years. The Manitoba NDP finance minister said that if the federal government reduces corporate taxes, it will make a difference for their businesses, and they would be very happy with that.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last year Health Canada's expert panel on caffeinated drinks recommended the minister better regulate energy drinks. However, instead of adopting the panel's recommendation to curb caffeine levels, she announced the caffeine content could be over twice the acceptable level.

Why will the minister not respect these expert guidelines to protect our children's health? Why is the Minister of Health siding with the industry instead of telling it to stop marketing to children? Why is the minister doing this?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we decided to take a balanced approach regarding energy drinks. It would give the parents and individuals like her more information. They can use the information to make an informed decision.

We looked at all the recommendations carefully and I believe we have a plan that is balanced. It would put the health of Canadians

Oral Questions

first by giving them the information they need to make informed choices for themselves.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only did the government ignore the expert panel's recommendations on energy drinks, but on top of that, it is going to take years to implement the changes that it is proposing. In other words, companies will have two years before they have to adjust to the new labelling rules. I do not find these regulations particularly energetic or very beneficial for our adolescents.

Why did the government give in to the interests of the industry and bring forward such a weak plan?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, we carefully looked at all the recommendations coming from the expert panel, as well as a number of other sources. I believe that we have put a plan forward that is balanced. It would put the health and safety of Canadians first and it allows Canadians to make an informed choice for themselves as well as for their families. This is a balanced approach.

As a mom, I know that it is important for me to have the information to make decisions for myself as well as my child. The proposed changes today allow me to do that.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, government scientists are being muzzled. They have to ask the minister for permission to speak to the media. Media coverage of climate change has decreased by 80%. Is that the government's real target? There are not enough statistics on the impact of the oil sands on greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

If the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers can exchange emails with Environment Canada scientists, why can the scientists not talk to Canadians?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the assumptions being made in that question are pure nonsense.

[English]

We have Environment Canada scientists available to talk to the media regularly and we make no apologies for finding more cost-effective ways to protect the environment.

We do have a plan to address climate change and mitigation with regard to meeting our Cancun and Copenhagen obligations, as well as adaptation, particularly with regard to the Canadian north.

Oral Questions

We have a plan, and I am delighted that the commissioner for the environment acknowledges it.

• (1450)

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, industry has a cozy relationship with government communications as well. Oil lobbyists got government help to explain why oil sands emissions data were left out. “I appreciate the help on this, an important issue for industry...”, writes one lobbyist in a thank-you note to the Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, this is important for all Canadians. When will the government stop muzzling its scientists so that all Canadians can hear from them, not just the Conservatives' oil lobbyist friends?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is prepared, and certainly Environment Canada is prepared, to communicate with all levels of Canadian society, whether it be in industry, whether it be non-governmental organizations, or indeed members of the opposition.

If my hon. colleague has any questions that she would like clarified with the department, I invite her to make contact with my office and I will arrange such a briefing.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of the Environment insisted that Dr. David Tarasick was free to talk to the media about the Arctic ozone hole article he co-authored. I have a copy of an article written by a journalist on the subject on October 3, 2011, that clearly states that Dr. Tarasick was not allowed to discuss the paper.

Can the minister explain why the government blocked this interview from taking place?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as one of my colleagues just reminded me, one should not believe everything one reads or hears in the media.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You should know.

The Speaker: Order, please.

The Minister of the Environment has the floor.

Hon. Peter Kent: As I said several times this week, Canadians do owe a debt of gratitude to scientists like Dr. Tarasick and the other scientists who participated in this international report, and who regularly contribute to the greater knowledge of not only ozone but of all of the sciences of the environment.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of the Environment said to this House, “We do not muzzle our scientists”. However, I have in my hands a copy of the email exchange between a reporter and the environment minister's spokesperson, which unequivocally states, “An interview cannot be granted”.

Can the minister please explain how his statement is inconsistent with the actions taken by his office?

Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also said on Tuesday that Environment Canada scientists are regularly available to speak with responsible journalists, depending on their availability.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Peter Kent: I would suggest that Dr. Tarasick will be available, again depending on his availability, to speak to representatives of the media.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2005 Canada made the historic decision to allow same-sex marriage. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are now trying to erode this right by intervening in an Ontario case to oppose recognition of a same-sex civil partnership from the U.K.

The Ontario government has agreed to recognize this partnership under Canadian law, but the Conservative government is opposing the guarantee of full protection of the law to this couple under the Divorce Act.

Why is the Minister of Justice intervening in this case to deny equal protection of the law for all same-sex couples?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has it wrong. We have been very clear that we are not reopening the issue, but it is a legal dispute over definitions.

As the matter is before the court, I look forward to the decision of the court.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government knows full well it is intervening in the case, not standing back from the case. The government claims it does not want to reopen the same-sex marriage debate, but that is exactly what it is doing by disputing the definition of a civil partnership. Conservatives are saying straight couples who move to Canada have more rights than same-sex couples.

Will the minister agree to respect gay and lesbian rights and stop opposing full legal recognition of same-sex marriages and civil unions from other jurisdictions?

• (1455)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we respect the rights of all individuals and we have been very clear about that. We have done nothing to reopen that debate. We respect the decision by Parliament, but it is a question of definitions, and that is being argued before the courts. We are intervenors, as are a number of other individuals and organizations, and I look forward to the court's decision.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian Authority is unilaterally seeking to become a full member of the United Nations General Assembly. Many people fear that this unilateral action will hinder the negotiations for peace in the region.

[English]

The application is for full membership at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is only exacerbating the situation.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs please share with the House the government's view on this problematic move by the Palestinian Authority?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed with the decision of UNESCO's executive body and urge all members of UNESCO to reject this unilateral action. The long-standing position of the Government of Canada is that we support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that the solution must be negotiated at the negotiating table between both parties. That position has not changed.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Digby, Nova Scotia resident Philip Halliday has been in a Spanish prison for almost two years awaiting a trial date so that he can clear his name. He needs treatment for liver disease and cysts on his kidneys, but is not getting it. Friends and family are worried about his deteriorating health and the fact that no trial date has been set. They wonder why the government is doing nothing to ensure Mr. Halliday receives a fair and speedy trial or proper health care.

Can the minister explain why the government continues to abandon Canadians in dire straits abroad?

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is well aware that the American government has agreed that Omar Khadr will return to Canada. We will respect the agreement between Omar Khadr and the U.S. government.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Montcalm.

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[Translation]

DISABILITY INSURANCE

Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the disability insurance plan is not fulfilling its mandate. People with serious disabilities cannot access it. Over the past five years, more than half the disability insurance claims have been rejected, and half of these people still do not have a job three years later. The program evaluation report indicates that 48% of beneficiaries live below the poverty line.

Will the government undertake to improve support for the disabled and put an end to this injustice?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has done more than any other government to help the disabled. For example, we signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and we introduced the disability savings plan. We also introduced several other measures to help these people and their families.

* * *

[English]

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today our government delivered on our commitment to launch the very first federal tourism strategy. Would the hon. member for Beauce and Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism please tell the House how our government is working with the tourism industry to help create jobs and growth for Canada?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his recent nomination as the chair of the Parliamentary tourism caucus.

[Translation]

I am very pleased today to have announced the federal tourism strategy, which will ensure that the Canadian government's efforts to support the tourism industry are coordinated. We know that the tourism industry in Canada creates jobs and wealth for Canadians. This is further proof that we are concentrating on what is important to Canadians: economic growth and jobs.

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EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Charlevoix and Haute-Côte-Nord have been hard hit by the economic downturn and seriously penalized by the termination of the employment insurance transitional measures. The minister has to understand that these measures were brought in because the economic reality and the labour market in these regions were not the same as in the Lower St. Lawrence and the north shore. By terminating these measures, the Conservatives are ignoring the reality in the regions and showing that they do not have a plan to help workers.

When will the government extend the employment insurance transitional measures?

● (1500)

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member said, these measures were transitional. The purpose of these measures was to help people who were having a great deal of difficulty finding a job because the unemployment rate where they lived was much higher than in other areas. For some time now, the unemployment rate in the region has been identical or comparable to other areas. The transitional measures are therefore no longer necessary. These people have the same opportunities as others in the area.

*Business of the House***BORDER CROSSINGS**

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on one hand, the government is negotiating a secret security perimeter agreement worth \$1 billion to make the Americans happy. On the other, the government is reducing the hours of border crossings and customs offices or even closing them, which has negatively affected security, the economy and tourism in dozens of communities close to Jamieson's Line, Franklin Centre, Côte-de-Liesse, Morses Line, Drummondville, East Pinnacle, Granby, Glen Sutton and Port-Cartier.

How can the minister justify these cuts, which are hitting the people who use these services hard, when it can find \$1 billion for the Americans?

[*English*]

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our ongoing initiatives with respect to our discussions on free trade and security with the Americans.

We are also looking at ports of entry across the country, those on the 49th parallel and elsewhere. We believe that Canadians expect us to handle their money appropriately.

We are looking at the situation, and in cases where it is no longer justified to have those border crossings open, they will not be open.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, State Minister, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

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[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons what his plans are for the rest of the week, as well as for when Parliament resumes following next week's recess, during which we will all be working in our ridings. In particular, I would like to know when the next opposition day is scheduled, for we have not yet been told.

Furthermore, my hon. colleagues know as well as I do that, for the second time in two weeks, the government is using a guillotine to cut off the normal debate process in our Parliament. We find this extremely worrisome, since it has become quite common with this government. Now that they have a majority, the Conservatives' contempt for Parliament is clear. I would also like the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons to tell us when, in his mind, there has been enough debate.

[*English*]

The government is using the term "enough debate". For the second time in two weeks, it is using a guillotine to cut off the normal work of parliament that we were elected by Canadians to do.

Bill C-13 was cut off after exactly three hours of debate. That is a budget bill. It is one of the primary reasons we get elected to the House and after only three hours of debate, it is cutting it off.

I would like, on behalf of all Canadians and the House, to understand when, in the opinion of the majority Conservatives, there has been enough debate.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in response to the question.

I want to start by extending my best wishes to the opposition House leader. I fear that this may be my last Thursday question from him, as I understand he might be embarking on new endeavours during the next week. We have worked together exceedingly well, to the surprise of many, I might say, and perhaps even to the disappointment of some. In any event, it is fair to say we have exceeded everyone's expectations in that regard.

Should it turn out that someone else asks next Thursday's question, allow me to offer him the best of luck. I know he is a determined competitor in every endeavour he undertakes and that he will still be around here, though perhaps in a somewhat different role.

As for the business of the House in the coming week, we will continue debating the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act this afternoon. That bill is designed to include many measures that were discussed in the last budget and the previous election, such as the small business hiring tax credit, extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing equipment, creating a new family caregiver tax credit, forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved areas and introducing a new children's arts tax credit for music, dance and art lessons.

Further to the motion adopted in the House this morning, the government will continue with the third and fourth days of debate on this bill on Friday. Then we will be in our constituencies for a week and we will return on the following Monday.

The House leader has asked me how much time is enough when we are doing the work we were elected by Canadians to do. The work we were elected by Canadians to do was to actually deliver on that budget and its terms that were discussed during the election campaign across the country earlier this year in the same fashion as our commitment to deliver on our tackling crime bill. The tackling crime bill was part of our commitment that we undertook to deliver to Canadians, and we intend to do that.

This bill will have been debated more than the average time at second reading than a typical average budget bill in the last 20 years, in fact more time than for any budget bill under a majority government during the past two decades, which I believe were Liberal majority governments.

On Tuesday, October 18, we will begin debate on the copyright modernization act.

In terms of the next allotted day, I will at some point allot that. We have not yet taken a decision on that.

In closing, let me wish all members a happy Thanksgiving. I know the opposition House leader in particular will put that week to great benefit.

* * *

● (1505)

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague across the way for his concern, but I would also like to point out something that may have already been brought to your attention.

Contrary to the Standing Orders, the Minister of State for Agriculture used the name of an hon. member, in this case, mine. I understand that you did not hear him because I know you well enough to know that, if you had, you would have instantly risen to remedy the situation. We are not permitted to rise on a point of order during question period and so we count on you. I understand what happened but I would still like you to remind us of the rule that applies to everyone, particularly to ministers, who must set an example.

The Speaker: The hon. member is right. I missed that during question period, but this is a good opportunity to remind the members of the House that it is not permitted to refer to members by their names. We must refer to them by the names of their ridings or their titles only. I am certain that the hon. minister will remember this in the future.

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I must have gotten carried away in a heated debate. I was clearly referring to the hon. member for Outremont. I take your point, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you know, it can be at times noisy in the House and I think the Minister for Consular Affairs may have had difficulty hearing the question I asked, which was about Mr. Philip Halliday from Digby, Nova Scotia, who is in a Spanish prison.

I would like to give her the opportunity, if you would permit, Mr. Speaker, to answer the question.

Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Halifax West for his courtesy. I have been back and forth with the House technicians about the sound for the last two weeks, so this is a good demonstration of why we need it to be fixed.

I appreciate my colleague from Halifax West raising this matter. Our colleague from West Nova is also in regular contact with me about the situation with Mr. Halliday. We are extremely concerned about this. We continue to be very active on this file and are continually monitoring the situation with regular consular visits to Mr. Halliday.

I can assure my colleagues from Halifax West and West Nova that this is very much a top of mind issue for our office and we will continue to work vigorously on it.

Points of Order

● (1510)

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to respond to a point of order that was raised by the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca on September 29.

I have reviewed the transcript of what I said during statements that day and the transcript of the point of order raised shortly afterward by my hon. colleague. Clearly, the comments that I made were in reference to the recent second reading vote on the safe streets and communities act, which the member himself opposed. I believe that after careful consideration, Mr. Speaker, you would find that the comments I made in no way accused the member of supporting criminals or criminality and did not impugn his character, as suggested in his point of order.

I am aware that this is a sensitive and sometimes personal topic for many Canadians. However, I do stand by my comment made on September 29, that by opposing the safe streets and communities act the member and all of those who joined him in voting against the act were in fact putting their constituents at risk by maintaining the status quo.

I would encourage the member and his party to reflect on the important measures contained in our bill and to change his vote in support of the safe streets and communities act at report stage and third reading in the coming weeks.

The Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member assuring the House that he was not impugning anybody's character. I would ask all members, especially during S. O. 31s, to err on the side of civility when they are making their statements, especially when they are singling out a particular member.

I thank the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale for that clarification.

TABLING OF DOCUMENT

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Having been elected to this place for a number of years, I am aware of a lot of the traditions in the House. When an individual refers to a document, particularly an internal government document, it is only fair that the document be tabled in the House.

I am sure the minister meant well, but he indicated that all was well with cutting the search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's. This document will explain to the minister, to members of the House and to the general public the danger to safety that is involved with these closures.

I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table this document so we will all be aware of the dangers of closing the search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul has six minutes left to conclude her remarks.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said when I first spoke this morning to Bill C-13, it is so important to get this implementation bill passed. It is important because there has been a great deal of debate, starting as early as March when the first phase of this bill was tabled in the House.

We have not only gone through debate, but we have also gone through a full-fledged election. In that election, the members on all sides of the House ran on the budget and explained it very thoroughly to everyone. After that, Canadians were well aware of what we stood for on this budget and brought us back to Parliament with a majority government. That was a clear message from the rest of Canada that Canadians wanted to have this budget.

What things were they supporting? One of them was 600,000 jobs. Those 600,000 jobs have been created due to the fiscal management under the Prime Minister and under this government.

What are some of the other things that are so important? I would ask members opposite to think about some of these things because this would impact all communities across our nation, both on this side and on the opposite side of the House. I think Canadians are paying attention to this debate in the House today. I think that in the municipalities, for example, in my municipality of West and East St. Paul, Canadians are very supportive of a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. Too often, municipalities had to wait to see what the transfer payment would be, and they put that very money to good use. This is in this implementation bill.

Also, the volunteer firefighters are waiting for their tax credit, which is waiting in the bill.

As everyone knows in the House, we have an aging demographic. It looks as if within the next 10 years as much as 25% of our population will be in the older age sector. The government, in its implementation bill, has introduced a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types of infirm and dependent relatives. It is very important to have that tax credit available. When family members need specific help, there is an expense to that help. Having this caregiver tax credit would be very important for them. We also propose to remove the previous \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expenses tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

The children's arts tax credit is waiting in the implementation bill. In prior budgets, we gave tax credits for sports. Members of my family and many of my constituents participate in soccer, basketball,

hockey and other wonderful sports for which Canadians are so well known. However, there was a cry from the communities all across Canada asking, "What about the arts? What about the music?" In this implementation bill is this tax credit waiting to be launched and implemented. However, without the support of members opposite to get this through right away, that tax credit is held in abeyance.

Education and training are of paramount importance. I know many school children are considering what they are going to be doing when they grow up. Even my own daughter wants to go into medicine and there are many new doctors and nurses who want to go to underserved rural and remote areas.

• (1515)

In this very important implementation bill, Bill C-13, there is the opportunity to forgive loans for new doctors and nurses who make those choices. I just visited Churchill. I was up north and I looked at the wonderful medical facility and talked with the nurses up there. I was discussing this particular part of the budget bill and they said that this would attract people into remote northern areas. I think this is very important.

Also, for students going to university, it is very expensive. That is also in the implementation bill.

There are many good things in this implementation bill, such as phasing out the direct subsidy to political parties. Canadians are saying that they want their tax dollars used for roads, infrastructure, all the things that they need. They do not want to give their tax dollars to political parties so they can do their political things and run for office. Political parties need to take responsibility.

I hope to see this implementation bill pass very shortly.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke briefly about post-secondary education and that this budget and the implementation bill supports post-secondary education. However, in reading the implementation bill, the only investment that I see is in creating more loans for students. By creating more loans for students who are carrying \$40,000, \$50,000, \$80,000 of debt, how is the government helping students access post-secondary education?

• (1520)

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, in this particular part of the implementation bill it is the forgiveness of those loans. In other words, if new doctors and new nurses choose to go to remote areas they have the opportunity to have their loans forgiven, and that is very important. My own daughter, who is going into medicine, is saying that this is something that is very attractive.

Post-secondary education is of paramount importance to all in this country and these opportunities will be opened up.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on not only a great speech but on all of the good work that she does to fight human trafficking.

Government Orders

I mentioned earlier, with my colleague from Burlington, the issues that we have in the greater city of Hamilton regarding steel and the manufacturing of steel, and not only steel producers but also steel fabricators, and the many different aspects of the value chain. I just wanted to ask my colleague how important it is that this bill gets passed to ensure that the measures come into force for corporations so they can invest for the future and create jobs.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very important question because the promotion of job creation and economic growth is of paramount importance.

Included in Bill C-13 is the temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring, which will help all businesses. Also included is expanding the tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments as well. Also included is the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector. Earlier today, several members talked about the importance of the mines in their northern constituencies. The government is listening to that and needs that to happen.

There are other things too. We talked earlier about the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing. I have manufacturing in my own riding and the business people are telling me that it is of paramount importance for this to get through so they can have it.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaesan: Mr. Speaker, maybe the member did not understand the question I asked previously. The loan forgiveness program would allow members of our community who have already become doctors and nurses to pay off some of their loans quicker, but the problem today is that members in our communities are not able to get into universities and colleges because they cannot afford to pay for them.

How would the bill actually support Canadians accessing education? She wants to talk about the doctors and nurses but the problem is that rural communities do not have the facilities. This does not actually go to the root problem, which is that we do not have enough doctors and nurses in our communities.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, the Canada grants loans program has been improved considerably, and that certainly does help the students.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the budget, which I have not had a chance to speak to before. I will be sharing my time with the member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

I will divide my speech into two sections. First, I will talk about why we do need, not only debate but much more information about the direction in which our economy is going in relation to what we are doing within the budget.

The budget was first put forward in March 2011 and then re-entered in virtually the same form in June 2011. Since then, we have seen many changes to the world situation, including Canada's situation.

The budget was based on projections of an increase to the GDP of about 3% a year. We hear that the IMF has said that it will be 2%. What does the budget say about that? The Conservatives talk about it

here, and it is something we should address in the debate and in the information going forward. In their plan to return to balanced budgets, they talk very specifically on page 208 on the estimated impact of a one year, one percentage point decrease in real GDP growth on federal revenues, expenses and budgetary balance.

Within that, we see quite clearly that in year one we will be short, from what we had projected as a deficit, of another \$3.3 billion. Those are the figures of the Conservatives. That goes on to minus \$3.6 billion next year.

We have an economic turnaround. Things were not as rosy as the government was presenting in a budget delivered before an election.

Now we are in a situation where the increased deficit will likely match up to what government is proposing to cut out of expenditures, which is \$4 billion. Where will that leave Canadians in the future? What pressure will it put on the government to continue to cut services, to continue to knock back on Canadians and not address the real issues, which, quite clearly, are finding ways to increase the revenue of the government in a way that would assist Canadians in righting their fiscal imbalance. The NDP has proposed that we not cut the corporate tax rate to the extent that we are.

There has been debate about Manitoba cutting the corporate tax rate. Provinces are very poor examples of a corporate tax rate. Corporations move their head offices from province to province in order to attract the lowest corporate tax rate in a particular province. I saw that phenomenon in the Northwest Territories in the year 2002-03, which upset the balance of our territorial budget by about \$300 million. So I know what I am talking about.

When we talk about provinces, they are the worst collectors of corporate taxes in the country because they are under constant pressure to lower their rates in relation to other provinces. The responsibility should lie with the federal government to collect the corporate taxes uniformly across the country.

Where is the debate about what is happening to our economy and to our budget in a real good fashion? We can approve these expenditures but do we understand where they are leading the country? Yes, we should debate the budget.

I will now turn to a more hopeful sign. There was an item in the budget in March and carried forward to June of \$150 million for a road between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik, an important part of the infrastructure of the north. It is a part of the infrastructure of the north that in 2007 I introduced the idea to the previous minister, Chuck Strahl, in a meeting that we required these roads and this particular road. I am glad to see that the government has taken this on. However, the \$150 million will not build that road. The \$150,000 will build part of the road. The rest of the cost of the road will be assigned to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Government Orders

• (1525)

In March of this year, I had a private member's bill in front of the House. The government, a person, voted against raising the borrowing limit for my Government in the Northwest Territories to fund valued infrastructure projects in the Northwest Territories. Since then, the Minister of Finance has promised our finance minister over and over again that he would give us some answers on the borrowing limit so that we can invest in the north, make choices on infrastructure and support our economy at a time when the recession is hitting us.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway is a project that the whole north supports. Up and down the valley, aboriginal land claims organizations have taken a section of the highway, have done the preliminary estimates, have the material together and are ready to go, in the very near future, to environment assessment on the whole Mackenzie Valley Highway, a distance of some 1,200 kilometres from the southern part of the territory to Inuvik and then on to Tuktoyaktuk. It is a road that, over the next two decades, would open up, and I am not exaggerating, tens of billions of dollars of development that would impact all Canadians in a positive fashion.

We have a great made-in-Canada project where likely very little of what we spend on the project will escape Canada to other businesses in other countries. It will occur in Canada. It is a great project that will provide relief to many communities that do not now have roads up and down the Mackenzie Valley, that have incredibly high costs of living and have isolated conditions that are really not appropriate in this day and age.

We have a great opportunity but we need to improve the fiscal capacity of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The federal government would not support my private member's bill in that regard. It stood up to a person against it. We need it and we need to understand the direction we would take with it. The government needs to come up with a better plan for investing in that highway.

In the April election, I was proud to see that my party, the New Democratic Party, had identified in our platform \$400 million over five years to invest in northern infrastructure, which is quite a bit more than the \$150 million that was put forward for the Tuktoyaktuk-Inuvik road. That is the kind of investment that is needed from the federal government, as well as from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We have a vision of what we want to accomplish in the Northwest Territories. Aboriginal treaty organizations up and down the valley are supporting this effort. It is time. This is a great opportunity for Canadians. It is a great opportunity to help our economy at time when we need stimulus in the economy.

We need to recognize what we can do in the next few years that will improve our economy, whether it is green jobs, which will return to us and make us a stronger and better society, or a project like the Mackenzie Valley Highway that is needed to serve the orderly development of very important resources. These are things that we should be investing in and talking about right now.

This is a time when we need plans and leadership. We need to understand how this country can avoid what is clearly a gathering storm of fiscal recession that will eventually fall onto the land of

Canada. We need this kind of positive debate about the budget. It is a budget that, after four months, is not really accurate and does not provide all the answers, which is why we are standing here today.

• (1530)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government has repeatedly emerged as an obstacle to international climate negotiations, ignoring science and winning one fossil award after another. As a result, study after study ranks Canada last or almost last in terms of climate change.

The 2009 assessment of G8 countries by Allianz and WWF ranked Canada last. The 2010 Suzuki Foundation and Simon Fraser University study shows Canada with the second worst environmental record of OECD countries, ranking 24th out of 25 countries. Now we hear from the Commissioner of the Environment that the government reduced climate change reductions by 90% since 2007.

I wonder if the hon. could comment on what the economic impacts of climate change are for his region.

• (1535)

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Madam Speaker, when we talk about climate change, we can say that we want to stop climate change and to do what we can to mitigate the advancing climate warmth before it happens. We can argue about whether or not that can happen, but the region of the country where I live probably has the fastest changing climate in Canada right now according to most scientific observers.

We do have impacts. We have problems inherent within infrastructure that will cost us more and more money in the future. We have problems with an increasing number of forest fires. We have problems with declining caribou herds.

Our whole society is having to accept that there will be adaptation. We know that no matter what we do in the next number of years we will not be able to stop many of the impacts that one or two degrees' warming in the earth's core has on northern conditions.

In the absence of this action by the government and many in the rest of the world, we need to see that adaptation plans are very clearly outlined for what is going to happen.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for telling us about the situation in his riding. He and his constituents have a front-row seat to the impact of climate change. I congratulate him for trying to help his constituents directly by proposing solutions instead of simply suffering through these changes. As he said, one way or another, these changes are happening.

Could my hon. colleague tell us how direct government support for strategic projects, which would directly help his constituents in their daily lives, could change things and solve these problems?

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Madam Speaker, what we want is for the federal government to recognize that northerners understand very well what we need to do.

The government should support our territorial government in its efforts to deal with these issues. The territorial government is moving very quickly on many climate change mitigation issues. It also has an aggressive green energy strategy that it is putting big dollars into, in the absence of any money from the federal government in that regard.

The other side of it is the federal government is being very paternalistic about the borrowing limit for the territorial government. The territorial government is saddled with a borrowing limit that is far less than what it should be. We are a burgeoning, developing territory. We need to invest, and yet we are hung up by the Northwest Territories Act which limits our fiscal ability to put money into things that will actually make our society work better.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying that this bill seems to be inspired by the same cynicism that Canadians have seen many times with every bill introduced by the Conservative government. The title of this bill talks about “keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing”. But the Conservatives added a provision that would eliminate per-vote subsidies for political parties.

Canadians are wondering if this is a taste of the strategy the Conservatives will be using over the next four years. They call a bill one thing, but they include provisions that have nothing to do with the main objective of the bill. These measures affect the electoral system and do not have the support of Canadians or the opposition parties. This is a cynical approach to politics. So it is not surprising that 61% of Canadians and 84% of Quebecers did not put their faith in the Conservative government in the last election. Their worst fears are coming true.

Before I begin speaking about the economy, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to speak about per-vote subsidies for political parties. The chorus of support our party received from young Canadians during the last election aside, the participation of voters from my generation has progressively decreased over the past several decades. Naturally, since it suits the Conservatives' strategy, the government is taking little interest in this issue.

Canadians often wonder whether the Conservatives have considered why voter turnout among young Canadians has dropped because, if they did, the Conservatives would quickly realize that Canadians are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the electoral system and the cynicism surrounding political campaigns. Canadians know that better options for an electoral system exist. They also know that our electoral system systematically under-represents the political parties.

Canadians know that funding for political parties should be based on popular support, not on the number of rich friends they have. The per-vote subsidy was an important step in making our political system more fair and equitable. That is why many countries throughout the world use the per-vote subsidy—because they believe

in equity. In fact, the Conference Board of Canada ranked Canada 16th out of 17 countries in terms of voter participation. That is because people are fed up with the cynicism. Why are the Conservatives taking us backward instead of forward?

Canadians are facing difficult economic times, but the government is not taking this seriously. We see the weakness in our markets, our stagnating growth, the massive household debt, the growing inequality, the lack of security in Canadians' pension plans and the lack of jobs. In a spirit of good faith, I would like to begin by saying that some measures in this bill are a step in the right direction. Rural communities need more family doctors, small businesses deserve a break, and it is important to promote home care for those who are ill. But, like most of the Conservatives' plans, the provisions of the bill are too weak. The Conservatives do not understand that seniors need help urgently, young people cannot find jobs, people cannot retire in dignity, and families are being crushed under the burden of household debt.

Just as we saw with the Champlain Bridge, the Conservatives are blind to the severity of the current problem. Instead of truly helping families, the government is making them pay for things that should be free. What we have here is a government that takes half measures. But these half measures are not enough for Canadian families, seniors and youth. This is not what they are asking for and this is not what they want either.

Is now the time for half measures, when there are approximately two million Canadians unemployed or underemployed? No. And while the Conservatives tell us day-in and day-out that they have created 600,000 net new jobs since the recession, they neglect to mention that the labour force has grown by 450,000. And it should be said that far too many of those jobs are not full-time or permanent and cannot support families.

● (1540)

Youth unemployment has reached 17.2% and has risen every year since 2008. Yet tuition fees across Canada are increasing faster than the rate of inflation. Is now the time for half measures? No.

Eleven million Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan, 250,000 Canadian seniors live in poverty and private pension plans have lost 20% of their value since the recession. Is now the time for half measures? Again, no.

I want to tell my colleagues a story. On October 1, seniors day, I went to my riding to speak with seniors, and I heard a very sad story. An 89-year-old woman told me that she wanted to die because she did not have enough money to live another two years. She did not know what she would do because in a year she would not have enough money to pay her rent. I was deeply saddened by that. I am wondering what this plan does for seniors. An extra five dollars a month is not enough.

Government Orders

Some 5 million Canadians do not have a regular family doctor. In 2022, there will be a shortage of 60,000 registered nurses if nothing is done. Quebeckers in particular are affected by the lack of health professionals. Yet this bill will do nothing to increase the overall number of doctors and nurses at a time when Quebeckers and Canadians need them the most. Is now the time for half measures? No.

This is no time to give \$2 billion to corporations. What will that \$2 billion do for families who cannot make ends meet at the end of the month? What will that \$2 billion do for this older woman who wants to die because she does not have enough money to keep paying her rent? Nothing.

It is clear that this bill fails Canadians in two ways. Not only does it illustrate the cynicism of the Conservative strategists, who are using a budget bill to dismantle fairness in our electoral system, but it also illustrates the Conservatives' insensitivity toward the real daily struggles of far too many Canadians and Quebeckers.

The NDP has a solid job creation program that compensates small and medium-size businesses, which are the real job creators. It has real and lasting measures, not temporary ones like what the government is proposing. It has a plan to provide security for seniors and improve our health care system in a permanent way.

What is more, the NDP believes that a fair electoral system is the best way to engage young people and all Canadians so that they come back to the polls. Canadians have a clear choice between the opposition, which wants to make life more affordable for families and promote democracy, and a government that is proposing half measures and playing political games to destroy our democratic systems.

• (1545)

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House of Commons.

The member spent the first part of her speech talking about the political party subsidies. By far, a large majority of the people I talk to believe that political parties should raise their funds from those who believe in that political party by doing some fundraising of their own, not by having funds given to them by the taxpayers.

The member went on to imply that this party somehow does not care about youth. I would like to remind her of some of the initiatives for youth that are in the budget.

We are helping apprentices in the skilled trades. I cannot think of anything more important in this day and age than to help our young people who are leaving secondary school to get involved in some type of post-secondary education. The reality is that for a lot of them, university is not a channel they can follow. We are facing skilled trades shortages already.

We are improving federal financial assistance for students. We are making it easier to allocate registered education savings plans. We are forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas.

All these initiatives are really important as we move forward not just for youth but especially for youth.

How can my colleague and her party possibly vote against all of the amazing measures, of which I only listed four or five, that will help our youth and help Canada?

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. He asked how I could vote against these measures. I am voting against them because they are half measures, and that is not enough. They may have programs to help students get into debt. Great, I congratulate them, but that is not right. Students should be able to attend school without the heavy burden of high debt. There have to be jobs for university graduates. This government does not have a plan to help young people get good, full-time jobs that pay more than minimum wage once they graduate. There is nothing for them.

• (1550)

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my beloved Canada once had an international reputation as a green country, with progressive environmental policies. However, Canada walked away from its Kyoto protocol targets. Our per capita emissions are double that of the citizens of Norway and the United Kingdom, six times higher than that of China, and 14 times higher than the citizens of India.

Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers*, confirms the data. Canada is by far the biggest defaulter on its Kyoto obligations on a tonnage basis.

We know we have a 2020 target. The government can get us 25% of the way there by reducing greenhouse gases. I wonder what the hon. member would suggest to get us the other 75% of the way there.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question. We need to take concrete action and invest in the green economy. We must invest in reliable and renewable energy. We must have a plan. Honestly, I have not seen this government's plan.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Madam Speaker, I cannot congratulate my colleague opposite on his shareholder approach to political funding. Could my colleague elaborate on her concerns about political funding?

Ms. Charmaine Borg: Madam Speaker, I will repeat what I have already said. We need an electoral system that is based on popular support for a party rather than having a party win because it has 10 friends who are millionaires. We cannot have this ideology. We cannot have an electoral system based on having rich friends. That does not work in a country like Canada.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to be splitting my time today with the great member for Brampton—Springdale.

Government Orders

It is a pleasure to stand and speak about the budget implementation act and all the great things that our government is doing for Canadians. I want to talk about some of the areas that are going to be improving the conditions in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake.

Rural Canada, especially my riding, is made up of small business. Up and down the main street are family businesses. Manufacturing facilities often started off with somebody working out of a machine shed, developing some new products and getting into the manufacturing business quite by accident, like working off the farm and developing a manufacturing company. For us to support manufacturers, like ensuring we extend the accelerated capital cost allowance, would allow them to reinvest in their facilities.

When I talk to business owners in the community and representatives of the chamber of commerce, they say they know that when we bring forward the \$1,000 benefit in EI for new hires, all small businesses in Selkirk—Interlake are going to benefit. They know it is going to be well used, help them grow their businesses, and put more people back to work.

Rural areas require those opportunities and I am quite excited about this. Two-thirds of Canadians work for small businesses. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said that this has been a high priority and it sees this as something that is going to support small businesses right across the country.

On a frequent basis I spend time in municipalities and over the last month I met with a number of councils. They always thank our government for putting in place the gas tax fund. They are now ecstatic that this fund is going to be put in legislation on a permanent basis, that they will no longer have to ask when it is going to come to an end or what is going to come after that.

Gas tax fund dollars really help them support their infrastructure and green projects. It is going to enable them to provide long-term planning and invest in projects they know are going to be of benefit to ratepayers and communities. This is a major investment and one that is well supported by municipalities right across the country.

Throughout the election campaign and when we brought in the budget last spring, one thing everybody got very excited about was the whole area of helping rural areas find doctors and nurses. There has been a huge shortage of doctors and nurses, especially in rural Canada. In my riding, the regional health authority is trying to recruit doctors and nurses from other countries. That is not a sustainable practice. We have to start producing our own doctors and nurses, train them in Canada, and allow them the opportunity to move to rural areas and have their student loans forgiven through the budget implementation act. Doctors can have \$8,000 per year of their student loans forgiven if they practise in rural and remote communities. Nurses can have \$4,000 forgiven per year, up to a maximum of \$20,000. Those types of investments are going to be highly successful.

A little while ago I heard the member for Scarborough—Rouge River say that this would not provide any benefit whatsoever since rural areas do not have any facilities. That is an insult. I cannot believe she would criticize a program that is going to help rural Canada. There is a real disconnect with that NDP member. She should stand and apologize for insulting rural Canadians. We have

our own doctors and medical facilities, and we need to ensure they are well staffed.

Some people would say we have a disadvantage because rural and remote areas do not have all the pleasures enjoyed in urban centres. I think that is a positive thing. I love what rural life provides, but let us make that investment happen, let us appreciate what rural communities bring, and let us allow doctors and nurses to move into rural areas with the benefit of having their student loans forgiven at a nice level. There would be young people moving into rural communities who will have a chance to maybe meet a significant other, start a family and call those areas home. I think that would be highly beneficial to all of us who need good medical care facilities, not just those of us in major urban centres.

● (1555)

The other thing that I heard throughout the election campaign that people are really concerned about has been the direct subsidies to political parties. Most people just cannot get over it that every party gets \$2.04 per vote. Most of us go out there, work hard and raise money. We are going to phase this subsidy out over the next four years.

However, I just want to share with members a couple of numbers. Last year, 2010, the Conservatives went out and raised \$17.4 million. Canadian taxpayers subsidized us at \$10.4 million. So we have a lot at risk here. We have a lot of money on the line.

The Liberals, last year, raised \$6.4 million and were subsidized \$7.3 million. So they did not even raise 50% of the funds that they have. The NDP is about the same. Its members raised \$4.3 million and were subsidized at \$5 million.

The one that really goes to me and gets my constituents really upset is when they see the Bloc Québécois last year raise \$641,000 but was subsidized at \$2.8 million. We are providing money to a party that is dedicated to the breakup of this country with \$2.8 million of Canadian taxpayers' money. The Bloc funds its entire campaign based on that subsidy and its members do not even bother going out there, working hard, connecting with their voters and supporters, and raising money directly. That is shameful. That is one of the reasons why I applaud the government's efforts to reduce and finally eliminate the direct subsidies to political parties. The vote subsidies really have to go.

Government Orders

Seniors, of course, are important to each and every one of us. They are our parents. They live in our communities. My riding of Selkirk—Interlake is a beautiful riding. People are living up and down Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. They love coming out to cottage country and retiring there. I am hearing from a lot of them that having the extra supplement, through the GIS, of \$600 per individual, or \$840 per couple, would be highly beneficial.

In rural areas, where a lot of the people did not contribute a lot to CPP, farmers and small businesspeople, they are the ones who are going to benefit from this GIS supplement. Even though it works out to only about \$50-a-month per person, it is still something that they would make use of. I have heard them say that this is something that is desperately needed and they congratulate us on doing it.

I was actually just talking to a friend of mine, on the street, just about a month ago. Jim said, “When can we get this done? I could really make use of that extra supplement on the GIS”. He is glad that we are moving forward on it. That is why it is important that we get this bill passed.

Finally, one thing that I also heard a lot in my riding throughout the election campaign, before the campaign and since then, when I have been going around and having my community consultations and round tables, is that people want to ensure that all kids have a chance, those playing sports, at the \$500 tax credit that we have been able to put into place for kids involved in hockey, football, basketball, soccer, and figure skating, like my daughter. Those types of investments are welcome, but what about the kids who are making those huge efforts in the arts, taking piano lessons and drama classes, and wanting to become musicians?

By extending this into a new arts tax credit, we have a great opportunity to actually open the door for, hopefully, more kids to actually get involved in the arts, something that I believe in. All my daughters took piano lessons. It would be something that families with small children, families with teenagers, kids who have aspirations to become painters and who want to get involved in drama and acting, would now have a chance to do and receive that tax credit. Those families would be recognized for their investment into the arts. I think that is something for which we should be applauding the government.

I will leave it at that. I am very excited about having the bill move quickly. I am looking forward to all members supporting the budget.

• (1600)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Madam Speaker, this timing is perfect, since my colleague was just talking about the arts tax credits at the end of his speech, credits for children's artistic activities. First of all, most families in my riding cannot afford to enrol their children in these kinds of activities. The amount parents have to spend in order to benefit from these tax credits is much too high.

Perhaps the government lives in an imaginary world in which all families can afford to enrol their kids in these kinds of academic or artistic activities, but that is not the reality. If the Conservative government really wants to make artistic activities accessible to all children, it needs to either reduce the amount needed to have to

access these tax credits or else subsidize these activities, because not all families can afford to enrol their children in such activities.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I cannot speak to the situation in the member's riding. In my riding it has been applauded. The families I have heard from are aware it is their responsibility to make those initial investments. We will recognize that through tax credits. It is a way to reward the families who get involved by putting their kids into arts schools and drama classes.

In my riding there does not appear to be a difference in the social class or economic standing of the parents who have their kids involved in the arts. In Manitoba, even parents who are living on social assistance will make a decision to involve their kids in music or piano or guitar classes to ensure they are in the band. They are helping their kids go down that path. I have not heard anything contrary to that.

• (1605)

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will follow up on what the hon. member just said. Even people on social assistance want their children to get some exposure to the arts and that is a great idea. However, it is a non-refundable tax credit.

I hope the member understands that if it is a non-refundable tax credit and parents do not have taxable income they would not get any benefit from it whatsoever. They need to have taxable income to actually write off against the tax credit. It would not work if they are below a certain income.

It is the same with the firefighter volunteers and the family caregiver tax credits. If they are non-refundable it discriminates against people with low incomes. What does the member have to say about that?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, the member can stand and rant and rave. However, the reality is that the tax credit will cost the treasury a lot of money. We know that families will benefit from it. We know that kids will be involved in the arts. Kids are already involved in sports and we have not heard a lot of criticism regarding our sports tax credit.

Members can stand and make all sorts of accusations and claims, but the reality is that this will be highly beneficial to families right across the country.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very concerned about the comments made by the NDP member for Scarborough—Rouge River indicating that the benefit that doctors and nurses would get by moving to rural areas would not be worth it because rural areas do not have medical facilities. That is an insult to the hard-working people in my riding who have chosen to go there to work as doctors and nurses. We want to encourage more people from urban areas to do that.

Perhaps the member should get out of Toronto every once in a while and come to a rural area like my riding to see the hard work that people are doing in such places as St. Pierre and—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake has 30 seconds to respond.

Government Orders

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Public Safety for that observation. It is one that I made in my speech as well.

That comment from the member for Scarborough—Rouge River was an insult to all rural Canadians. As the minister said, she needs to get out of the GTA and come out to see that there are hospitals right across the country in small rural communities as well as in remote communities. Those people need options when trying to attract doctors and nurses who are often from urban centres and have to relocate. Initially, we have to provide an incentive for them to work in rural areas.

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Brampton—Springdale, it is my honour to represent my constituents in the House. I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate on the budget 2011 implementation act entitled keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

Our government continues to focus on the economic growth of our country. I am proud that Canada has the strongest job growth record in the G7 and that the International Monetary Fund regards our economic outlook for the next two years as promising despite the global economic turbulence.

Since July 2009, Canada has created nearly 600,000 net new jobs. We are the only G7 country that has regained more than all of the output and jobs lost during the downturn.

The current global economic difficulties are largely due to the lack of confidence in the efforts of other governments to reduce their deficits.

This is a great opportunity for Canada to demonstrate leadership by example. Many of the initiatives in this budget promote strong, sustainable and balanced growth for both the short term and the long term. By implementing them we can lead the way in promoting global recovery and strengthening market confidence.

As we are not immune to the effects of the difficulties facing the global economy, it is especially important to stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan will preserve our country's advantage in the global economy and benefit Canadians from coast to coast including my own constituents in Brampton—Springdale.

The first phase of Canada's economic action plan had a significant positive impact in my riding. The partnership between our government and the city of Brampton resulted in the creation of thousands of jobs and the revitalization of important community spaces, such as Chinguacousy Park and nine recreation centres.

These projects demonstrate the remarkable success of the first phase of the economic action plan in my riding. I look forward to the achievements of the next phase and the positive results it will produce for businesses, communities, families, students and seniors.

In Brampton—Springdale, many small business owners will profit from the temporary hiring credit for small businesses which will allow them to hire additional employees, creating more jobs and

improving the growth of our local economy. Many of them will also benefit from the simplification of customs tariffs which will make trade easier and lower the administrative burden on their businesses.

We also have a large manufacturing base in the city of Brampton which will profit from the accelerated capital cost allowance. This will allow manufacturers in my riding to continue to invest in necessary equipment and machinery that will promote industry growth and economic advancement.

Our government has named 2011 the year of the entrepreneur. Along with the other measures aimed to support small businesses and manufacturers, this budget encourages young people to pursue their dreams by allocating \$20 million to the Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

The Canadian Youth Business Foundation will use this money to provide start-up financing and mentorship possibilities that will enable young Canadians to start over 1,000 new businesses that could be expected to create over 6,700 new jobs.

I am proud that the government is investing in a better future for our youth by providing support to young entrepreneurs. I strongly encourage young Bramptonians to turn their bright ideas into successful businesses.

• (1610)

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act works to provide additional support for communities across Canada. It legislates a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund which will provide dependable long-term funding for infrastructure in municipalities.

Bramptonians have already seen the great benefit of this funding in their transit system. The millions of dollars the City of Brampton has received have been allocated toward various transit initiatives that have worked and will continue to work toward improving the quality and efficiency of public transit in our community. These initiatives have also created numerous jobs in Brampton, which is an added benefit to our local economy.

I am pleased that the government is emphasizing the importance of family with the new family caregiver tax credit. This credit would ease the burden on families in my riding who are caring for infirm dependent relatives. Their selfless service and commitment to family members is praiseworthy and enhances the quality of life for everyone in our community. These families need to be supported.

Families will also benefit from the removal of the \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible expenses a caregiver can claim on behalf of a financially-dependent relative under the medical expense tax credit.

The new children's art tax credit will allow families in our riding to enrol their children in programs that are centred on artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

Government Orders

Families in Brampton—Springdale will also greatly appreciate the investments in education provided by the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. Occupational, trade and professional examination fees will now be eligible for the tuition tax credit which will help apprentices in skilled trades and workers in regulated professions receive the certification they need to get into their chosen profession.

Our riding has a growing student population and families will benefit from improved financial assistance for students as well as measures that make it easier to allocate registered education savings plan assets among siblings without incurring tax penalties or forfeiting Canada education savings grants. This will make it possible for more young people to attend and graduate from colleges and universities.

Education is extremely important for the long-term economic health of both our local communities and our country. Not only is our government supporting caregiving and education, the budget provides much needed support for Canadian seniors by enhancing the guaranteed income supplement, expanding the new horizons for seniors program and eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally-regulated employees.

As the member of Parliament for Brampton—Springdale, it is my pleasure to support the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. It provides support to small businesses, families, students and seniors in my riding that will allow our community to continue to prosper, even in uncertain economic times.

The investments and tax credits in the budget will directly benefit our local economy, which will in turn contribute to the overall well-being of our great country.

I look forward to assisting my hard-working constituents access many of these new benefits in the years to come and a future wherein the job market and our economy continues to grow.

Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters: creating jobs and economic growth. This budget does just that.

●(1615)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member on an excellent speech. In the short time he has been here he has helped restore the riding of Brampton—Springdale to a place that has an MP it can really count on. He has also been a successful business person.

Would the member comment on the proposals we are hearing from both opposition parties with respect to: massively increasing taxes on businesses; running massive deficits; their confusion with respect to our economic agenda going forward and whether they like tax cuts or actually want to put more money in the pockets of Canadians?

Previous Liberal governments always felt it was better for the government to spend money rather than for Canadians to spend money on their families and their businesses.

Would the member comment specifically on how the disastrous proposals of the opposition would affect small business people and job creation?

Mr. Parm Gill: Madam Speaker, as a member of a family who owns a number of family businesses, I can say first hand that raising the taxes on small businesses, which are ultimately the backbone of our economy and the engine that drives this country, would kill small businesses. It would kill jobs and it would be a disaster for our country.

I am very happy that the government is moving in the right direction by supporting small businesses, which are helping to create jobs and putting people back to work. It is not by mistake that we have created almost 600,000 net new jobs. This was due to the prudent policies that were put in place by the Conservative government, and I am proud of that record.

●(1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. members across the floor for doing their smoke and mirrors tricks again regarding job creation and support for small businesses.

During the finance department presentation yesterday, we learned that after all is said and done, a business could qualify for the famous little tax credit, which might turn out to be very little, without creating a single job, through a simple shell game of increasing premiums from one year to the next, from 2010 to 2011. And that is to say nothing of the fact that a business going through a rough spell after having a certain level of employment in 2010 could very easily create jobs without being able to benefit from the tax credit.

How can my colleague continue to defend this measure, which is unlikely to create any jobs?

[*English*]

Mr. Parm Gill: Madam Speaker, our government is concerned for all Canadians who are out there looking for jobs. Our job will not be done until we are completely back on track and get to the lowest level of unemployment in the history of this country. We are moving in the right direction.

I would encourage all parties, mainly the NDP and the Liberals, to support our cause to help better our economy and move it along in the right direction.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will ask the hon. member the same question that his colleague did not answer.

The member talked about the family caregiver tax credit. Does he realize that if one has a low income, one does not benefit from this tax credit? I cannot ask the question more simply.

Mr. Parm Gill: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member that people would only qualify for a tax credit if they had paid income taxes or other taxes that are required to be paid. They would obviously not qualify to receive a tax credit if they had not paid anything.

Government Orders

I would also like to remind the member that there are a number of other measures in the bill that would help support families, seniors, students and businesses. I would encourage him to read them all.

The Deputy Speaker: On a point of order, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Madam Speaker, I would actually like to provide a point of clarification. From my previous question, I had members opposite misquoting me, and I would like to clarify.

When I spoke about the question, it was that this bill does not facilitate the creation of more jobs, or of more doctors and nurses getting jobs in rural and urban communities. It does not facilitate more jobs being created for doctors and nurses.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and speak for too brief a time on Bill C-13. The bill has the august title of “keeping Canada’s economy and jobs growing act”. It is quite a bit of fluffery, frankly, but let me move on to it.

Part of the trouble that I have with this legislation and the claims that government members are making about what it would do is that the government is the same government, with the same Minister of Finance, that had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the realization that the economy was in trouble in 2008 and that the government needed to respond. Only when the Conservatives had a near-death experience did the Minister of Finance bring in a fairly significant stimulus plan that made investments in infrastructure. Opposition parties were involved in ensuring that took place.

Now we have this bill before us. It would implement the budget that was introduced back in the spring, when the economy was at a different point.

Increasingly over the past number of months, we have seen what has happened in the United States, where the economy continues to sputter along. It is not making the kind of growth and the kinds of improvements that we would like to see. We are seeing European countries having significant financial problems and threatening to default on the bailouts they received from the banks in the European community.

It causes us some concern to hear the Minister of Finance continually saying, “Steady as she goes” and that the budget introduced last spring in very different economic circumstances is still the bill that the government is going to move forward.

Bill C-13 is full of half measures. It is a budget full of half measures.

For example, some members opposite were talking about increases to the GIS. We talked about that in June. We talked about the government failing to make the kinds of investments that would lift all poor seniors out of poverty.

We were not talking about ensuring that all seniors would have a home and a two-car garage, for heaven’s sake. We were talking about lifting all seniors out of poverty, but the government was not able to go that far. It went halfway. For those people who will receive the \$50 a month, it will undoubtedly make some difference, but a lot of seniors will continue to suffer in silence.

That is just an example of the kind of half measures I was referring to.

We have heard government members claim *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam* that the government has created 600,000 net new jobs. My colleagues have put some of the facts on the record to show that this is absolutely not the case. We have seen the addition of barely 200,000 new jobs since the pre-recessionary employment high point in May 2008.

As well, the labour force has grown by 450,000 since then. Those new jobs fall 250,000 short of the number needed just to hold employment steady. The government’s claim of creating 600,000 new jobs is just specious. It is wrong. It does not hold water. It is not true, and the facts make that clear.

However, the most troubling thing about it is what these figures say about unemployment in the 15- to 24-year-old age group.

● (1625)

At the high point in May 2008, before the recession, 2,600,000 Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 had jobs. The participation rate at the time was 67.6%. The official unemployment rate was 11.9%.

In August 2011, there were only 2,400,000 people between the ages of 15 and 24 years of age employed. The participation rate had fallen three percentage points, to 64.7%. The unemployment rate was 14%.

That means that there are almost 127,000 fewer jobs for the 15- to 24-year-old group today than there were before the recession. If we take into account the lower participation rate, that is another 133,000 jobs.

What that points to is the problem faced by so many young people in this country. When I rose in the House the other day, I spoke about how young people in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour invest in their education. As a result of the lack of support from the federal government for post-secondary education, those who can afford to pull some resources together to acquire student loans go into very significant debt in order to try to increase their employability by improving their skills and qualifications. They come out and, as the statistics show, at a time like this the jobs are simply not there.

It is a remarkably discouraging situation faced by young people, who are the talent and the human resource needed to continue to build our country into the future. Unfortunately, they find themselves working at part-time jobs and trying to cobble things together. The problem is discouraging at best; it is creating desperation at worst.

There is a gaping hole in these employment numbers, and the numbers are particularly affecting young people.

As for manufacturing jobs and jobs at NewPage, the pulp mill in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, hundreds of middle-aged workers there, women and men, are laid off right now. The provincial government, with no help from the federal government, is trying to put together a transition plan so that company could perhaps be purchased and restarted in some form.

Government Orders

It would be nice if the federal government would recognize that there are Canadians living down in the eastern end of this country and that it should start giving support to those people and communities. However, another several hundred Nova Scotians are going to be either heading out west or staying in Port Hawkesbury and competing with one another for those significant jobs.

In conclusion, let me say that there is another area where there is a desperate need for the government to invest.

I am the international trade critic, as members know, and the government is bullish on all the trade agreements it is trying to negotiate around the world. The one thing that really concerns me, and has concerned a number of business leaders in this country, is that the government is doing this without having an industrial policy in the country, without having a policy that has identified those sectors where good jobs are going to be created. That is where it should be investing, in order to ensure that we do not lose the potential to continue to build our economy and that we do not keep going down the road that returns us to what we were in the 1960s, which was hewers of wood and drawers of water.

• (1630)

We need to have good manufacturing value-added jobs in order to provide the kind of economic activity in our communities, jobs for people in our families that will make our communities strong today and tomorrow.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the bill and I would like to indicate that I will not support the government.

• (1635)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, there are sectors that we know have been and will continue to be key to growth in our country. One is the oil sands petroleum sector, which has brought benefits to the member's riding, as well as hundreds across the country and will continue to do so if it has the support of the House.

My question for the member is the following. Civility is based on the ability to speak the truth, to be honest with one another. Is the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour really prepared to stand in the House and say that the number of 600,000 new jobs created in the country since the end of the recession, not a number from the government side but from Statistics Canada, an organization respected and relied upon by all of us in the House, is untrue? Canadians and his constituents deserve to know.

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Madam Speaker, I do not know where the member gets the 600,000 number, but the examination that the NDP has done of the numbers on the dates that I have described paint a completely different picture than the one about which the member has talked.

In the opening of his question he mentioned something about the oil industry, refinin, and that kind of thing. Let me respond to what I thought he was going to say. I thought he was going to talk about the Keystone pipeline and the fact that his government was planning to ship another raw resource to Texas. Why we cannot add value to our natural resources in our country and create hundreds and thousands of good-paying jobs for Canadians? Why can we not do that?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech and his very interesting answer.

I have already condemned in the House our growing dependence on natural resource development, which traps us by putting us at the mercy of the fluctuations in international trade, as my colleague knows full well. In the meantime, we are seeing an incredible number of jobs disappearing in the processing sector. This was clear during the recent election campaign in Ontario when Mr. Hudak criticized this state of affairs and the loss of 300,000 jobs in Ontario.

I would like to invite my colleague to elaborate on the solutions we are proposing to truly diversify our economy and protect ourselves from the adverse effects of a possible recession.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Chisholm: Madam Speaker, my colleague is also a member of the international trade committee. Economists have acknowledged and supported us in our claim that now is the time for the public sector to be investing in very necessary infrastructure. Now is the time, I would suggest, for us to start focusing on our transportation links across the country. We should look at things like rail service. I have heard from the Port of Halifax about the kind of stranglehold CN has on many industries and employers that are trying to transport goods. It affects our ability to trade, either export or import. Why does the government not make the kinds of investments that are necessary so we can move goods, services and people safely and dependably from one end of the country to the other?

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, International Trade; the hon. member for Avalon, National Defence.

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to address the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act introduced by the Minister of Finance on October 4. I will be sharing the allocated time with my colleague, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

This legislation provides key elements and continues the progress of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, a low tax plan for jobs and growth.

With \$60 billion in targeted stimulus, Canada's economic action plan has worked. It has protected Canada from the worst of the global recession and is a testament to our country's resilience in the face of the challenging economic times that have plagued countries around the world. Our progress has not gone unnoticed.

Last month the World Economic Forum released its annual global competitiveness report naming Canada the soundest financial system in the world for the fourth year in a row. It is a rank of which our government and Canadians alike can be proud.

The praise for Canada does not end there. Just this week the prestigious financial journal, *Forbes*, reported that Canada was the number one country in the world to do business.

The *Globe and Mail* noted:

Canada has earned the highest reputation ranking in Reputation Institute's 2011 Country RepTrak. The study measures the overall Trust, Esteem, Admiration and Good Feelings the public holds towards these countries, as well as their perceptions across 16 different attributes, including a good quality of life, a safe place to live and a strong attention to their environment. Results from over 42,000 respondents worldwide showed that Canada scored well in all of these elements...

This is good news in a fragile world economy, yet global troubles remain. There are serious threats to global financial markets, continuing uncertainty and challenges around U.S. growth and unemployment, Japan's economic struggles to rebound and Europe's debt problems pose a risk to all of the world's economies.

Canada is not immune. We share the challenge of avoiding the devastating consequences of returning to global recession.

That is why completing the next phase of our economic recovery is so important. Canadians agree. Our government was given a strong mandate to stay focused on what really matters, job creation and economic growth. We will continue to make the economic recovery our number one priority.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act strives to protect and support Canada's economic recovery through the following measures: first, promoting job creation and economic growth; measures include providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring; expanding tax support for clean energy to encourage viable green investments; extending the 15% mineral exploration credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector; simplifying customs tariffs in order to expedite border trade and lowering the administrative burden for businesses; extending the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years to support the manufacturing and processing sector; and eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers wishing to work the option of remaining in the workforce.

The legislation will support communities by legislating a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities.

It introduces a volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters.

It increases the ability of Canadians to give more confidently to legitimate charities by introducing a package of integrity measures designed to help combat fraud and other forms of abuse.

The legislation will help families by introducing a 15% family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of infirm dependent relatives. It will also remove the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

Government Orders

The bill introduces a new children's arts tax credit for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational, and development activities.

We will invest in education and training by forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas.

●(1640)

It also will help apprentices in the skilled trades and workers in regulated professions by making occupational, trade and professional examination fees eligible for tuition tax credits and improve financial assistance for students.

The legislation before us today responds to and respects taxpayers in that it phases out the direct subsidy to political parties. Our government has the duty to use Canadians' tax dollars with great care and only in the public interest, especially in a time of fiscal restraint when families are struggling to make ends meet. For these reasons we have introduced legislation to gradually reduce the \$2.04 per vote per year allowance starting April 1, 2012 until this taxpayer subsidy to political parties is completely eliminated. This will generate annual savings that will ramp up to \$30 million by 2015-16.

This legislation will also close numerous tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

These new measures will help complement what we have already done.

Our government removed over one million Canadians from the tax rolls and increased the amount Canadians can earn tax free. We reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 back in the pocket of the average Canadian family.

We introduced the universal child care benefit, offering families more choice in child care by providing \$1,200 a year for every child under the age of six. We introduced the child tax credit, providing personal income tax relief of up to \$320 in 2011 for each child under the age of 18.

We introduced the children's fitness tax credit which promotes physical fitness among children through a tax credit of up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with physical activity.

We brought in the landmark tax-free savings account, the most important personal savings vehicle since RRSPs.

We introduced income splitting for couples, eliminating the marriage penalty for one-earner families by increasing the spousal amount to the same level as the basic personal amount.

We introduced the registered disability savings plan to help families of children with disabilities.

In addition, families are benefiting from other new targeted measures, such as the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, the expanded homebuyers' plan and the public transit tax credit.

Government Orders

Due to our strong record of tax relief, the total savings of a typical Canadian family is over \$3,000 annually.

Moving forward our government will stay the course remaining focused on completing our economic recovery. We are launching strategic and operating reviews to find ways to improve government operations and programs to ensure quality and value for Canadian taxpayer dollars. By doing so, we will support our goal of returning Canada to balanced budgets by 2014-15, a year ahead of our original schedule.

As always, we will do so without raising taxes or cutting transfers to the provinces. We are staying focused on Canada's economic recovery while being mindful that the choices made by other countries can and do have an impact on us here at home.

In the words of our Minister of Finance, while we should not underestimate the risks, Canadians can be confident that our country is well positioned to face the global economic challenges ahead.

•(1645)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we must strive to ease the burden of every individual struggling to recall a spouse's name, every person unable to recognize a child's face, and every family member or friend who brings them comfort and care. We must seek hope for all families struggling with Alzheimer's disease. We must renew our commitment to research that is improving treatments for this illness and which one day may prevent it entirely. We must leave no avenue unexplored.

It is fundamentally important to make sound fiscal decisions. We absolutely have the opportunity to change the course of Alzheimer's disease now. I am wondering if the hon. member thinks we should increase investment for Alzheimer's disease and dementia because it would save lives and would save money.

Mr. Lee Richardson: Madam Speaker, I know how hard the hon. member has worked on this file in the promotion of research and development and funding for Alzheimer's in Canada. Personally, I agree that we should look at this more. I know we are currently reviewing Alzheimer's disease, largely because of the member's efforts. I appreciate her efforts.

•(1650)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Madam Speaker, my constituency is made up of families and a lot of small businesses. When I look at the bill, there is not much there, especially for small businesses.

I know my friends across the aisle have given big tax breaks to the big corporations, their friends, but in my constituency we need help for small businesses. We have already been hurt by the introduction of the HST, which has been repealed by the referendum in British Columbia.

What is in the bill to help small businesses? I know there is a lot for the friends of the Conservatives, such as the banks, the oil companies and corporations like that.

Mr. Lee Richardson: Madam Speaker, as I was sharing my time with another member, I did not have time to get all of these great points in, but small business is one that I really wanted to talk about and I am thankful for the question.

There are so many good things in the bill for small businesses that I do not know where to begin. I just cannot get it all in with the time allotted. We have the accelerated cost allowance, which would be continuing. We have the temporary hiring credit for new hires. This is made for small businesses to assist in new hires. In any event, the general increase in the economy and helping Canadians by reducing taxes would generally provide an economic climate for small businesses in Canada compared to other countries in the world. This is a great environment for Canadians to invest and businesses to grow.

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, I should advise the House that the member is not sharing his time and we have moved to speeches of 10 minutes.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish to reiterate the comments made by my colleague from Nova Scotia. It is with great regret that the time is now limited. The government is forcing us to make fewer comments on what we consider are great inadequacies in this budget. So, I will try, in 10 minutes, to share some of the concerns that have been raised with me about the budget document tabled here today, Bill C-13.

Canadians face an historic deficit, through no fault of those impacted by the recession, and yet those most reliant on federal programs will suffer the effects of cuts to those critical services and programs, as we have been hearing for the last couple of weeks: cuts to Service Canada, assistance, employment insurance, immigration, pension benefits. I can speak personally for my riding that people desperately need assistance. They do want a 1-800 number.

Shifts to computerize further centralized responses deeply hurts those who most need this assistance: immigrants, those who live in isolated communities, the people of the regions.

Many seniors and aboriginal peoples are challenged in gaining access to computers. Many have problems with basic literacy.

To their credit, some volunteer organizations have stepped up to the plate, including the South East Edmonton Seniors Association in my riding which, with some help from the government, is actually trying to train the seniors on how to access this kind of information on line. However, it is still very stressful for seniors.

Many immigrants are challenged by government systems and language skills, in particular, temporary foreign workers. The reference to "just go and look it up on a computer" is basically not helpful to these contributing members to our society.

Government Orders

The second aspect of concern to this budget, which some of my colleagues have spoken to, is innovation in the next generation economy. Most disturbing are the blinders on the government in recognizing the need to invest in the new, cleaner energy economy. Strong support has been expressed for enhanced investment in the clean energy economy from provinces, the fossil fuel sector, the energy efficiency sector and by a lot of think tanks, including the right-wing think tanks.

However, most surprising is the support for investment by the federal government in moving forward on a Canadian energy strategy so that Canadian businesses and, generally, Canadians, can benefit from the investments that have been made around the world. What is happening is that our clean energy sector, our energy efficiency sector, because of the renegeing of investments by the government, are moving to other nations. We are losing in investment in securing our economy of the future.

Instead, the government is gifting billions in public dollars to a handful of energy companies to simply test technologies to deal with carbon, with no obligation in law to reduce the carbon emissions and no obligation to invest in R and D. The fossil fuel sector is known to be one of the worst sectors in the Canadian economy in investing in R and D. This is short-sighted and would put Canada at risk as a player in the new economy.

The third segment of my comments are about aboriginal Canadians. No segment of our population has suffered more under the Conservative economic strategy than aboriginal Canadians. This was clearly delineated by our former auditor general, Sheila Fraser, in her final audit this year.

Among her key messages for the 2011 audit was the failure by the current government and previous Liberal governments to take action on her 31 audit reports on aboriginal issues; 16 reports in the last decade addressing first nation and Inuit issues and 15 additional chapters dealing with issues of importance to aboriginal peoples.

As noted by the former auditor general:

It's no secret that their living conditions are worse than elsewhere in Canada. Only 41 percent of students on reserves graduate [from high school], compared with 77 percent of students in the rest of the country. And more than half of the drinking water systems on reserves still pose a health threat.

She went on to say:

What's truly shocking, however, is the lack of improvement. Last year, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada reported that between 2001 and 2006 there was little or no progress in the well-being of First Nations communities. In a wealthy country like Canada, this gap is simply unacceptable.

Over the past two years, the former auditor general presented 31 reports. However, despite those 31 reports and despite some federal action, some attempts by the bureaucracy, the first nations still lack, according to the auditor general, what most other Canadians take for granted. "On the surface", she said, "it seems that the government simply needs to work harder". She suggested that we needed to look much deeper, and that, after 10 years, she had come to believe that we needed fundamental changes and that we needed to see meaning progress in the well-being of our first nations.

• (1655)

The auditor general said that we could not simply turn to the same old ways of doing business, that we needed substantive changes. We

need funding but we also need major legislative initiatives. We see none of that in the budget tabled.

More specifically, the auditor general pointed out that there was no action on education. First nation children still receive 2% less support than other children. As for access to quality water sources, far too many communities still do not have access to safe drinking water. As for housing shortage, there is disrepair and dangerous mould in houses. Child and family services are not being delivered. First nation children are eight times more likely to be removed from their homes. Still, there is no major commitment by the government. It wants to address crime but where is the investment in facilities to help youth come together with elders and actually avoid the gangs with which they are becoming entangled?

The government has failed to implement obligations under land claims agreement. I have heard delegation after delegation of first nations concerned both with the specific treaty process and with the overall comprehensive treaty. The government is simply not living up to the honour of the Crown.

The problems that the auditor general reported involved not just the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, but also Health Canada, CMHC and Treasury Board. The auditor general, parliamentary committees and expert panels appointed by the government have all recommended deeper reforms beyond budget allocations. These include legislative regimes to govern such things as education, child and family services, health services and drinking water. They are the kinds of regimes that other Canadians benefit from.

However, the key to developing these regimes, as the auditor general recommended, as the Assembly of First Nations recommended and as many individual first nations recommended, is that they need to be consulted and accommodated. They need to be directly engaged. What the first nations do not want is one size fits all. They want to have the support of the government to provide the framework so that they, too, can be engaged, as the provincial and territorial jurisdictions are, in the delivery of their own services to the people in their communities.

The government fully endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. By endorsing the UNDRIP, Canada has committed to ending discrimination against indigenous peoples in this country and yet we see nothing specific in this budget to address the long-standing discrimination, despite unilateral federal jurisdiction and the duty to uphold the honour of the Crown.

The government has criticized aboriginal leaders who, in frustration, are taking their concerns to the courts or to the media. Where else are our aboriginal leaders to turn? I call upon the government to reconsider its spending priorities, to provide hope to young aboriginals and to show that we value their potential to contribute to society and to contribute to the economy.

Government Orders

• (1700)

Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think we all recognize that Canada and Canadians generally tend to be a caring, sharing society, and that we can understand and that we can appreciate. However, we need to have the means by which to care. We need to generate the income. We need to generate the wealth. We need to create jobs. In order to create jobs, as anecdotally proven, in business practices proven and in the world proven, we need to have a low tax base to draw jobs.

I know my corporate haters across the aisle seem to think that corporations are these nasty big beasts. Well, they are mom and pop operations. They are small businesses and big businesses. A corporation consists of owners, managers and shareholders. Some of the greatest shareholders in corporations are the unions that invest and are highly supportive of the NDP. Why does she wish to continually bash the income creators in this country?

We are bringing in accelerated capital cost writeoffs. I have a company in my riding, Procter & Gamble, that is investing over \$100 million, a lot of it due to accelerated capital cost writeoffs. It is jobs for everyday people who are working hard and can contribute back to our economy. What does the member have against creating jobs like this?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I am imagining that the member opposite actually heard my speech where I actually called upon the government to step up to the plate and engage Canadians, engage the fossil fuel industry, engage the territorial, provincial and first nation governments, engage experts, engage the energy efficiency industry and engage the Canadians who would like to reduce their power bills. They have all called upon the government to step up to the plate and start the dialogue on a Canadian clean energy strategy.

The government committed at Cancun to deliver a low carbon energy strategy. Where is it? We are all waiting for the chance to be engaged and nobody is waiting more than our aboriginal communities. The people of the Northwest Territories are waiting for the opportunity to be engaged. They would like to look into alternative energy sources. They would like to stop burning diesel oil and turn to alternative fuel and develop technologies that they in turn could sell to others. So, yes, I and my party are fully engaged and supportive of some kind of new innovative strategy to move forward into the next century.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to explain to us how the government's budget is undermining the public health care system by doing nothing to prevent the private sector from moving in and weakening the public system. Instead of adding doctors and nurses, the government is moving doctors from the public system to the private system, which is further crowding emergency departments in the public system.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, the member's question is obviously in regard to health care and fair access. Timely access is a concern of all Canadians, but very much held by the people of my riding and all of Alberta. It is the top issue. People are deeply

concerned about the suggestions that the government may be moving toward supporting some shift toward greater private delivery of health care.

Nowhere is that more critical than for our aboriginal communities. In most cases, the people who live in isolated communities have no access to doctors and very little access to nursing care.

I actually attended, over the last couple of years, the sessions delivered by the medical faculties and by the Rural Doctors Association. They have told us that we need a lot more direct incentives.

We need to get the government to encourage medical faculties to be putting more money into training more doctors and encouraging students who live in rural areas, including first nations communities, and enable them to go to medical school because they are the ones who are most likely to return to those communities and provide the public health care they deserve.

• (1705)

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is my first speech in the House and I am proud to represent the great riding of Etobicoke Centre. I am grateful to the good people of Etobicoke Centre, my friends, family and supporters for electing me, and I commit to always serve to the best of my ability. I am also the first Conservative in Etobicoke Centre since the hon. Michael Wilson, a great finance minister in his day, and I am singularly honoured to speak today to the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

As I said, it is with pride that I rise in the chamber to discuss the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. With \$60 billion in targeted stimulus, Canada's economic action plan has worked in protecting Canada from the worst of the global recession. Under the leadership of our Conservative government, Canada is weathering the global recession better than nearly all other industrialized countries. As a result, Canada has emerged as one of the world's top performing advanced economies.

Here are the facts. First, Canada has had seven straight quarters of economic growth, with nearly 600,000 net new jobs created since July 2009. Second, Canada's unemployment rate is significantly lower than that of the United States, a phenomenon that has not been seen in nearly three decades. Unlike my colleagues across the aisle who continually criticize our government for sound economic policies, I would point out that both the independent International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, forecast that Canada will be at the head of the pack for economic growth in the G7 for the years ahead.

However, the global economic recovery remains fragile, as Prime Minister Cameron himself spoke about in the House not so long ago, and we must continually work to secure Canada's economic recovery. That is why the next phase of Canada's economic action plan will focus on jobs, economic growth, supporting Canadian families, and ensuring Canada's economic advantage remains strong.

Government Orders

Our Conservative government believes that Canada's economic success depends on a competitive tax regime working to keep taxes low for hard-working Canadians and the businesses that employ them, like many businesses in Etobicoke Centre. The opposition's high tax agenda would increase taxes on job creating businesses to pay for billions and billions in reckless spending on bloated government programs in Ottawa.

Our Conservative government believes in a different approach, an approach that recognizes that Canadian workers and businesses should have more freedom to be innovative and creative with their hard-earned dollars. This is the right approach for economic growth and job creation in Canada.

Small businesses are one of the reasons why our government declared 2011 the Year of the Entrepreneur and it is committed to helping them grow, succeed and create jobs. For example, there is a new hiring credit for small businesses, a temporary one-time credit of up to \$1,000 against a small firm's increase in its 2011 employment insurance premiums over those paid in 2010. This new credit would help up to 525,000 employers defray the costs of additional hiring.

With regard to reducing red tape, we are upgrading the BizPaL online service to make it easier for businesses to obtain the appropriate licences and permits they need to be successful and further consulting Canadians through the Red Tape Reduction Commission.

As for supporting youth entrepreneurs, there are \$20 million to support the Canadian Youth Business Foundation's activities. The foundation works with young entrepreneurs to help them become the business leaders of tomorrow through mentorship, learning resources and startup financing.

We are extending work-sharing arrangements to help businesses keep their workers. There will be \$10 million in additional support to assist those employers that continue to face challenges by making available an extension of up to 16 weeks for active or recently terminated work-sharing agreements. As was mentioned earlier, we are extending the accelerated capital cost allowance to help manufacturers and processors make new investments in manufacturing, and processing machinery and equipment.

The foundation of our country is families and keeping taxes low for Canadian families. Our Conservative government has also recognized and responded to Canadians by providing specific measures in Canada's economic action plan to ease the cost of raising families, keeping children healthy and ensuring money remains in the pockets of the mothers and fathers who work every day to support their children and loved ones.

That is why the next phase of Canada's economic action plan has included the following key measures. There is a new children's arts tax credit, a 15% non-refundable tax credit, on up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

• (1710)

Canada's economic action plan also includes the new family caregiver tax credit, which is a 15% non-refundable tax credit on an amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent

relatives, including for the first time, spouses, common law partners and minor children.

It also includes the enhanced medical tax credit, which will remove the \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible medical expenses that can be claimed on behalf of a financially dependent relative.

Of interest to many, the extension of the eco-energy retrofit program is included to help families lower their heating and electricity bills by making their house more energy efficient with grants of up to \$5,000.

Our action plan includes help to students, which will allow full-time students to earn more money without affecting their loans, doubling in-study exemption to \$100 per week, and giving them a tax break on certification fees.

The Conservative low tax plan has resulted in a total savings for a typical family of over \$3,000. This is because our government recognizes that keeping taxes low for Canadian families will allow them to save and reinvest their money. I firmly believe that this is best for Canadians and best for the Canadian economy. Investing in our families is the right thing to do.

Canada's economic action plan includes support for seniors. These are the people who laid the foundations that we all walk upon today. Our government recognizes the valuable contributions seniors have made to the health and well-being of Canada. This is evident in my own riding of Etobicoke Centre where seniors contribute so much through volunteering and community engagement. That is why Canada's economic action plan is taking measures to improve the quality of life and expand opportunities for these very people.

Our plan includes enhancing the guaranteed income supplement. Eligible low income seniors will receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples, helping more than 680,000 seniors across Canada.

With respect to seniors again, our plan will enhance the new horizons for seniors program with an additional \$10 million to promote volunteerism, mentorship and the social participation of seniors, which is so critical to their well-being. These funds will contribute to enhancing community life through active and social living. The program will also provide funds to target and reduce elder abuse as well.

Government Orders

Canada's action plan includes extending the targeted initiative for older workers with an additional \$50 million to extend the initiative, which provides a range of employment activities for unemployed older workers in vulnerable communities of a population of 250,000 or less to keep them employed and to support their reintegration into the workforce.

Our plan will eliminate the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees. We are giving seniors who want to remain active in the workforce the freedom to make that choice by eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees, unless there is an occupational requirement.

The budget is responsive to the needs of Canadians and takes the appropriate measures to ensure that our economy continues to grow while offering Canadian business an operating environment needed to be competitive and responsive to the demands of the global economy.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Madam Speaker, small businesses drive the economy of this country. That statement comes from economists and the many experts who have talked about how small businesses are owned by families. Any money they make from their small business is reinvested into their communities and generates more jobs. Small businesses are a major part of our economy.

Yet, my friends across the aisle are giving billions of dollars to large corporations, big banks, oil companies and their buddies. We do not even know if these large corporations will actually create jobs here in Canada. They may be shipping jobs overseas. With the billions of dollars that my friends across the way have given to these large corporations, they are sitting with \$500 billion on their books. That money is not being invested to create jobs. They are sitting on that money which should be invested in our local economy, so we can generate more jobs so unemployed people can find jobs.

I would like to ask the member across the way, why are the Conservatives against small businesses?

• (1715)

Mr. Ted Opitz: Madam Speaker, for a moment I thought members opposite were actually seeing reason. That was at the beginning of my colleague's speech.

However, if the member had listened to my speech, he would have heard that we support small businesses in a myriad of ways. We talked about the credit for hiring. We talked earlier on about expanding tax support for clean energy to encourage green investments. We talked about the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments and manufacturing processes and machinery.

This government knows all about small businesses. We acknowledge that small and medium-sized businesses are the engine of our economy. That is why small and medium-sized businesses have a champion in this government.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member and my friend and neighbour in Etobicoke on his first speech.

I would also like to speak about one of Canada's veterans who served on multiple tours and was later diagnosed with PTSD. He

loved his career in the military and the loss of his job broke him. It made him lose his whole identity. Today, he is tired of begging and grovelling for help and of being belittled. He says that when he gets home he cannot take the stress. He walks a tightrope everyday between his wife and his children. He says that there is not a day that goes by that it would not be easier just to stop. What keeps him going is his strong family life.

I wonder what more the hon. member thinks we should do for our veterans who are suffering with PTSD.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and my neighbour to the north work together and we are friends.

I have a total of 33 years of service in the military, both reserve part-time and full-time. I have been on deployment as have many of my friends. When my friends come back from deployment, I can see this very clearly and I am extremely sensitive to that issue. Therefore, I thank the hon. member for bringing it up.

We are working on it. The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs released a lot of initiatives today in his statement to deal with PTSD. It is an issue that we will be studying closely in committee. This is an issue that has our highest attention because of the health effects to Canadian soldiers.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Madam Speaker, regarding the initiatives about which the hon. member just spoke, I would like him to expand upon the initiatives for job creation for corporations, how those tax incentives and how things like the EI initiatives for work share are going to create jobs in the future.

Mr. Ted Opitz: Madam Speaker, the work share arrangements for EI would allow other members to share in those work programs so wages and EI benefits would be distributed among a wider group of people.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the budget implementation act. However, I am very concerned about the limited time allowed. This act is about three inches thick, 640 pages plus, and the government, after three hours, brings in closure.

We are seeing the same thing at committees. When opposition brings motions before committee, the government goes in camera and basically votes against opposition motions and keeps them out of the public arena. What are we living in, an executive dictatorship in our country? Is this what the country is coming to?

This is a large budget bill with serious issues for Canadians in it, but the government shuts down debate. That is not the kind of country we have always known. We have known Canada to be a country that allowed debate, transparency and talked about issues in a comprehensive way. What we see from the government is closure.

Those on the back bench, although they get up and talk about its government, they seem to sit in fear, afraid to speak out against what cabinet is doing. It is a reckless government with a reckless agenda. It is just as simple as that.

Government Orders

The member for Oak Ridges—Markham can heckle all he likes, but the facts are the facts. This is a reckless government with a reckless agenda. We now have a huge deficit. The government has taken the country that was in a surplus position and drove it into deficit.

The government, to look at its message in the names of its bills, attempts to leave an impression. However, when Canadians listen to the names of government bills, they should not believe the implication in the name of the bill or what it should do is within the pages of that bill. The government is absolutely great at messaging, but it is what it does not tell us that we ought to pay attention to.

In the bill, the Conservatives talk about bringing in a family caregiver tax credit, which is a very important part. Also in the bill are a volunteer firefighter tax credit and a children's arts tax credit. Yes, it sounds good on the surface, but let us really look at it.

I will turn to the budget bill where it explains the volunteer firefighter tax credit.

I had a private member's bill in the House for years that would have done something for all the firefighters. If one serves as a firefighter, one deserves a tax credit. However, the government is denying the low-income earners. For students who may serve as volunteer firefighters, because they do not have a high income, the government would deny them the right to the same kind of credit, recognition and money as those who earn high incomes. In the government's budget implementation bill, this is a non-refundable tax credit. That means the low-income earners would not get the tax credit.

During the election we proposed, and what I proposed in my previous bill, a refundable tax credit. If one served, one deserved to get the money. However, as is the government's way, it has left the low-income people out of the bill.

Canadians should understand that when the government talks about a volunteer firefighter tax credit in the amount of \$3,000, it is 15% of that and firefighters really end up with \$450. Volunteer firefighters who are low-income earners, who still have to put gas in their vehicles to do the job, to get to the training, get zero, absolutely nothing.

● (1720)

That is the way the government operates. It supports the big corporations with tax credits and really, to a great extent, it throws a little chaff toward the small business sector. The multinational sector, the big corporations get the tax breaks and they get the tax breaks at a time when the income gap between the rich and poor is growing wider and wider. The way the government is moving forward is unacceptable.

As a party, we have asked the Conservatives to remove the minimum income threshold so low-income Canadians can also qualify, but the Conservatives have refused. We think it is unconscionable for the Conservatives to deliberately exclude the very people who are most in need of help.

That is not the only area and it is not all in this budget. We can look at other areas where the Conservatives are involved. Let us look

at the crime agenda. I was standing outside while the Minister of Public Safety was doing an interview. One of his responses was "A million here, a million there, we don't have the numbers".

The member for Calgary Centre said in his remarks that the Conservatives wanted to be responsible with the public purse. We have never seen a government, in introducing legislation, as irresponsible as that government. It is bringing in a crime agenda that the Parliamentary Budget Officer claims could cost in the range of \$9 billion.

The government does not have the figures. It will not produce the figures. We know what the crime agenda will do. At the end of the day, it will mean more jails, more costs and more than likely, if it goes the same way as the Americans have gone, more crime. What will happen is people will be imprisoned for longer periods of time. Where they go in for a soft crime, they will come out as hardened criminals.

The government will not even look at the facts and produce the figures to tell Canadians how much it will cost for that particular crime agenda. The costs are not just in the jails.

We fought an issue in the House during the last Parliament. It was over the prison farms. Anybody and everybody in the criminal justice system will say that prison farms were perhaps one of the best rehabilitative tools for prisoners in the system. The government did not look at the facts and closed them down. Some of those operations were in fact profitable, but the government did not want to hear it. It just put criminals in jail. That is what this crew does.

Again, it is a reckless expenditure of money that at the end of the day will produce poor results.

Let me go to my area of responsibility, which is international trade critic. There is not a whole lot in the budget, other than the fact that it will increase trade. The Minister of International Trade is going to China next week. He was at the committee today, but the chair of the committee would not let us ask him any questions. He would not let committee members ask any questions on the problem in the United States, the buy America proposal. The minister was only there to talk about the Canada-European trade agreement.

The government has a whole range of ministers in the area of international trade. There is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but we know that most of his time is not spent concentrating on the subject at hand. Most of his time is spent defending the ridiculous expenditures of the President of the Treasury Board in terms of patronizing in his own riding.

● (1725)

My point is this: although it is good to be looking at trade in other areas, while the minister was flitting around the world, the government was caught with its pants down in terms of buy America. President Obama telegraphed on June 28 what he was going to do. There have been five speeches since that time, and the government failed to realize it and to be proactive by talking to the administration to stop him from closing down Canadian jobs with the buy American policy.

Government Orders

• (1730)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, initially budget 2011 was introduced in March. Then it was interrupted by a costly and unnecessary election. The Conservatives' platform was the 2011 budget, and the majority of Canadians decided they wanted it to proceed. The member opposite wants to stall the will of the people.

To whom does the member opposite want to deny the benefits in this implementation bill? Is it those who have infirm, dependent relatives? Is it the people who will benefit from the medical expense tax credit, or students who need financial assistance? Who is it that he wants to deny? Is it the firefighters who have been asking for the tax credit?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party does not want to deny anyone. That is the difference between the party over there, which forms the Government of Canada, and both opposition parties, for that matter. We want to ensure that low-income people, whether they are looking for the family caregiver tax credit or the volunteer firefighters' tax credit or any other, qualify for those tax credits and those moneys the same as rich people do. In the budget they do not qualify, because it is not a refundable tax credit. That is what we are saying: it should be.

Will the government come to its senses and assist the little people out there who do the same kind of service, but are going to be denied the moneys?

The bottom line, to respond to the first part of the member's question, is that we want to see a budget with this many pages and this much potential, both negative and positive, debated fully in the House, rather than rammed through as the government is doing.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the last federal election the New Democrats proposed a 2% cut in the small business tax. Our party actively campaigned on that. The results show that we gained a large number of members in this Parliament.

In this budget I do not see that 2% cut, yet Conservatives are giving away billions of dollars to the large corporations.

Why are the Conservatives against the small businesses?

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, the bottom line in terms of the budget is that yes, it covers a lot of area, but it misses covering the needs of the people who need the money the most.

I have heard colleagues of the member who just raised the question speak to this very issue. One of the most fundamental purposes of government is to create fairness and equity. That has been the tradition in Canada throughout the decades. We are seeing the opposite of that tradition and that policy in this budget, because it denies the money to the people who need assistance the most.

It is a budget that is extremely unfair. It is reactionary in many ways, and debate is shut down as though we have an executive dictatorship. This is a reckless agenda by a reckless government.

Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter the debate on Bill C-13 this afternoon, a very lively debate, and I am glad to see interest from members on all sides of the House on this important bill.

Bill C-13, Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act, is a very important one that follows up on our economic action plan that helped steer Canada through one of the most difficult recessions since the 1930s and in the lifetimes of most of the people here.

This is now the second phase of our action plan. The budget implementation bill we are discussing today brings into reality many of the things that were in the budget that was introduced in the spring and debated all the way through the course of the election. We ran on the pledges that are in the budget, and now it is time to implement them.

I will review a few of the things contained in this very big bill. It is a heavy piece of work, some 600 pages, and it is very important because it covers measures that will help keep our economy going in the right direction.

Our focus remains the economy. Our focus is creating jobs and keeping Canadians employed and making sure of the economic advantages we have in Canada, making sure they help us provide the measures that people depend on from government in this country and that we have the resources to keep meeting the needs of Canadians.

Some of the measures in the act include a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring. Some 525,000 small businesses in Canada will have the opportunity to take advantage of this credit to hire employees in the next year.

We are also expanding the tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments. Even in a tough economy, this is an important measure to help our environment. We are working on that as well, and provisions are in the bill.

We are extending the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector. I come from the province of British Columbia, where mining is an extremely important part of our economy. We are a resource-rich country, and our mining sector is an important contributor to our GDP.

We will be simplifying customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses. We are extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery. That is very important to help keep Canada competitive in a competitive world. Those measures have been well received by the manufacturing sector, which has helped us maintain an economic edge in difficult times. That measure is being extended to that important part of our economy.

We are eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers who wish to work longer the option of remaining in the workforce.

Government Orders

It is true we have an aging workforce. We have a shortage of skilled workers. I have a very skilled retirement community on Vancouver Island, but many of these people are quite able and willing to continue to contribute to Canada's economic activity by working just a little bit longer for the benefit of their own retirement in the future and for the benefit of their families.

Those are just some of the measures.

We are doing something to help our communities. For example, there will be a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to help our municipalities. This is something that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been asking for. Our B.C. municipalities have been asking for it. It is tremendously important to help catch up on the infrastructure deficit that many of our municipalities are facing.

Another very important measure is the volunteer firefighters tax credit. Since many of our rural communities cannot afford a full-time professional fire force, we depend on our volunteer firefighters, and they have been asking for this measure for some time. I am very proud we are able to deliver on that. It is a 15% non-refundable volunteer firefighters tax credit to the amount of \$3,000 for those firefighters who perform at least 200 hours of service. In my community, this measure is very much appreciated.

While I am talking about volunteer firefighters, I want to mention a citizen we lost last year. He was named the Citizen of the Year in Parksville. His name was Don Brittain, and Don was the chief of the Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department. He was fire chief for nearly two decades. This man exemplified what it means to be a volunteer. He motivated many other people. He knew everything there was to know about fighting fires.

I was at his funeral, and the community came out in a remarkable way to honour the contribution by this man to our community. This tax credit will not benefit Don Brittain, but many of the people he motivated will benefit from it in our rural communities, and I know it is very much appreciated.

● (1735)

We are helping families by introducing a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives. That is a welcome benefit in our communities.

We are removing the limit on the amount of eligible expenses that caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

These are all important measures to people in our economy.

Then there is the children's arts tax credit, which even in tough times will encourage young people and families not to miss the opportunity for young children to develop their artistic talents, and I know it is very much appreciated.

All of our efforts are geared toward respecting taxpayers, including phasing out the direct subsidy of political parties. I received an email from one of my constituents this morning stating how much he appreciates that measure, because he does not believe he should have to fund parties that he does not agree with or support.

Canada's economic performance has been noted around the world. Our debt to GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the G7 and in the G20, at about 34%.

I was recently at a Canada-EU forum at the EU Parliament in Strasbourg. The target for EU nations set by the Maastricht Treaty was 60%, just for comparison. We are way ahead of our competitors in our debt to GDP ratio. That is something we are proud of. Since 2006, this government paid down nearly \$40 billion on our debt before the recession, and that has contributed to our healthy situation going through these troubled times.

We had more encouraging news from the IMF and the OECD. Both these organizations recently forecast that Canada's economy will be one of the strongest in the G7 this year and next. Similarly, Fitch Ratings and Moody's recently renewed Canada's AAA ratings. Moody's August statement credited Canada's strong rating to what it termed "economic resiliency, its high government financial strength, and its low susceptibility to event risk".

One of my favourites is a quote from a *Forbes* business magazine that just came out:

Canada ranks No. 1 one in our annual look at the Best Countries for Business. While the U.S. is paralyzed by fears of a double-dip recession and Europe struggles with sovereign debt issues, Canada's economy has held up better than most. The \$1.6 trillion economy is the ninth biggest in the world and grew 3.1% last year. It is expected to expand 2.4% in 2011, according to the Royal Bank of Canada.

We have a lot to be thankful for. Managing an economy through difficult times is something that has to be done very carefully and delicately. That is why these measures in Bill C-13 are very carefully crafted.

I note that time is getting skinny for me, so I would just like to comment on some of the economic measures that were put in place to stimulate the economy on Vancouver Island, in my area.

The new cruise ship terminal cost some \$24 million. Approximately \$8 million of that was from the federal stimulus plan. There are cruise ships coming in to that facility right now.

The Nanaimo Museum just reported it is seeing three to four times more visitors on the days when a cruise ship is in port. That is an indicator of the restaurants and businesses in the downtown Nanaimo area that are benefiting. As word gets out and more ships take advantage of this, we will see more tourism. When people come back to the cruise ship, we are ranked about 90% in terms of the experience people have had, and as the word gets out, we are expecting to see that spread to the entire mid-island area.

The pulp mills in our area are receiving benefits through the green energy transformation fund.

Government Orders

There was funding for our Vancouver Island University for the Deep Bay shellfish research centre. We are pushing forward with science that helps the expansion of our aquaculture industry, which is a very responsible industry, and recently there was more funding for a brand new international centre for sturgeon research, the only one of its kind in North America. That is attracting an international forum to Nanaimo that will bring scientists from around the world, and that will also help stimulate our economy.

All of these measures that we have been taking, including measures helping to keep people employed and measures targeting older workers and keeping people engaged, contribute to helping us get through the economic challenges.

We want to stay the course, keep our taxes low, keep our spending low and make sure we help Canada cruise through to more stable times.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to ask him a question about the budget and families. The Conservatives say that the budget will help families. However, we see that there will be little help for caregivers. There is a tax credit for caregivers, but they generally do not have enough income to take advantage of it.

Have the Conservatives considered the possibility of direct tax benefits for caregivers rather than tax credits? In this way, whether they are low or middle income earners, they could receive financial assistance to continue helping the people and seniors in their family who often are sick.

• (1745)

[*English*]

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, some of the measures that have been referred to are small but incremental. On top of what we have already done, we have just added a family caregiver tax credit and a children's art tax credit. In addition to that, we have cut over 120 taxes since we formed government just a few years ago.

We cut the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%. We removed over a million Canadians from the tax roll entirely. We increased the amount that Canadians can earn tax free. We reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 back in the pocket of the average family, a measure that the party of the member opposite would like to reverse. We also introduced the universal child care benefit.

Altogether, these measures save the average family of four \$3,000 a year. We think we are on track in helping families.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think tax credits can be a good thing. They are a good thing if everybody benefits from them. However, there is a difference between a non-refundable tax credit and a refundable tax credit. Unfortunately, when we are talking about non-refundable tax credits, as we are here, those who are in the lowest income bracket do not get the benefit. Yet the government is acting as though everybody is going to benefit from its tax credit.

Does the hon. member recognize that those with very low incomes are not going to get the benefit of these tax credits?

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, I heard the member raise this point earlier in the debate. He does make a point about the lowest-income people, but if they are not paying taxes, of course they will not benefit directly from this program. However, they do benefit when we lower the GST, because even the lowest-income people pay lower GST. Why does this member's party want to raise the GST?

I remember that when the GST was introduced many years ago, it was this member's party that campaigned on getting rid of it—but they forgot to. We lowered it from 7% to 5%, which has helped all families in Canada.

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member mention the IMF a couple of times and *Forbes* magazine.

I have another statistic from the IMF. The IMF projects that Canada's balance of payments deficit as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worst among advanced economies, worse than that of the U.S., and soon to be worse than those of Italy and Spain. Yet the government is more interested in selling our raw materials, whether it is oil going to the United States or raw logs going overseas to other countries.

What in this budget is going to help develop value-added industry in this country?

Mr. James Lunney: Mr. Speaker, the member raises an interesting point. We are a resource-rich country. We are so fortunate in Canada to have the abundant resources that we do, that we are able to generate great income in our country to meet our domestic needs, and also have energy that is in demand all over the world. In fact, many people have described Canada as an energy superpower. It is the funds brought in from our energy sector that help to fund many of the programs that we have, including transfer payments to the provinces for health care and education.

That is why we are keen on ensuring that our green energy development goes ahead and that investments in our manufacturing sector go ahead, so that we can continue to meet the needs of all Canadians through the benefits that come in through our industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is my third 10-minute speech during debates on bills in a week, and I truly feel honoured to express my vision of Canada in the House.

I have taken the time to study aspects of the bill on implementing certain provisions of budget 2011 and, although I am in favour of some of the measures, others are not very useful and are even harmful in my eyes. As I have already mentioned on other occasions, the government is a major, essential economic player, and anything we do or stop doing has significant consequences for taxpayers, businesses and public servants.

Government Orders

In other words, Bill C-13, dubbed the “Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act”, is not worthy of its name. While the government claims to be promoting economic growth and job growth, we quickly see that it is not taking into consideration the priorities of Canadian families and that small businesses are being overlooked.

I will start with a tax measure that is useless to most and irritating because it is a shameless vote-buying ploy. I am talking about the children's arts tax credit, which will cost the national budget \$110 million in lost taxes without clearly promoting participation in artistic activities or affecting the millions of families who do not pay taxes because of their specific situation.

Between 35% and 40% of Canadian taxpayers do not pay taxes for one reason or another. In the vast majority of cases, it is because of their low income. A significant portion of these low-income taxpayers are our seniors. We cannot blame them for not paying taxes, because they are living on less than \$20,000 a year.

Another portion of these taxpayers is made up of families with young children whose parents are either young workers who earn close to minimum wage or victims of occasional or long-term unemployment. Most of these Canadian families will not be able to benefit from this tax credit because they do not have a high enough income. This is an elitist measure that excludes a large number of Canadians, people who need to get involved in society and give their children an opportunity to have enriching experiences.

Why exclude these families? Did the government call it a day after creating those 600,000 jobs and give up on addressing the pressing needs of Canadian families?

We have known for a long time that the Conservatives have decided to favour major corporations at the expense of small businesses. This year alone, the government has given nearly \$2 billion in tax cuts to businesses that are not held accountable for this massive amount of money. Although our plan is clear on predictions for job creation, the Conservatives refuse to listen to us and implement support measures for Canadian small businesses. The NDP wants to help families directly by creating good-quality jobs. These jobs will enable Canadians to live a decent life in this fragile global economy.

This week, we received the Conservatives' support on a motion calling for immediate economic action. The motion received the unanimous support of the House. Since they recognize the need to act quickly, why do the Conservatives not use their strong mandate to take immediate action instead of giving us this bill with a misleading title? Yet they gave us a strong mandate by supporting that motion.

This bill includes very few measures to stimulate the Canadian economy. There is a temporary tax credit of up to \$1,000 on employment insurance premiums, for one year only. This measure announced by the Conservatives does not target new job creation since it applies only to existing jobs. A business can obtain this tax credit by simply increasing an employee's hours. So how will this measure create jobs? It is wishful thinking to expect that that this measure will create jobs. Furthermore, since this measure is temporary, what guarantees that the jobs created this year will be

kept next year? If the incentives for businesses are no longer there, why would they create jobs? While we are proposing sensible and responsible solutions for job creation, the Conservatives are throwing money out the window. Instead of giving a tax credit to create jobs, the Conservatives are blindly handing out tax credits.

• (1750)

In addition, there is no information available about the estimated number of jobs that will be created by this bill. We have the impression that the bill was thrown together. Canadian taxpayers do not want this government to squander their taxes, and they want to know what results to expect. This government must be responsible and forecast the results of this fiscal policy before implementing it. How many jobs will be created by these half measures or by this almost total lack of measures?

Is the government searching for economic priorities? I would like to provide one that is important to me in this “year of the entrepreneur”. In Canada, the entrepreneurship rate is declining and, according to the report on entrepreneurship, could sink into the red by 2018. The situation is that serious. Briefly, the report explains that the number of new entrepreneurs is not even sufficient to replenish firms that are already on the market. Owners of profitable and productive businesses will be forced to shut their doors if we do not act quickly.

Quebec has been hit harder than the other provinces by this problem. The government has a duty to take immediate action to deal with the problem of entrepreneurial renewal in Canada. It must get its priorities right and be proactive. Encouraging entrepreneurial renewal is the best way of ensuring that our economy will develop in a sustainable manner.

The NDP is proposing clear actions to support the Canadian economy: cut small business taxes from 11% to 9% and offer a tax credit of up to \$4,500 for each job created within the Canadian economy. We also proposed an employee retention incentive that would include offering employers a tax credit of up to \$1,000 if they commit to maintaining the jobs created.

Our employment plan aims to create 200,000 sustainable jobs each year, jobs that will support Canadian families. That is concrete action, touch wood. We will ensure Canada's economic prosperity by supporting small business. That is a plan that works and that will work if the government agrees to use it to create jobs. It is solid. It is a plan that responds to the needs of Canada's small businesses.

To conclude, I would like to say that one of my many weaknesses is the pride I inherited from my late father. I refuse to be treated like a monkey being tossed a handful of peanuts. These crumbs are an insult to the intelligence and dignity of this country's families—I am talking about the tax credit for families for art activities—and a large number of families are excluded, as I explained earlier. People need far more dignified and respectful measures.

Government Orders

Can I, as a member of Parliament, accept that a mostly ineffective, needlessly expensive measure—one that has no effect on the families that need it most—is being inserted into this bill?

• (1755)

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what does the member opposite have against employers who employ large numbers of people? We heard repeatedly that he was down on large corporations. However, as we tax large corporations at higher rates, that means they can provide fewer jobs. Not only that, he is also biting the hands that feed him. We have large employers, who are largely unionized and whose unions, after all, provided \$85,000 worth of sponsorships for his party's recent convention.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to speak about the issue of large corporations.

I have absolutely nothing against large corporations, but I do have something against the preferential treatment this government has been giving them in the form of approximately \$10 billion a year in tax breaks since it came into office. This money has been completely wasted and the Conservatives are depriving the public treasury unnecessarily. As I said, the state has financial resources, but this government is giving them away big time.

• (1800)

[English]

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that large corporations are sitting on a \$500 billion tax giveaway by the Conservative government. I am glad that my colleague has talked about small businesses. They do drive the economy of our country.

I want to ask my colleague, why are the Conservatives so against small business?

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the Conservatives are so against small businesses, as the hon. member pointed out.

The hon. member mentioned an extremely important factor, namely the accumulated funds or the \$500 billion in cash held by Canadian companies, particularly large corporations. To use some imagery, it is about the same as the captain of a ship putting the ballast at the top of the mast, which, with the speculation we have been through in the past, will make it pitch more and more sharply and will make everyone feel sick.

All this risk is expensive and makes life difficult for Canadian families and small businesses. I therefore call upon the government to put an end to it.

[English]

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague to change the subject from big business to the so-called arts tax credit. I have worked in the arts

field, and I have used the arts to help young, at-risk youth to connect with themselves and to learn the tools to become better citizens.

This arts tax credit that the Conservatives are producing seems to me to be something that only works for those people who actually have an income and who can actually pay for arts classes. Can my hon. colleague comment on that?

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Jeanne-Le Ber raises a crucial point. He is in a unique position to understand the needs facing the most disadvantaged groups.

The Conservative measure excludes so many families that, in the end, we have to wonder why they bothered introducing it at all. What is truly unfortunate is that, at the same time, many organizations are seeing their budgets being cut, even where money was well invested and producing results. Meanwhile, unfortunately, even for the families that can benefit from it, this tax credit does not even amount to one cup of coffee a week. How does this benefit everyone? It is basically a waste of \$110 million.

[English]

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to add to the debate on behalf of the people of Don Valley West on Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. It is the people of Don Valley West who placed their confidence in me to ensure that we continue to move the economy forward and work to create a better Canada for all Canadians.

In April during the election campaign, there were three main issues that were foundational to my campaign, three issues that were consistently discussed on the doorsteps of my constituents, and it is these three issues that I would like to address with regard to Bill C-13 this afternoon. These three issues are: families, job creation and the economy.

I would like to begin with the economy as resolution to all of these issues flow from a strong and strengthening economy. Our Canadian economy is being recognized as one of the strongest and most stable in the world today and this is clearly a result of strong leadership and vision. Our government has cut taxes over 120 times since 2006, helped remove over one million low income families, individuals and seniors from the tax rolls altogether, and helped an average family save over \$3,000 a year through our economic initiatives.

I note that both the IMF and the OECD have forecasted that Canada will be at the head of the pack for economic growth in the G7 for several years to come. Canada enjoys the lowest debt to GDP ratio among its G7 partners. With all of these positive initiatives, we cannot forget that the global recovery remains fragile, something we have spoken about over the past four months.

Government Orders

Our government campaigned and committed to balancing our books and eliminating the deficit. Before the global recession, our Conservative government paid down nearly \$40 billion in debt. Our plan to balance our budget over the next few years is the cornerstone of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. The good news is that we will do all of this without raising taxes on Canadians, unlike the official opposition that would raise taxes immeasurably and kill jobs or something the previous Liberal government accomplished by slashing provincial transfers to health, education and seniors in order to effect their balanced budget.

We understand that when Canadians are balancing their budgets at home, sacrifices need to be made. That is why, as a government, we are going through an extensive review of government spending, including scrapping the per-vote subsidy that was given to all political parties. We believe in using taxpayers' money wisely and that includes no free handouts to political parties.

The Toronto Board of Trade recently stated:

The 2011 federal budget achieves a prudent balance of tax stability and deficit reduction measures while pointing to longer-term infrastructure investment opportunities.

Additionally, the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants stated:

[The budget] strikes the right balance by keeping Canada competitive and demonstrating prudent fiscal management. This budget charts a course that will help Canada be competitive in attracting investment while establishing a fiscal framework that sets the stage for sustainable recovery and economic growth.

With regard to business and job creation, Canada has the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment in the G7, an open invitation to new investment in this great country. In the Year of the Entrepreneur, we introduced a new hiring credit for small business. I have heard from constituents in my riding of Don Valley West who own a small family manufacturing business that they are able to hire two more employees as a direct result of this specific initiative.

We are working to reduce red tape through the Red Tape Reduction Commission.

• (1805)

Since we formed government in 2006, over one million new jobs have been created. Since July 2009 over 600,000 net new jobs have been created, taking us to a higher level than the pre-recession level.

We are lowering taxes for businesses in order to help create an environment that encourages sustainable growth, so that they can continue to hire Canadians. Let us not forget that over 90% of businesses in Canada are small and medium-sized businesses.

Our economy has become so well regarded that even *Forbes* business magazine, the influential business magazine, has just this week ranked Canada the number one country in which to do business and create jobs.

To again quote the influential Toronto Board of Trade, it stated:

—welcomed new initiatives to spur small business productivity and hiring, such as the hiring credit for small business. SMEs are the engines of job growth. Spurring productivity and employment growth among SMEs, as this budget does, should help Canada's economic recovery.

And it is doing just that.

Within this sector, manufacturing continues to play an important role. Our government is working hard to create the right environment to stimulate manufacturing growth and job creation in Canada.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association said:

The extension of the two year write-off for investments in manufacturing and processing technologies announced in [budget 2011] is critical to sustaining Canada's economic recovery...In an era of economic uncertainty, this tax measure gives manufacturers the confidence to invest in their future by boosting purchases of productivity-enhancing technologies.

Finally, I would like to address what our government is doing to assist families at this time.

We believe in families, and to prove that we have introduced a new children's arts tax credit of up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with children's arts, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

We introduced the children's fitness tax credit, promoting physical fitness among our youth through a credit of up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with physical activity.

We brought in the landmark tax free savings account, the most important personal savings vehicle since the RRSP was born.

We have introduced a new family caregiver tax credit, an amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives, including for the first time, spouses, common law partners and minor children.

Our government is extending the eco-energy retrofit program to help families lower their heating and electricity bills by making their house more energy efficient.

I have nine seniors homes in my riding and this past weekend on National Seniors Day, I had the pleasure of visiting hundreds of seniors in these homes and witnessing the impact the new horizons for seniors program has on the every day lives of seniors.

Our government has enhanced the guaranteed income supplement. Eligible seniors will receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 a year.

The C.D. Howe Institute stated:

—the new Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) top-up benefit for low-income seniors, would bring a meaningful increase in benefits too low-income seniors.

We have eliminated the mandatory retirement age, allowing Canadians to work longer.

According to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, "People have a right to determine how long they work, and this is a major step toward eliminating poverty for seniors".

Our government is working for Canadians. I urge the opposition parties to abandon their high tax, job killing agenda, and support these initiatives which are working for Canadians and for all of Canada.

Government Orders

• (1810)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Conservative after Conservative has mentioned the IMF, *Forbes* business magazine, and other agencies around the world and how well our economy is doing.

Here is another fact. The IMF projects that Canada's balance of payments deficit as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worse among advanced economies, worse than the U.S., and we are slowly approaching Italy and Spain.

What does this mean? It means that the Conservatives plan to ship raw materials such as oil and logs from British Columbia and other parts of Canada to the states or other countries. This means that jobs are going to be shipped from Canada. That is the Conservatives plan.

I would like to know from the member what the Conservatives are going to do in the budget that will help our secondary industries have value-added industries as part of a plan that will bring jobs to Canada?

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate this afternoon and there are two very separate ideological differences between us and the opposition. I am here to celebrate our successes. I want to celebrate Canada and all the good things that we do in the country. As I listened to some of the questions and comments coming from the opposition, as I stand here proud of the country and all the good things we are doing, I do not understand how we can take a negative approach from the other side and pummel this economy into the ground.

World expert after world expert talk to us about the great things we are doing in our country. I encourage the member to celebrate our successes, not knock them.

• (1815)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the member has an interest in health. One in three, or ten million Canadians, will be affected by a neurological or psychiatric disease, disorder or injury at some point in their lives. There are no cures for ALS, MS, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease and no effective treatments that consistently slow or stop the course of these devastating neurodegenerative diseases.

Statistics are neat and tidy. They do not show the reality of those living with the diseases. Nor do they truly reflect the significant burden on Canadian families. Does the hon. member think the government should commit to a national brain strategy for Canada?

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, I know the member has spent a tremendous amount of her career and efforts on addressing these issues. I clearly understand her empathy and understanding of these issues.

Our government is deeply concerned, as is every Canadian about these issues. We have created the new brain centre initiative to fund the new brain centre. We recently announced that we would be reviewing all initiatives and spending in this area to see what other initiatives we could become involved in that would help in finding solutions. We are probably not far apart in terms of understanding and addressing these issues. I look forward to greater dialogue in that area with the member.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my friend, the hon. member for Don Valley West, who was a very successful entrepreneur in his own right, a fairly simple question. What does it take to create jobs and wealth? Why does the NDP not understand the principles of wealth and job creation?

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, as an entrepreneur and a business person, Canadians work hard every day. There was a comment made earlier that we did not celebrate entrepreneurs. I entirely disagree with that. We celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians. Business people need to work in a positive environment. They need to build success in order to meet obligations, to pay the bank, the payroll, all the things that businesses do every day in all shapes and sizes of small and medium enterprises.

I do not understand why the party opposite cannot get on board with these initiatives to help Canadians become more successful in their everyday lives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-13 contains a number of intolerable elements. For one, the Conservative government wishes to use this bill to end public funding for political parties. What a shameful proposal. Public funding for political parties is a key element to maintaining democracy in Canada.

The political party financing system offers equal access for all political parties and gives political parties that cannot afford it an opportunity to have their voices heard. Obviously, the Conservative Party would prefer to have a system that favours rich political parties to the detriment of smaller parties. No one is surprised by the fact that the Conservative government is proposing such a measure. It is yet another tactic to solidify their power and muzzle those who have a different vision for Canada.

Public funding for political parties was implemented to put an end to corruption in politics and meddling by rich entrepreneurs. If the state does not subsidize political parties, the funding must come exclusively from private sources. Without public funding, the government would not be much different from a business. Perhaps the government's next proposal will be that political parties be put on the stock market, I do not know.

• (1820)

[*English*]

I will tell hon. members a little tale. About a year ago I was a student and my wife was a student as well. We are both educated people. I have a master's degree. She was a lawyer in Turkey. All the same, we had a hard time making ends meet through these difficult economic times.

Government Orders

An organizer saw me in the summer of 2010 and asked me if I was interested in becoming a candidate for the NDP. Here I was, struggling to keep my business running, studying and taking care of my family. The party thought I might make a good candidate, so it approached me. I accepted, knowing that the campaign financing through the per vote subsidy would support me rather than having to raise my own money, which would have been an impossibility at that time, since I was working, studying and taking care of my family.

I clearly did not have the time to raise money while I was studying and doing all these things, so the elimination of the per vote subsidy might eliminate guys like me as candidates. Instead, they will prefer the professional politicians who have well-polished political machines and this will leave the grassroots voiceless and further alienate the people from the political process.

Voting and elections are part of the common good, so I do not understand why the Conservatives continue to deride the electoral process and thus show their contempt for the electoral process.

However, with that said, we will be in good shape to raise our own money as a party, living without the subsidy, but my fear is that it will discourage certain candidates, those who cannot get involved in the political process because they do not have the money.

There is nothing worse when one is broke to get hit up by a political party for money. I know this from experience. That is when an individual is earning \$25,000 a year and a political party says it needs help and asks if he or she has \$500 to give. Most Canadians do not have that money and they resent being asked for it.

That is why the subsidy is in place, so the costs of political activity are borne by the greater public for the greater good. Everyone pays, but those who do not have any money will not get dinged for this \$2 per vote. It will be borne by the more well off in the taxation system. That is what happens. Those who do not make enough money during the year do not have to pay for this. Those who are well off would end up paying this money through their taxes.

This is the way of the government. The Conservatives believe more in the prosperity of the few rather than the prosperity of all Canadians. They believe that the electoral and democratic system, through the per vote subsidy of our country, is not worth investing in.

I will leave this subject briefly and say that the government is also scattershot on the economy. The Conservatives continue to applaud their Minister of Finance, who was chosen by *Euromoney* magazine as the best finance minister in the world two years ago.

The current best finance minister in the world is Wayne Swan, a Labour brother from Australia. Why? Because he not only acted quickly on this year's economic downturn, but the one in 2008 as well.

Both times, Canada's Minister of Finance was asleep at the wheel. While he was reading *Forbes*, with his feet up on the desk in his tailored suit in the warmth of his leather and wood office, perhaps he could not hear the voices of our most poor from his Ottawa bubble. He waited too long before acting and it shows, because these measures in this bill are scattershot. They lack coherency.

That is why the government rests upon its platitudes. It says that it is leader of the G7, while ignoring that the top four countries in the World Economic Forum competitiveness report are not from the G7 at all. Why ignore these countries? Because countries like Switzerland, Sweden, Singapore, Finland invest in public transit. They have coherent plans. They have state-of-the-art infrastructure. Their governance models are orderly and transparent.

The solution of the government has been like the kid in class who neglects to study. He sits next to the smart kid and when he can peek at what the smart kid is doing, he cribs the smart kid's notes.

The small business tax credit was our idea, except our proposition is in a half measure.

● (1825)

The government's tax credit for small business will not be effective in helping small businesses. We proposed the \$4,500 tax credit for small businesses and a reduction in small business tax from 11% to 9%. Perhaps the government did not see that part when it was peeking over our shoulder.

Regarding Montreal's infrastructure, we said that the Champlain Bridge needed to be built. We talked about the economic significance of the bridge and its contribution to productivity. Six months later I listened to the minister repeat my exact words to a room full of journalists. He also said it would not cost the taxpayers anything. I guess he missed part of our notes. We have done our homework on the way PPPs work and they often cost more than a regular procurement. There is no such thing as off-the-book accounting and the government should be transparent about that.

However, I guess when the Conservatives cribbed from our notes, they missed the substance of our argument. They prefer the comfort of their own ideology.

Let me remind the hon. members of the 12 pillars of the World Economic Forum's competitiveness index. I will open the answer book to give them a peek so perhaps they can create the jobs necessary to build this economy. We will give them the answers so we know they do not have to copy off of us.

The basic requirements of the 12 pillars are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, and health and primary education. These are the keys for factor-driven economies.

Efficiency enhancers are: higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, and market size. These are keys for efficiency-driven economies.

Innovation and sophistication factors are: business sophistication and innovation. These are key for innovation-driven economies, of which Canada is one.

The Conference Board of Canada identified weaknesses in these last two areas, business sophistication and innovation. That is why since 2009 Canada has slipped from sixth place to ninth place and in September of this year to twelfth place.

Government Orders

The member for Calgary Centre can cherry-pick the facts and figures in this report, but the fact remains that the stability of our financial system was not due to his government but the foundations built by Canadian governments of the past. That is a fact I will acknowledge to the third party in this House even though its last Prime Minister wished to change that system. We are glad he decided not to. Members can take credit where credit is due, but they must realize that it is a misleading practice to claim credit for something someone else has done.

Let us return to the weaknesses identified in the report, that being innovation and business sophistication. The report states:

—greater R and D spending and producing goods and services higher on the value chain, would enhance Canada's competitiveness and productive potential going into the future.

What is the government's answer to this criticism on competitiveness? It is to focus on export of raw materials like bitumen from the oil sands. To make it a priority to invest in basic—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order. I would remind hon. members that in the course of their speeches it is always a good idea to look this way once in a while as I will give an indication as to how their time is proceeding.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to be honest, it is rare that I listen to the NDP's economic policies. However, as I was listening to the member, what really surprised me was the point he made regarding political subsidy. He wants Canadian taxpayers to pay for his party. His party has difficulty raising money from the Canadian people. If people liked his party's policies they would give it money. When its members realize that is not a possibility, they want Canadian taxpayers to pay for their party.

What is even more interesting is the member mentioned that big corporations would be coming back and paying back. He forgot to look at the other side of the coin. There are limits regarding donations to political parties. Businesses are not allowed to donate to political parties. Unions and their buddies are not allowed to donate to them. That is why they are feeling the punch and why we see them crying about it.

• (1830)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, our party is in a fairly good position to raise its own money, so it will not be a problem for the party.

What I said was that the most disadvantaged members in our society may not be able to participate in the political process because they will not be able to afford it. Therefore, if political parties have to constantly hit up individuals for money, those who do not have the money or whose social situation is affected by the government's economic policies might resent the fact that a political party is asking them for money. Therefore, we see that the per-vote subsidy would allow those poorest members of society to take part in the political process.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my hon. colleague for what is one of the most thoughtful speeches I have heard delivered here from either side of the House. He talked about facts and developed arguments using logic that was respectful to all parties and history.

When I listen to the members opposite, what is always interesting is how rhetorical they get and substitute invective, such as name calling, for logic. My hon. colleague across just talked about us crying or something to that effect. What kind of childish argument is that?

Here are some facts. The two biggest deficits in Canadian history are Conservative: Michael Wilson, under the government of Brian Mulroney; and, the deficit last year of this current Minister of Finance.

What are the policies that led to our stable banking system? The Conservatives wanted banks to merge, to be deregulated and to sell insurance, all measures that were stopped and that Canada was thankful to not have in place to help us with the recession.

I ask my hon. colleague for his thoughts on the Conservatives' record and what he feels the NDP would do instead?

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, I am disturbed that the debate on this motion is being guillotined. We have time limits in the House. I am aware that I was not prevented from speaking, rather my speech was cut off in accordance with those time limits. However, I believe there are more comments of substance to be said about this legislation that might not be said due to time constraints.

To answer my hon. colleague's question, if we look at the economic record of NDP governments in Canada at the provincial level, we have shown ourselves to be fiscally responsible, fact-based and realistic about measures.

During the cuts to the transfers to provinces, in British Columbia Mike Harcourt's government did not reduce costs. It actually invested in infrastructure at that time. We now see that it is in a healthier position regarding its infrastructure.

There are many examples of NDP governments having been successful at managing the economy.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to rise and speak to this bill, a very important bill that talks about keeping Canada's economy and jobs market growing.

Members will remember quite clearly the recession of 2008. The government acted very strongly and brought in the first economic action plan, which included spending for infrastructure to ensure that there was money flowing into the country and that there were jobs.

The stimulus package worked all across the nation. It was a step that helped Canada weather the storm. I can say to all members that Canada, despite the fact of the global turmoil, weathered the storm very well.

Now we are coming to the same situation, due to the eurozone crisis and the instability in the U.S. market. We are again facing economic uncertainty, so the government has come forward, once more, with the second stage of the economic action plan which this bill is addressing.

Government Orders

When the first economic action plan was presented in the House, the NDP had the same arguments opposing it. The NDP opposed all the measures put into that action plan. Now those members are standing up and using the same arguments.

It is no surprise to anyone that members of the NDP are standing up again to oppose an economic action plan that works for Canada.

We hear the arguments made by the other side. The last speaker was talking about nitpicking. It is amazing. There is a recession in the world and this party is bringing bad news. Members of the NDP are saying that everything is going wrong and the sky is falling. It is the same thing they have always been saying. I have been sitting here, all these years, listening to this party giving the same arguments.

Despite the fact that some of the members have changed, nothing has changed in the NDP ideology. The NDP does not look at critical factors or what this bill will do. This bill addresses how we can get more people working. That is a key thing. Right now, as we speak, President Obama has a bill in the U.S.A. trying to get people back to work.

It is quite interesting that the NDP members will get up and talk about how we are losing jobs. Then they talk about the pipeline that is going to be built to the benefit of Canada. Who is opposing it? It is the NDP.

They will find some rationale, at any give time, to oppose anything that would benefit Canadians and the Canadian economy. Their rationale for always opposing everything is their ideology, which is big business, higher taxes, bigger taxes.

We just heard the NDP members talking about subsidies and how the taxpayers should pay for them, so they can go and collect money. I find it quite strange, but if they did make an effort to go out, they would find out what Canadians are actually saying. This time Canadians are saying that politicians should not get free money from taxpayers.

It is important to recognize what this bill is all about. It is about creating an economic environment that is there for businesses, big and small, to have the opportunity to hire people.

• (1835)

The bill talks about training people to ensure that our workforce is capable. People who have lost their jobs can get training and go back into the workforce. The important point here is to get people to work. That is what the NDP should understand.

There are provisions in the bill to help. Maybe the members of the NDP should see that this would help Canadians and maybe they should support this for a change. Now that they are the official opposition, they should take a rational look at it and support those measures. After they support it, they can come back and give their ideas on what would help Canadians. Working together is how we will get out of the recession.

My friend from Winnipeg talked about the ostrich with its head in the sand. That applies to the members of the NDP. They have their head in the sand and do not see what is happening globally. There is a crisis in Europe and in the United States. We do not live on an

island. We are an integrated economy with the world. The impact of these things are being felt in this country.

A recession is going on. This is not a good time. It is not a time when figures are flying high and the economy is booming. The economy is not booming anywhere around the world. There are danger signs all around the world and we need to take steps to create an environment that will enable Canadians to get jobs. A Canadian who is willing to work can feed his family, take care of his children and send his children to school, and all those things that make societies very strong. However, the NDP would never find anything good. It is always negative.

In conclusion, I ask my friends on the other side to look at this carefully, as there are excellent points in this, and to support it because it is for the good of the country. If they have any better ideas, we would be more than happy to listen to them and work together. However, at the end of the day, we are talking about Canadians going back to work and a sound economy.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was actually quite surprised that the hon. member opposite was so upset when asking the question.

[*English*]

It is outrageous that taxpayers must pay for political parties. What is more outrageous is that the government is saying that taxpayers need to pay for prisons, jets and all kinds of right-wing policies. This is outrageous.

Why are these policies part of an economic plan for a country that is in a recession?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I should not be surprised by that question from the NDP.

Are we talking about jets? No. We are talking about arming our armed forces and getting them the best equipment for the future. We are talking about the future defence of this country. When we talk about our crime bill, it is about making our streets safe. That is what Canadians want and that is why Canadians chose us. Maybe she should consider that.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether I want to thank the hon. member for his speech. It was not really a sales pitch for the budget. It was really more a diatribe against the NDP. However, he did say somewhere in there that he would be glad to hear some useful ideas.

I will give him this idea. There are a number of tax credits in this plan but they are non-refundable. I would make the suggestion that they should be refundable so that the least fortunate, the lowest income Canadian, would actually be able to benefit from them. I think that is a good suggestion. I would like to hear what he has to say about it.

Government Orders

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, at least we have a suggestion, as opposed to criticism, from the other party. It was not a diatribe against the NDP. It is the NDP that is opposing Canada's action plan. However, he has given us a suggestion and we will look into it to see if it does benefit. We may come back with good news, who knows.

• (1845)

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the NDP for the entire day and the last member actually talked about cherry-picking the facts. Who are the New Democrats going to believe? Do they believe the OECD, the IMF, *Forbes* magazine, Statistics Canada? All of these organizations have talked about the success of Canada through this global downturn and the fact that we added 600,000 new jobs.

The previous NDP member, again cherry-picking, mentioned that the report said that we needed more research and development. What he did not say was that was in the private sector. We lead, per capita, as far as government spending goes, in research and development.

I want to ask my colleague if he thinks that we should replace what the private sector should be doing with taxpayer money?

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, first he asked what the NDP believes in, which reports or anything else. I will be very blunt. The NDP will believe in any report that is negative to Canada. That is how it cherry picks.

In answer to my dear colleague's question, it is very simple. There needs to be a good balance between the government and the private sector, but, most important, we know that it is the private sector that will carry the most important innovation and investment. Therefore, our job is to create that environment.

Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. Our government has made Canada's economy our number one priority. We have been keenly focused on creating jobs and providing the right conditions for economic growth. We recognize the economy is what Canadians are concerned about and we are working hard on their behalf.

The bill that we are debating is an important part of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. It builds on the tremendous work done by our government to secure Canada's economic success. There are many positive aspects of this bill that are deserving of mention and that I am pleased to address. Most important, this bill is a clear plan to promote job creation. It is a clear plan to create economic growth. It provides support for our communities. It helps families and invests in education and training. Not only does this bill address these many important issues, but it does so while respecting taxpayers, something that has been the hallmark of our government.

This bill contains several measures that would encourage the hiring of more Canadians and create necessary jobs. It would provide a temporary hiring credit for small businesses, the very companies that are so vital to building our economy. This bill would reduce red tape because reducing red tape makes it easier for Canadians to get jobs and keep them. We are also supporting young entrepreneurs by providing \$20 million to enable the Canadian Youth Business Foundation to continue assisting young entrepreneurs.

These initiatives—

Mr. Scott Andrews: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since the government put closure on this bill, one would think members would be here to listen to it. There should be a quorum call right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I am seeing quorum.

The hon. Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

Hon. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, that is interesting that one single Liberal in the House can call quorum and—

An hon.member: That's democracy in action.

Hon. Lynne Yelich: One single Liberal is all there was.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, back to this exciting budget. This is exciting because these initiatives are simply a handful of the many positive ones contained within this bill that would help create jobs.

Furthermore, I am very pleased to see that the bill is striving to create the right conditions for Canada's economic success by not just creating jobs but also working to respect the taxpayers. We are a government that is working for all Canadians and we are committed to keeping taxes low. In fact, under this government, taxes have been reduced 120 times since 2006. We are continuing to keep taxes low because, unlike the opposition, we know that higher taxes would kill jobs. It is a fragile economic recovery and it sets Canadian families back.

I know our government's tax relief for families and job-creating businesses has been extremely important in my riding, and I am proud of our record on that issue.

The bill goes far in providing critical support for our communities. In particular, I am pleased to see the commitment to legislate a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in a tax fund, the gas tax fund, that would provide predictable infrastructure funding over the long term.

I believe that this builds upon the many projects that our government invested in during the first phase of Canada's economic action plan. These were important and necessary projects. They created jobs and they contributed to economic growth. Many of these projects will be well used for many years by communities across the country.

I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues the many measures in this bill designed to assist Canadian families. Canadian families stand to gain much from this next phase of Canada's economic action plan. In particular, there is the new family caregiver tax credit that would assist those Canadians already striving to care for the infirm and their dependent relatives.

Government Orders

As well, Bill C-13 would remove the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

Finally, we are introducing the children's arts tax credit for recreational and developmental children's programs.

We understand how difficult making ends meet can be for Canadian families. Our government desires to make life easier for families, which is precisely what the initiatives in this budget are outlined to do.

I wish to speak to something of tremendous importance in my riding in the province of Saskatchewan that is addressed in this budget. It is the important measures in Bill C-13 that invest in education and training.

Our government recognizes the importance of a well-educated and talented workforce in today's modern economy, especially within the context of a highly competitive, global economy where education and skills are of the utmost necessity to guarantee success. Bill C-13 invests in education and in training so that Canadian workers are the best equipped to tackle the challenges of today's work environment. We are ready to build on Canada's reputation as a world leader with a strong, well-trained and well-educated workforce that is flexible to meet the labour needs.

To accomplish this, I am proud to see that Bill C-13 contains a number of important measures. In particular, we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in research and development, in higher education and in new technologies. We are extending tax relief for skills certification exams by extending the scope of the tuition tax credit. We are forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses who choose to live and work in remote and rural areas, which frequently were underserved. We are doubling the in-study income exemption so students can earn more while at school without negatively impacting the loans. The last measure alone would assist nearly 100,000 students.

These are investments so fundamentally important to Canada's economic prosperity that we will see benefits not just now but in the future and for many years into the future.

In my home province of Saskatchewan, investments are both very necessary and are extremely welcome.

• (1850)

Our government fully understands the importance of remaining competitive in the global economy. We recognize the role played by investments in innovation and education. The bill, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, is clear and concise. It is a plan for tackling the challenges faced by Canada's economy.

It is important that the bill be passed. It is important because our government can then continue to build on the highly successful first phase of Canada's economic action plan. The government remains committed to the principles that served Canadians well during the recent global economic downturn. We have emerged from that downturn and our economy is showing very positive results. It is necessary that we be allowed to continue down this path. In the next phase, we will continue. We will continue to support job creation. We will lay the groundwork for economic growth and, importantly,

we will do this while assisting families, investing in education and innovation, and supporting communities and keeping taxes low.

I am proud of the work we have done. I am proud to be supporting the bill. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak.

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the two speeches of the members opposite and I am disappointed to see them clinging to analyses based on data from two, three or four years ago. This gives results that may not still be valid. If I had applied the same logic, I would have given up before the election campaign had even begun and I would have never won my seat.

In my work as the small business critic, I apply a detailed analysis of the current reality. That is exactly what I did during the last election campaign to the point where I was practically announcing that I had won.

I am trying to understand something. I was able to beat my Conservative opponent, and my Bloc Québécois opponent finished third despite the system of public financing of parties. The system works and it is fair. Why is the government trying to go backward so that elections can be bought?

[*English*]

Hon. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, if the member is asking if public financing helped him get elected, I am not sure if that is the reason he was elected. I do not believe that is the reason any of us were elected. We were elected because we had good platforms. I do not know why the member was elected, but we on this side of the House were elected because we had a platform. We had an economic action plan that in a time of global uncertainty has been what Canadians have wanted. They wanted to have financial security. They also wanted to have safe communities, something that we have been offering families in particular. We have dealt with the provinces and fixed the fiscal imbalance. As everyone knows, there was an imbalance there and we fixed it through our transfers, making sure there are always transfers available for the health and social needs of our provinces.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week is Feeding Toronto's Hungry Students Week. We feed 110,000 children every morning, but some 40% of elementary students and 62% of secondary school students do not eat a nutritious breakfast. One in five Canadian children lives below the poverty line, which can lead to poor nutritional status and poor health outcomes. Hungry children cannot learn. Their learning capabilities are affected by how recently they have eaten. Malnutrition in early life can limit long-term intellectual development. The right to safe and adequate food is a right of every individual.

Adjournment Proceedings

Does the hon. member think the government should be working with the provinces and territories to establish a national nutrition program so that no child goes to school hungry?

Hon. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, our government has done much for food safety.

Our government has provided \$100 million on a cash basis over five years for targeted investments in inspector training, additional science capacity, and electronic tools to support the work of front-line inspectors. Canadians will benefit from this improved safety.

We also support agriculture. It is important to provide safe food to our families in urban and rural areas.

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would submit that perhaps one of the reasons that many of the members opposite were elected is that in certain constituencies voters were tired of the Bloc Québécois.

It is clear from the speeches we have heard today that the NDP has not yet got its act together to put together an economic policy.

The member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges went to great lengths to outline the 12 factors underpinning competitiveness according to the World Economic Forum. He did not mention that virtually all of them are referred to in Canada's economic action plan, nor did he mention that the World Economic Forum has rated our financial system the best in the world.

The member did say that many of the ideas we put in our budget and our economic action plan were stolen from the NDP. We know that is not true, but would the minister not agree that on the opposition backbenches, there are some signs of hope and that maybe a rebellion will eventually open up against their front bench—

• (1900)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. We need some time for the minister of state to respond.

Hon. Lynne Yelich: Mr. Speaker, I am certain they will. Every idea we have, such as supporting job creation, strengthening our families and communities, investing in the economy, and the economic action plan that we provided for Canadians, are things that the NDP is demanding that we do. I am sure those members will be voting for our economic action plan.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I relish this opportunity to stand and talk again about a topic that I raised in the House on September 27, which was Canada's Asia Pacific strategy.

As a result of my own experiences working in the Asia Pacific region over the years, I have a continuing interest in this topic. I worked and lived in Indonesia, I worked and lived in the Philippines. I have done study tours and other kinds of exchanges and projects in other places in the Asia Pacific region. However, my specific reason for raising this topic was sparked by my attendance at the Business Council of B.C. Asia Pacific conference, which was called "Realizing Canada's Asia Pacific Opportunity".

I would say, with regret, I was the only member of Parliament who was at this conference in Vancouver. Because the House was in session, we could not all be there, but it would have been very educational I think, particularly for members of the government, to be there and hear what was said about its Asia Pacific strategy.

This was a gathering of business leaders, not leftists, not critics of the government, but people working in business in the Asia Pacific region. The Minister of Heritage did come and give a short speech about the Asia Pacific strategy, but as I said, otherwise I was the only one there through the conference.

The keynote speaker was the president of the Asia Pacific Foundation, Mr. Yuen Pau Woo, who complimented the government on two parts of its Asia Pacific strategy. He said that it had done a good job in expanding our forestry exports, in particular to China. He said that the government had a good focus on infrastructure development to help improve our port facilities to encourage trade. However, what he went on to say that this was not enough for a true strategy to develop Canada's trade relations over the next years with the Asia Pacific. He emphasized that there was a real need for an Asia Pacific strategy which focused on human capacity development.

He was really talking about three things.

First, he said that Canada needed to identify and build on its comparative strengths. He said that the government seemed to believe it had done that at the Asia Pacific strategy when it focused on energy and resources. However, what he said, very interestingly, was he thought we were missing the most important comparative advantage that we had in Asia, and that was the depth of our human connections. In Canada we have a very large Chinese Canadian community. We have a very old Japanese Canadian community. We have a very new and growing Filipino Canadian community. On the west coast, we have a very strong Korean Canadian business community.

He said that the narrow focus on infrastructure and resources missed the biggest opportunity we had, which is to develop and strengthen those personal contacts that will actually lead to further business opportunities.

The second thing he said was that Canada was failing to recognize Asia as the region which was the new power centre of the world and that we needed to develop our cultural and not just our trade understanding of Asia.

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Third, very specifically in the area of human capacity building, he said that Canada needed to build our network of human relationships. We do that through language training, cross-cultural communication training, international business education and in building those enduring human relationships, through exchange of international students, through study tours. Those kinds of things were completely absent from the government's Asia Pacific strategy.

Therefore, I rose to ask the question of the minister as to why we had this narrow focus and when would the government turn to this broader human capacity and relationship building strategy that business leaders so overwhelmingly endorsed in Vancouver on September 23.

● (1905)

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I, too, lived in the Philippines, so I welcome the member to this place.

Our government is committed to protecting and strengthening the long-term financial security of hard-working Canadians. We believe that to be one of our main focuses. We continue to focus on the economy, creating jobs and economic growth to benefit hard-working Canadians. That is why we are continuing to deliver free trade leadership.

Our Conservative government and most Canadians understand that international trade is a kitchen table issue. What I mean by this is that Canadians intuitively understand that expanded trade is the key to their long-term financial security.

Despite the NDP's ideological opposition to free trade, we will take advantage of trade opportunities that are crucial to Canada's long-term economic success.

Trade accounts for almost 60% of our annual GDP, and one in five Canadian jobs is directly or indirectly dependent on trade. That is why our government is committed to securing and deepening access to traditional markets, like the United States, and broadening and expanding access to more markets, like the European Union, India and the other fast-growing countries of Asia and the Americas.

Asia is projected to account for half of the global gross domestic product in the coming decades and we are witnessing dramatic growth in our trade with this region.

Our exports to China have surged some 70% in the past half decade and China is now Canada's second largest merchandise trading partner and our third largest export market. China is now the world's second largest economy after the United States, therefore, it is important that we continue to strengthen our commercial trading relationship with this powerhouse market in order to create opportunities for Canadian businesses, workers and their families.

That is why we are focusing on the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative. As the demand for Canadian exports to Asia-Pacific markets continues to grow, so do the opportunities for Canadian workers and companies. This innovative approach to the transportation network brings together the key transportation, labour and logistics providers across our supply chains to facilitate pan-Pacific trade.

We have partnered with all four western provinces, municipalities and private sector partners to support strategic infrastructure projects with over \$3.5 billion in the Asia-Pacific gateway. This includes federal contributions of over \$1.4 billion. These investments are saving time and money for businesses on both sides of the Pacific, resulting in Canadian companies tapping into new and expanded markets. This will generate new business opportunities and will create thousands of jobs for Canadians by increasing our trade and related services.

By strengthening our overall transportation system, we are improving how we move freight from North America westward across the Pacific to Asian nations.

Equally important, we are making it easier for people to travel to and from Canada through liberalized air agreements with Asian countries, such as China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Indeed, one of Asia's largest airlines, China Southern Airlines, recently launched a direct service from Guangzhou, China to Vancouver.

Last, budget 2011 allocates \$10 million over two years to develop and implement an international education strategy that will reinforce Canada as a country of choice to study and conduct world-class research.

Innovative and outward-looking colleges and universities are key partners in developing a diverse, skilled and internationally focused workforce. This international education strategy will strengthen our engagement with emerging economies and ensure greater collaboration between Canadian and foreign institutions.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the parliamentary secretary's comments and his discussion of international education initiatives.

There are three institutions in greater Victoria, one and a half of them in my riding, since one has two campuses. We have really been providing leadership in the area of international education. We have the Peter B Gustavson School of Business at the University of Victoria with its very innovative international business specialization in its MBA program.

We have the Royal Roads University, which is entirely in my riding, with its BA in international hotel management, an MA in international intercultural communication and an MA in global management.

Finally, where I taught for 20 years, we have Camosun College with an Asia-Pacific program that tries to engage first and second year students in the Asia-Pacific region.

The problem is that the government talks a good line on the international educational aspect but, in the Asia-Pacific strategy, the funding for those initiatives is missing and a long commitment to growing those relationships and that understanding is narrowed down to infrastructure and resource trade.

I would like to see the government's strategy expanded along the lines of the speech given by the president of the Asia-Pacific Foundation in Vancouver.

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●(1910)

Mr. Randy Kamp: Mr. Speaker, we welcome that advice from my colleague across the way.

Many of those institutions are under provincial jurisdiction, so I hope he also shares that advice with our colleagues on the provincial side.

I will say again, though, that our government has seen the need to invest in the infrastructure projects under our direct jurisdiction that are going to help increase trade, jobs, and the exchange of goods and services and ideas across the Asia-Pacific Gateway.

We are working hard to seize on every opportunity to expand our trade and cultural linkages with our international partners in the Asia-Pacific region and we will continue to do so.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be in the House this evening to follow up on my questions to the Minister of National Defence a few weeks ago. The questions were on the minister's precedent-setting opportunity when he called a search and rescue helicopter off the tarmac in Gander to come and pluck him out of a fishing lodge on the Gander River.

We see the scarce resources of our search and rescue capabilities following the closing of sub-centres in St. John's and in Quebec City, yet the minister, at his will, can get search and rescue to come take him off a river in Gander. He was only 12 nautical miles from Gander. It was not as if he was deep in the woods and had to plan on taking half a day to get out of there. He was only 12 nautical miles from the airport.

One of the questions is about how he got to the lodge in the first place. Did he come in on a boat or in a quad? He could have gotten back in the same way within 20 minutes. He just wanted to impress his fishing buddies.

To elaborate on my question, I know the parliamentary secretary is going to talk about training and how we all participate in parliamentary internship programs and how a great program it is. I think it is great. I have done it myself. I spent a whole three days with the Canadian Forces at CFB Greenwood and I had a great time. I learned a lot.

However, how can the minister learn anything in 30 short minutes? He obviously did not have time to see the search and rescue capabilities. They just came and hoisted him off the river and then brought him back to Gander. He did not really have time to participate in an exercise.

The minister had called Gander. CFB Gander said it was way out of protocol. He was not satisfied with that, so then he called their superiors and got them to call Gander to force the search and rescue plane to come pluck him off the river, which was absolutely abusing his position as minister.

These questions need to be answered. Canadians deserve a lot more from their elected officials in regard to this.

Another thing is that the minister is going to say he cut his vacation short and that he had to go to an important announcement. That is fine, but announcements do not just pop up overnight;

announcements are planned well in advance. The minister knew full well that he had to get back for an announcement. He was not cutting his vacation short.

Let us get into the details. When was this announcement planned that he had to get to all of a sudden, and had to call in a Challenger jet? The Challenger was waiting for him, and it was total abuse of taxpayers' money.

The other part of my question was about how the minister did a phony spending announcement during the election. The day before the election was called, the minister flew to St. John's, and \$20,000 later, he made an announcement. If it was not so ironic, it would be funny, because back in 2005 this same member, the member for Central Nova, asked the same question. He said,

Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister spent the summer burning jet fuel in the Challenger making phony announcements, his cabinet ministers were touring the country in limos tanked up on taxpayer dollars.

The same guy did the same thing five years later, but it is okay now. Now that the Conservatives are in power, they are saying they are allowed to do this.

Is it not pretty hypocritical that five or six years ago in this place, the minister criticized the government of the day for doing that, but now that the Conservatives are in, they can get away with it? What is the real deal here, Mr. Parliamentary Secretary?

●(1915)

Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I will just make the subtle reminder to the member for Avalon that normally questions are directed through the Chair to other hon. members.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin a substantive answer by simply noting that the low tone of the remarks we just heard in that rant, which the hon. member tried to qualify as a question, is what gives some hon. members, and certainly the party to which the hon. member belongs, a bad name in the eyes of Canadians. I would put the hon. member on notice that this kind of unfactual insinuation is not going to wash with Canadians. It did not wash in the last election and it will not wash in the future.

However, I would like to thank him for giving me the opportunity to set the record straight on the use of government aircraft. The Minister of National Defence is the lead minister for search and rescue in this country, and he attaches enormous importance to his role in this respect and to understanding the work that is done each and every day by the men and women involved in search and rescue, including by the men and women of the Canadian Forces, who are just one element of the overall solution.

Canadians are fortunate to have one of the most effective search and rescue systems in the world. We can be forgiven for forgetting that fact in the wake of dozens of questions by the other side casting aspersions and alleging abuse that is simply not there.

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A vast network operates across this country to ensure that appropriate resources are available to respond to incidents that may arise anywhere. We have 18 million square kilometres of responsibility. The hon. member may know that is 13% of the earth's surface, an area of land and sea greater than the size of continental Europe.

The Canadian Forces and the Canadian Coast Guard work very closely together to coordinate responses to more than 8,000 incidents per year. The forces are proud of what they do and they take advantage of all opportunities to welcome senior officials and government members to showcase their capabilities, as the member well knows. I am grateful to him for coming clean in saying that he took a trip with the 103 Search and Rescue Squadron in Gander, Newfoundland in July 2010, a trip that was even longer than the minister's trip, which was under an hour we are told.

However, there has been no question from this side or any side about the appropriateness of that. Indeed, members of this House have a duty to understand the operations of the Canadian Forces, above all, the members of the Standing Committee on National Defence. And the Minister of National Defence, with statutory responsibility for these forces, has a responsibility to know their work intimately. Fortunately, he does and is dedicated to his job; he does not take it lightly. And, fortunately, he has committed to doing this job seriously and to knowing the work involved as no other minister in recent years has known it.

While the 103 Squadron was pleased to have the opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities, obviously the visit would have been terminated had an incident arisen and those resources been required elsewhere. I do not want to single out the member. Many members have taken part in these sorts of demonstrations. However, for the Minister of National Defence, there is a special responsibility, and the government is committed to ensuring that the Canadian Forces have the people, equipment, infrastructure, and readiness required to defend Canada and Canadians, including in the field of search and rescue.

On the Challenger flights, I just have one thing to say. The hon. member opposite, representing the great riding of Avalon, should know better than to ask about this issue when he represents a party that had the highest rate of use of Challengers, and, probably, abuse from time to time, in Canadian history. This government has reduced that rate of use by 80%, and I think those facts speak for themselves.

● (1920)

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is quite rich. I say to the hon. member that we will not be bullied, and if he wishes to refer to what is “unfactual”, the facts are that the minister was on a vacation. The facts are that the minister called a search and rescue plane to come and remove him from that vacation. Those are the facts of the matter.

Also, the member should get his facts straight. I was at CFB Greenwood when I did an exercise that took three days. I spent a whole day with the search and rescue squadron at Greenwood. We did daily briefings. They showed us all of their gear and their exercises and maneuvers, and those kinds of things. It was not done by a phone call from the minister to come to pick him up and to spend a half-hour of his time with the search and rescue squadron in Gander.

So the member should not try to pull the wool over our eyes that this was all planned and all good and that they were doing it all for the great cause of our Canadian Forces. That is absolute malarkey.

Mr. Chris Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear to all of us in the House at this point that the member has lost his sense of perspective on this issue. He has not as yet answered the question as to why it is fine for him and many other members to follow the rules, participate in the search and rescue exercise, but not fine for the Minister of National Defence, who is responsible for search and rescue in our country, to do the same.

We on this side can well understand why the NDP asks so much about this. It opposes so much of what the Canadian Forces does, such as the operation in Libya, the operation in Afghanistan, Canada's economic action plan, the procurement of equipment, the minister's commitment to doing his duty to fallen soldiers.

What we cannot understand on this side of the House is why a Liberal member, whose government used these assets five times more than this government, is questioning the commitment of the Minister of National Defence to knowing his job as the lead minister on search and rescue and his minimal use of Challenger aircraft to get to places in Canada.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:22 p.m.)

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